

PLUCK-N-POST

The official newsletter
of the Jew's Harp Guild



VOLUME 10, ISSUE 3

FALL/WINTER 2005

Memories of a first-time festivalgoer

Resonant tones in a parallel universe *by Joan Broughton*

I had no expectations as we headed out to Bay City, Oregon; I was a festival virgin.

I had been learning how to play the Jew's Harp, having listened with interest and amusement to my pal Ingrid Berkhout playing her harp for years and whenever possible for the city folk in Seattle. Always game for an unusual adventure, I forgot to ask what might be going on, who and how many would be there, whether there would be a chance to participate or just spend the weekend listening to the pros who I suspected would be there. I just knew that Ingrid loved the festival and the people and tried to attend the event whenever she could. So we packed up the camping gear and her considerable instrument collection and set out to experience an amazing parallel universe.

What I found out is that the event is attended by hugely talented musicians and folks who just love to jam and share their love for the versatile little Jew's Harp. I learned a huge amount about how to play, where to find variations of Jew's Harps all over the world, and what a role the instrument has played in a surprising number of cultures.

There were plenty of opportunities to participate in jamming with a broad variety of instruments from a saxophone to a classical violin to guitars, mandolins and banjos, a didgeridoo, nose harps, clackamores, harmonicas, collections of unusual and delightful percussion instruments and always the beloved Jew's Harp.

(cont. on page 6)

She plucked its weed whacker
line, it plucked her heartstrings.

PHOTO BY INGRID BERKHOUT



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A Word from the Executive Director

Hello Harpers,

I hope you enjoy this special "Festival" edition of *Pluck-n-Post*. The 13th annual North American Jew's Harp Festival was very enjoyable and a great time was had by all. A great big "Thank You" to all our volunteers who made the festival a success. Without each and every one of you, it could not happen. If you weren't there, we hope you can attend in the future ... you won't regret it!

The recap of the minutes from the annual post-festival Guild meeting are included in this issue. Many of the items I normally address in this segment are included there.

I will be stepping down as Executive Director at the end of this year. After 13 years, it is time for me to



Janet (at piano) with the "Amazons": taking a breather.

JOHN PALMES

pass this "flag ship" on to a new captain. Gordon Frazier has been nominated as the new Executive Director. If he is elected, I am confident he will do a fine job of leading our Guild and am very grateful to him for his willingness to accept this nomination. I hope each of you will give the new director as much love and support as you have given me. I have much appreciation for everyone who has helped the Guild and festival become what they are today ... thank you all!

Over the years, our small group of Jew's harp aficionados has blossomed into a very well organized, and very well known organization. We have become one of the key groups who are keeping the Jew's Harp alive and growing throughout the world. Each of you should feel very proud of your efforts. I certainly am proud to have been a small part of this success.

So, with positive thoughts and hope, I look forward to many more years of helping this small, mystical instrument become even more of an enchantment to us all.

Be well, be happy ... and keep twangin'

Janet Gohring

PLUCK-N-POST

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Gordon Frazier, Larry Hanks, Denise Harrington,

Mike Stiles, Gene Ralph

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New website features: post your sounds and photos

Jew's Harp Guild website (<http://jewsharpguild.org>) users will now be able to upload their own sound files and pictures to share with the world. Just complete the forms and use the uploader, and within a few days your files will be available to listen to or see. (This is moderated, which is the reason for the delay.)

The submission pages are:

<http://jewsharpguild.org/soundssubmit.html>

<http://jewsharpguild.org/picssubmit.html>

The results will be posted at:

<http://jewsharpguild.org/audio/useraudio/>

http://jewsharpguild.org/images/user_pics/

The Discussion Group has also been modified to prevent spam and I invite you all to post new topics.

Thanks for your help in testing the new features.

Mark D. Poss – JHG Webmaster

BULLETIN BOARD

Questions? Answers?
Write to PNP at:
508 2nd St, Cove, OR 97824 USA
or e-mail us at:
newsletter@jewsharpguild.org

INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS: I've been enjoying your newsletter for years as I'm now mostly in Asia and it's my connection with the outside world as it were. I've been playing on this magnificent instrument for the last 20 years but specializing in South Indian, Rajasthani, H'mong and Balinese, Lombok harps the last 12 years in Asia. I was also on the last DVD of the fest in 2002 in Rauland, Norway playing on morsing, morchang (both performing and lecturing) and genggong klopokan; an archaic form of that wonderful instrument.

However, I have a humble question; who is organizing the **next congress in Amsterdam 2006**? I was invited to play by Annelise who was organizing for der esbreker (the event location) but have now lost contact—it would be of great help if you could put me into contact with the current organizers of the event—I'm in Europe touring for most of the summer each year (now in Berlin) so now organizing for the next year. Thanks for your time,

Namaskaram, Steev steevjawharp@hotmail.com

The Fifth International JH Congress will be held in Amsterdam July 28–30, 2006, at the new Dutch Center for New Music (Muziekgebouw aan 't IJ). See www.muziekgebouw.nl for more on the center, and watch for an article on the congress in the next issue of Pluck-n-Post. —ed.

Hi folks. Can you tell me the site for **Freidrich Schlütter** in Germany? I googled unsuccessfully. I also called him, but we don't speak one another's language, so i couldn't take the letters over the phone.

Ja. It is: <http://www.schluetter-trump.de>, in German but with English translations of most pages. E-mail: maultrommel@tiscali.de — ed.

With its distinctive sound and subtle complexity the Jew Harp is an instrument that should be raised in our community rather than lost in the sands of time. I would like to learn more about the instrument and hear from people who have experience with it.

[The Guild] website features some of the only information on the web about playing the Jew Harp. I am having a hard time finding someone

to teach me and my best friend how to play. We are having a very **hard time with the volume** of the instrument. We cannot make the tone very loud at ALL. We followed the directions and passed the harp around to several friends with the directions, but no one could get the volume that I have heard from other players. Any suggestions?

One reason for low volume is that players refer to an oft-used instructional graphic showing the placement of the common steel Jew's harp against the teeth. In the graphic, the player is baring his teeth, lips curled back, like a wolverine in attack mode. This illustrates the placement of the frame, but does not illustrate a good playing technique. Once the frame is against the teeth, the lips should "uncurl" so they rest lightly on the upper and lower parts of the frame. This focuses the sound of the boing into your mouth cavity, preventing "leakage" which might be the cause of your problem; the less boing that goes into the mouth, the less there is to resonate. Let us know if this helps. (This is all assuming you have a decent instrument, by the way; see the "Tsk!" sidebar in the previous issue of PNP.) — ed.

(cont. on next page)

WELCOME new Guild members
Jonathan Faddis — Loa, UT
Bruce W. Hodges — Portland, OR
Roger Hurliman — Cloverdale, OR
Joan Broughton — Seattle, WA
Ed Clark — Potsdam, NY [good to be back in touch with him after all these years!]

BULLETIN BOARD (cont. from page 3)

I'm a multi-instrumentalist (former 17 year veteran with mandolinist David Grisman). I perform and educate with a wide variety of found sound instruments and I'm **trying to locate Ray Jacobs** about his cardboard instruments. I played one at Artichoke Music in Portland, OR and wish to speak with him about acquiring or commissioning him to build one or two... would greatly appreciate any contact info. on him!
Many Thanks,

Joe Craven, Blender Logic Arts
joe@joecraven.com
707.678.1351 hm / 530.902.4413 cell

I've prepared a **29-minute video** of parts of the [2005 Festival] Saturday evening concert for airing **on Portland cable access**... I've also made a short video of slowed down waterfalls to the music "Minor Third" by Gordon Frazier and Bill Gohring [from the 1998-2000 Festival Highlights CD —ed.] that I would like to submit, kind of a Surreal Water video. I enjoyed the festival a lot this year, and hope to attend in the future.

The Minor Third video will show separately on cable access, being 3 1/2 minutes long it will be filler at the end of the 1/2 hour or hour. It usually takes 7-10 days for the station to program a video. You could check at <http://www.tvctv.org/> and search for Jews Harp Festival for program times, but the area where it will play is the west side of Portland on channels 21 and 23, with rare times when it might play all of Portland on channel 11.

Cheers, Bob Nesbitt

I found your website very interesting, I came across it as I am researching my Tromans family from Rowley Regis, Staffordshire, England. Many of the **Tromans family** were **Jews Harp makers** and at one time Rowley Regis was known as the world centre for jews harp making. If you are interested in our discussions on the subject have a look at www.rowleyregis.com and search in the forums under jews harp and Tromans. It is believed the name Tromans comes from their occupation.

From the DX Listening Digest 5-113, July 10, 2005 Incorporating Review of International Broadcasting edited by Glenn Hauser, <http://www.worldofradio.com> (used with permission): LAOS [non]. **Hmong Lao Radio**, via WHRI South

Carolina, 11785, Sunday July 10 at 1317 with what **sounded like a Jew's harp**, really neat rustic music. I just wish they would play more of it during their weekly hours, Sat 1200 and Sun 1300. Excellent reception here, if not in Laos
Glenn Hauser, OK
DX Listening Digest

Can you put me in touch with anyone in the **Nashville area** who is an experienced Jews Harp player? Thanks,

Dean Hinton
2120 8th Ave S, Nashville, TN
615-844-9445 / wdhinton@nashvillescene.com

Please visit my website about "Ne'Karombi" in Tana Toraja. You'll also hear the instrument. URL: www.batusura.de/neka.htm

Gary from Germany

Thanks for including the video link in PNP. The reason that **the link below wouldn't work is because the computer read the period** at the end of the link "...small." as part of the link.

The video comes in three sizes, you can choose according to what you think your readers would be most comfortable with. As always, it is a trade-off between video quality and bandwidth usage. Here are the links for the three sizes uncluttered by human punctuation:

<http://www.hilltribe.org/videos/08-video-english-jingnongjammin.php/small>

<http://www.hilltribe.org/videos/08-video-english-jingnongjammin.php/medium>

<http://www.hilltribe.org/videos/08-video-english-jingnongjammin.php/large>

You might notice that having a link ending in something like /small is pretty weird. It's just a trick I have used to make Google's spiders want to read the page.

Anyway, I don't know much about Jew's Harps, but they seem much more popular than I had imagined. I get 1-2 people per day linking to that video via the link I put on Wikipedia. That's more than I would have expected.

Thanks for your interest and let me know if you have any other questions. Cheers,

Jonathan Morris
jon@hilltribe.org

Jew's Harp Guild annual meeting minutes

Following is a brief synopsis of the meeting held August 7, 2005, in Bay City, Oregon after the festival.

Festival Wrap-Up

General discussion on festival expenses; comments on the 2005 festival. Discussion on next year's festival and vision of future festivals. In summary, we all agreed the festival should be (1) kept small; (2) a good mix of player-oriented folks and simple community event and (3) a scaled down venue to be held, for the most part, at the city park with the Arts Center housing the evening concerts.

Guild Business

Ingrid and Gordon volunteered to work on a new design for the Guild Shirt.

Report on Guild expenses; status of NAJHF CD stock and sales.

Discussion to fill two vacancies on the Board of Directors. Ingrid Berkhout and John Palmes indicated they would be interested.

Their names will be placed on the 2006 ballot for election of officers.

Janet announced she would be stepping down as Executive Director at the end of the year. She would like to stay on as an honorary board member. Kathi Vinson is also stepping down as Secretary/Treasurer.

A discussion followed on how best to divide Guild duties in the coming months.

Gordon Frazier – Will continue as editor of *Pluck-n-Post*; he was also nominated as Executive Director.

Either Gordon or Larry Hanks – Will be Official Representative to the International Congresses.

Ingrid Berkhout and Joan Broughton – Festival secretaries and coordinators of the NAJHF Info booth.

Denise Harrington – On-site Festival Coordinator.

Denise, Jim Nelson, Ingrid, Rick Meyers and Rob Hoffman – 2006 Festival Committee.

Pat Vining – Bay City Arts Center liaison.

Janet Gohring – Interim Guild Secretary/Treasurer; honorary board member.

Dan Gossi – Internet Coordinator.

(For a copy of the complete minutes, please send a request and SASE to Janet Gohring, 508 2nd Street, Cove, OR 97824.)

Post-festival Addendum

After consideration, Janet has decided to perform the duties of Secretary/Treasurer until someone else is able to take over that position. On August 22 Gene Ralph sent in his resignation as a Board Member; in light of this Janet has suggested that she stay on the board (rather than be an honorary member). This will ensure that there will be enough names on the ballot to fill the board slots.

Amendments to By-Laws

After the discussion at the annual meeting, the following amendments were made to the By-Laws of The Jew's Harp Guild via an e-mail meeting of the Board of Directors on August 24, 2005.

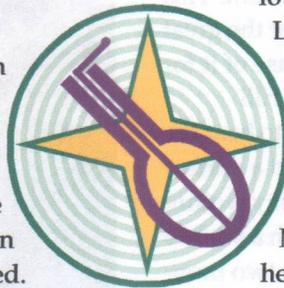
Amendment to 4.30: The Board of Directors shall meet once a year, at a time and place designated at the previous Board Meeting. Additional Board Meetings may be held as necessary, at a time and place designated by any three Board Members as set forth in paragraph 4.40. [change to number of times the Board meets annually]

Amendment to 5.10: The officers of the Association shall be Executive Director and Secretary/Treasurer. All officers shall be members of the Association. [Eliminate the Assistant Director position]

Amendment to 5.40: [delete this section, "The Assistant Director shall assist the Executive Director"]

Amendment to 8.20: In the event of dissolution or liquidation of said THE JEW'S HARP GUILD the total assets, after the payment of liability, becomes the property of the Bay City Arts Council, a non-profit organization located in Bay City, Oregon; or if they are not a viable organization at the time, then to a non-profit fund, foundation, or corporation which is organized and operated exclusively for charitable, educational, religious, and/or scientific purposes and which has established its tax exempt status under section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. [Amend heir designation from Eagle Valley Grange Park to Bay City Arts Center]

Meeting minutes were taken by Joan Broughton;
synopsis written by Janet Gohring.



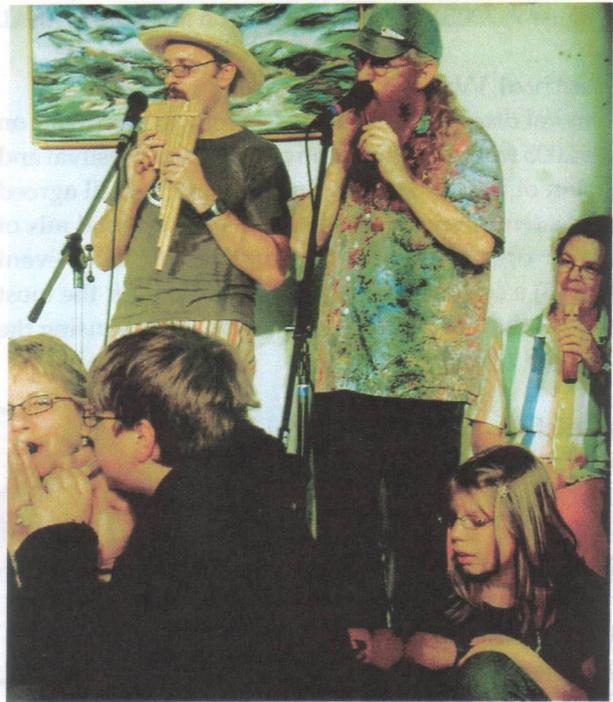
Resonant Tones *(continued from front page)*

At one point, nearly the whole crowd, all ages and orientations, joined in for some great improvisational jamming and people who weren't playing were dancing and the whole scene was magical.

My fondest moment came on Friday night when I decided to play the festival "gut bucket" bass [made by the late Eric Leffingwell – ed.] and fell in love. From that moment on, it was hard to separate me from that home made wooden marvel with the resonant tones accomplished with a line from a weed whacker. This is no galvanized washtub with a hole drilled in the center, my only previous exposure to such an instrument. This is something else entirely. At one point, one of the great sound people put a microphone under the base of it for my own personal gut bucket solo. What a thrill!

There were almost enough opportunities to hear the real pros like Bill and Gordon on the harp and a performance by John on the mouth bow. On Saturday, volunteers were divided up into "bands," each with a variety of diverse instruments, given time to practice two numbers and expected to perform on stage that night. It turned out amazingly well. The "women's jam" led by Janet, an inspiring piano and vocal talent, was huge fun.

Needless to say, I am a convert and convinced that from now on, if it's August and festival time, I will be there. Thank you, hard working festival planners and Jew's Harp Guild, I am most grateful for your efforts! ■



COMBINATIONS:

Above: Squish on panpipes, Curtis on Clackamore, Nikki on . . . is that a train whistle? It must be Saturday night's Grand Jam. Below: The band scramble also produced an eclectic combination of instruments, from sax to Jew's harp to washboard.



IMPROVISATIONS:

Top right: A hastily gathered contingent of festivalgoers participate in Bay City's Pearl of the Bay Parade. Center left: Denise Harrington shakes her bootie to the musical stylings of improvisational jawharpist Ingrid Berkhout. The Friday night dance featured all kinds of music and dancing, from improv to a Virginia Reel. Center right: A group of festivalgoers in an impromptu round of Jew's harp show-and-tell. Bottom left: It's always a good time to learn a new instrument. Bottom right: Gordon Frazier and harmonica player Jeff Chance take advantage of the weather to indulge in a funkalicious jam on the front porch. Well, and to compare hats.

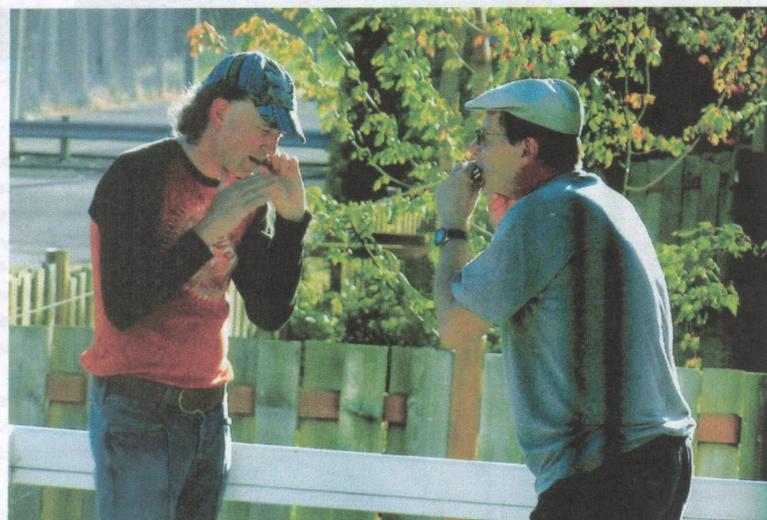
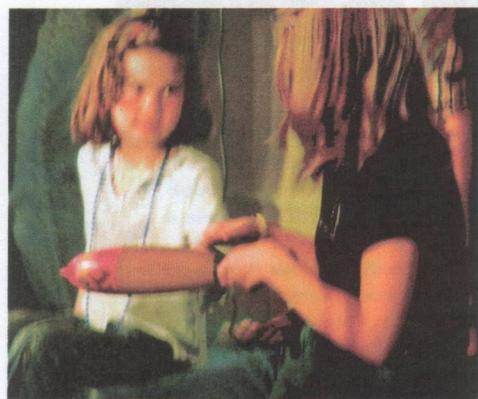
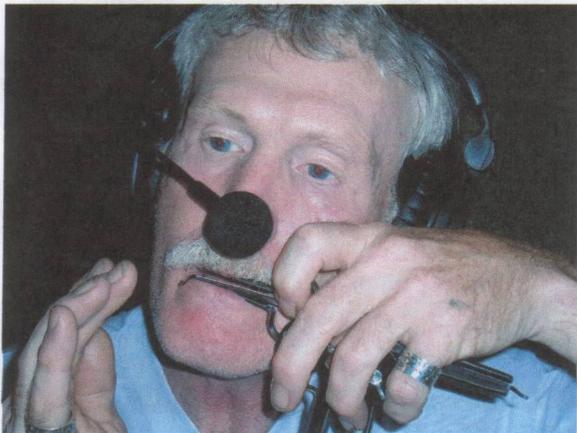
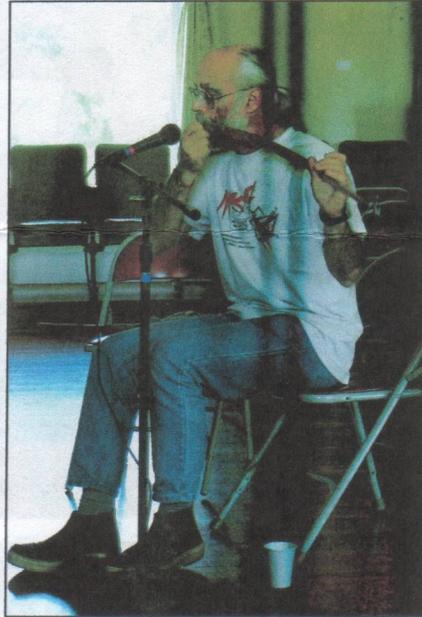
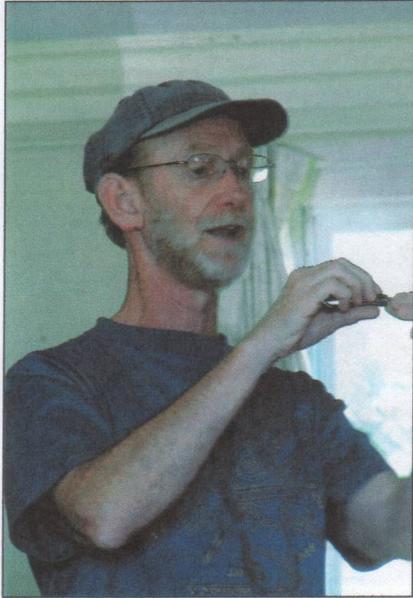


PHOTO CREDITS: OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP: INGRID BERKHOUT; BOTTOM: JIM GOHRING. THIS PAGE, RIGHT CENTER, JANET GOHRING; OTHER PHOTOS BY JOAN BROUGHTON.



EDIFICATION: Top left: Jew's harp maker Bill Gohring leads a workshop on the care and maintenance of the steel variety of the instrument. Upper right: Ralph Christensen, maker of the bamboo variety, gives a workshop on playing and other aspects of those instruments. Middle left: Gordon Frazier displayed and demonstrated Jew's harps from many lands at his workshop. Middle right: John Palmes gave a workshop on the mouthbow, a sonic first-cousin to the Jew's harp. Bottom left: At the Twang Time Circle players shared techniques with each other. Shown is Bruce Wayne Hodges, who shared unique playing techniques and demonstrated some other tools of the trade.

PHOTO CREDITS, THIS PAGE: BOTTOM, JOHN PALMES; OTHER PHOTOS BY JOAN BROUGHTON. OPPOSITE PAGE: TOP, JOAN BROUGHTON; BOTTOM: JANET GOHRING.

2005 Festival Participants

Jew's Harp Players

Bill Gohring, Cove, OR; Bruce Wayne Hodges, Portland, OR; Charles Davis, Vernonia, OR; Dan Gossi, Boise, ID; Denise Harrington, Garibaldi, OR; Geoff Phillips, Baker City, OR; Gordon Frazier, Seattle, WA; Ingrid Berkhout, Seattle, WA; Janet Gohring, Cove, OR; John Palmes, Juneau, AK; Joan Broughton, Seattle, WA; Jonathan Faddis, Loa, UT; Larry Hanks, Berkeley, CA; Marcus Tenaglia, Portland, OR; Martin Nelson, Garibaldi, OR; Matthew Tendick, Veneta, OR; Michael Stiles, Meridian, ID; Ralph Christensen, Eureka, CA; Rick Meyers, Portland, OR; Rob Hoffman, Portland, OR; Roger Tendick, Veneta, OR.

Other Musicians

Alice Field, Banks, OR; Brianna, (unknown); Christine, (unknown); Curtis Chamberlain, Portland, OR; Gary DeLong, (unknown); Gene Ralph, Banks, OR; Jack Roberts, Carson, WA; Jim Nelson, Garibaldi, OR; Joe Wrabek, Garibaldi, OR; Judith, (unknown); Julie Woodward, (unknown); Michael, (unknown); Nikki Jones, Portland, OR; Sara Kaufman, (unknown); Squish, Portland, OR. [Sorry for the omissions; contact us so we can add you to the mailing list!]



The paraders, still giddy from their marching debut, gather at the end of the route.

Workshops

Mouthbow (John Palmes); Care of the Jew's Harp (Bill Gohring); Intermediate Jew's Harp Playing (group); Bamboo Jaw Harps (Ralph Christensen); Geography of the Jew's Harp (Gordon Frazier); Twang Time Circle (group).

Band Scramble

Band #1 Name to Come: Jim Nelson, Joan Broughton, Rick Meyers, Bruce Wayne. Played: Roots and Shoots (written by Jim Nelson); No Use In (Joe Raebeck original).

Band #2 Number Two (aka Horse Dung Beetles): Gordon Frazier, Bill Gohring, Gary DeLong (nose flute), Jeff Chance (harmonica), Gene Ralph, Martin Nelson. Played: Spanish Eyes; Quit Your Low Down Ways

Band #3 Dancing Bananas: Bruce Wayne, Matthew Tendick, Squish, Rob Hoffman; Breanna; Judith. Played: Mr. Bojangles; De' Oh

Band #4 The Big Cheese: Dan Gossi, Nikki Jones, Geoff Phillips, Mike Stiles, (sax players); (singer); (piano). Played: You Are My Sunshine; Down By The Riverside

Band #5 Denise Ronstadt & the Straight Ponies: John Palmes, Denise Harrington, Marcus Tenaglia, Curtis Chamber-

lain, Roger Tendick. Played: Then I Won't Want You; Instrumental Radiation/Mama Don't 'Low

Band #6 Jungle Whalers: Jack Roberts, Janet Gohring, Julie, Ralph Christensen, Ingrid Berkhout, Alice Ralph. Played: Lion Sleeps Tonight; Long Hot Dusty Road

Raffle Winners

Amber Stiles, Betty Diamond, Bob Mouyios, Bob Nesbitt, Brett Hurliman (2), Denise Harrington (2), Dick Diamond, Gene Ralph, Ingrid Berkhout (3), Jack Roberts, Jackie Gohring, Jan Burns, Janet Gohring (2), Joan Broughton, Kathy Baker, Larry Hanks, Marcus Tenaglia, Melkuni, Ralph Christensen (2), Red, Roger Tendick, Sandi Nuxts, Tina Blackburn

Festival Organization

Janet Gohring (information booth); Denise Harrington & Jim Nelson (local contacts, publicity); Jonathan Faddis (Saturday evening MC); Gordon Frazier, Larry Hanks, & Ingrid Berkhout (scheduling); Gene Ralph & Jim Nelson (sound engineering); Gene & Alice Ralph (signage, publicity); Bay City Arts Center volunteers (meals, maintenance, moral support).



Jonathan Faddis, MC, keeps the action moving along at the Saturday concert.