



The REEDER

Visit us on the Internet at
www.gatewayharmonicaclub.org

NEWS & VIEWS by Mary Ann Love

HEALTH REPORT:

Audria Gebhardt suffered a broken foot in front of the door to St. Anthony's while taking a friend to the hospital. Buddy Hirsch had a second cataract removed and is doing well.

Bob Carmody is improving from a long hospital stay and sends a big hello to all his fellow club members. We wish them all continued improvement.

GET WELL

The Gateway Harmonica Club sends out get well wishes and best regards to Jack Ely of the Buckeye Club. Doreen Scurlock reported that Jack was in a rehab center with complications of diabetes and coordinated the entire festival from his bedside. All harmonica clubs need dedicated people like Jack to keep the ball rolling.

CONDOLENCES

The Gateway Harmonica Club offers sincere sympathy to the family of Ed Ampleman who entered eternal rest on June 1, 2005.

Word was also received through a friend that Bill Mann deceased several weeks ago. Bill had been in residence in Litchfield, IL for the past several years.

Both of these gentlemen were friendly, pleasant, and continued to be faithful members of the club even though they were unable to be in attendance for the last several years. May they rest in peace.

VISITOR

Jesse (didn't get the last name) visited the club practice and intends to become a part-time member

when his job with Boeing permits. He commutes between St. Louis and Seattle. Welcome Jesse! Joe and Sue Fey ran into Jesse where he was volunteering at the Scott Joplin House festivities on Memorial Day.

REEDER ONLINE

The GHC newsletter can also be viewed on website: www.gatewayharmonicaclub.org on the Newsletter link. There are also back issues through the year 2004 available on that link. This website could be a great source of information for potential members or for friends and families to see what the club is all about. Pass it on. (Thanks, Jim Melchers!)

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:

Joe Hagen (Regular Member)
 3863 Botanical
 St. Louis, MO 63110
 (314) 773-0800
jasmhagen@sbcglobal.net

Wayne Stennett (Regular Member)
 219 Meadowbrook Lane
 Collinsville, IL 62234
 (618) 345-6482

Gene Dodson (Associate Member)
 2017 Dogwood Drive
 Lexington, KY 40504-3407
 (859) 276-2069



See you at the
42nd Annual SPAH Convention

Kansas City, MO • August 16 - 20, 2005

THE GHC REEDER is a bimonthly publication of the Gateway Harmonica Club, Inc. of St. Louis, Missouri, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation and advancement of the harmonica. The club meets weekly on Tuesdays at 7:00 PM at the Rock Hill Baptist Church, 9125 Manchester, Brentwood, MO.

Inquiries about membership should be directed to:

Buddy Hirsch, Treasurer
 47 Orchard Lane
 Kirkwood, MO 63122
 (314) 821-8651
 e-mail: BuddyHarmonica@aol.com

For information about club activities and performances, contact:

Charles Pratte, President
 1547 Azalea Dr.
 Webster Groves, MO 63119
 (314) 961-7764
 email: CAPJR68@aol.com

All other correspondence should be directed to:

Mary Ann Love
 Recording & Corresponding Secretary
 1162 Villa Flora Dr.
 O'Fallon, MO 63366-4443
 (636)-379-7707
 e-mail: maryannlove@charter.net

Information about the club's activities is also available on the World Wide Web at:

www.gatewayharmonicaclub.org

Happy Birthday!!!

Birthday greetings are extended to the following members of the GHC family who are celebrating birthdays in July and August. (*Oops! Some of the May birthdays were inadvertently lost in the last issue. Sorry folks! Thanks for the notice. I apologize and please know that this was an accidental mistake. Editor*)

July

Joe Hagen 7/2
 Dorothy Welsch 7/5
 Ruth Morrison 7/10
 Francis Love 7/15
 Kathleen Cenatiempo 7/16
 Anne Hagen 7/22
 Tom Sutterfield 7/24
 Mary Heininger 7/24
 Bob Kubie 7/25
 Buddy Hirsch 7/25
 Tony Wilbraham 7/26
 Mary Ann Love 7/28
 Jessie Hirsch 7/31

August

L. J. Atkison 8/12
 Betty Ford 8/13
 Rich Krueger 8/15
 Andy Cassimatis 8/16
 Jackie Pratte 8/18
 Ria Meagher 8/20
 Sue Fey 8/25
 Lillian Krueger 8/27
 Jack Cook 8/30
 Al Reinsch 8/31



“CHRISTMAS IN JULY”
 MID-YEAR PARTY
 JULY 5, 2005

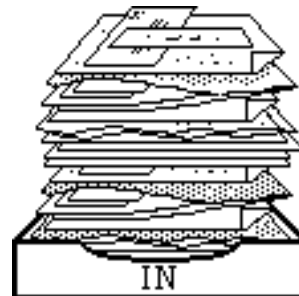


Members and spouses joined in our semi-annual get-together for food and fun.



Thanks to all who brought the great refreshments. And thanks to Bill Dulin for the photos. (More photos on page 8.)

WE GET LETTERS . . .



Here's a letter from harmonica virtuoso Robert Bonfiglio that was forwarded to us by several friends in the harmonica world:

Dear Fellow Harmonica Player,

This year will be my first Chromatic Seminar for Diatonic Players (and also for chromatic players and teachers who wish to advance their chromatic knowledge and pedagogy) held from August 8-13 at my house in beautiful Columbia County, Copake, New York. We are near all kinds of hiking, biking, swimming, camping, etc. and only a train ride to New York City.



I have introduced players like Randy Singer, Rob Paparozzi, Clint Hoover, Emile D'Amico and Sugar Blue to chromatic and given lessons to Mike Turk and William Galison who already could play chromatic.

This seminar is for all levels of players. People with a higher level of expertise on chromatic will learn teaching pedagogy and reinforce the fundamentals of chromatic play. It moves very fast and will give you stuff to practice and how to practice for the next ten years which is what all musicians do. We will cover everything from tone, phrasing, corner switch, dynamics, speed, practice habits, etc.

This will be the week before SPAH to allow players from abroad to take part and I will update you as to some special stop by guests like Rob Paparozzi who is coming to help!! This proves to be a very heavy-duty chromatic week.

The seminar will be \$300 or \$500 if you stay at the house for the week; I can pick people up without cars from the train station 20 minutes away. I will include a copy of my two etudes "Scales and Arpeggios" and "Bona Rhythm Etudes" for each player which usually cost \$200.

I studied harmonica with Chamber Huang and was coached for 12 years by Andrew Lolya, the Principal Flute of the New York City Ballet. I have a Master degree in composition from Manhattan School, of Music and studied with Aaron Copland. For more on my bio feel free to go to my website.

The seminar is suitable for anyone wanting to gain more knowledge about the chromatic. It should be fun to get several players together for intense sessions.

Please email me if you wish to come. Check out what Rob Paparozzi and Randy Singer wrote on harp-I below:

Harmonically yours,

Robert Bonfiglio
<http://www.robertbonfiglio.com>

* * * * *

7440 Sharp
St. Louis, MO 63116
June 28, 2005

Gateway Harmonica Club

Dear Harmonica Club Members:

Thank you so much for your memorial in honor of Ed Ampleman to the BackStoppers.

Ed loved being a member of the Harmonica Club. He started playing in grade school. He tried to teach me while we were dating but I never got the hang of it. When he was a Cub Master he used music during the meetings and the boys sang along. When his term was over the next Cub Master said he could never take Ed's place because the boys behaved so well and sang during meetings. Ed didn't read music until he joined the Club. He loved going to nursing homes and retirement homes. When he was in the nursing home at Parc Provence he took his harmonica along and played. When the club came to play there he was happy when Joe told everyone that Ed was a member. I brought your tapes and played for Ed every day and also the tapes of the Choral Club we were members of. He always played a solo and then our group sang with him while he played. I played the tapes — even the last day. His favorite song was "When the Saints Go Marching In."

Thank you for your kindness.

Elizabeth (Liz) Ampleman

* * * * *

To: Gateway Harmonica Club Members
June 17, 2005

On behalf of The BackStoppers I want to express our sincere appreciation for your donation of \$50.00 in memory of Ed Ampleman.

Our organization is proud of the sacrifices made by our Police Officers and Firefighters and are humbled by the loyal support we receive.

Gifts such as this will assist us in caring for the families of the fallen Firefighters and Police Officers who gave their lives in the line of duty while protecting our homes and families.

Thank you again for your support.

Sincerely,

Chief Ron Battelle
Executive Director

HARMONICA BIOGRAPHY - THE HARMONICATS

Editors Note: In the absence of a current member submitting a biography this issue, we are featuring The Harmonicats. Some of the profile was derived from newspaper articles found on the cover of a LP in our library collection, and more was gleaned from internet biography pages.

The Harmonicats were a harmonica trio, consisting of Jerry Murad, Don Les, and Al Fiore. As we will see below, all three had shortened their names for marquee purposes. (We are indebted to Danny Wilson's Harmonicats Web site, <http://www.harmonicats.com>, and his Al Fiore page, <http://members.aol.com/harmonica/PLAYERS/fiore.html>, for background on these performers.) Jerry Murad normally played lead on the chromatic harmonica; Don Les sometimes added lines on the 10-hole standard harmonica. More exotic were the Hohner bass harmonica and the Hohner 48-chord harmonica, both of which made essential contributions to this specialized ensemble. As bass harmonica player Danny Wilson explains, the instrument is 8 3/4 inches long, and much thicker than a regular harmonica; it weighs 2 3/4 pounds. The 23-inch long chord harmonica consists of two combs, one above the other; it produces block chords tuned in a circle of fifths, and is normally expected to carry out a rhythm function, like a rhythm guitar (or an accordion's left-hand buttons).

According to a story in the *Milwaukee Journal* of October 17, 1947, the Cats had formed in 1944 under Jerry Murad's leadership. Jerry Muradian was born of Armenian parentage in what was still called Constantinople, on December 12, 1919. He arrived in Chicago in 1925 and decided that he wanted to play the harmonica instead of going into the family business of making carpets. Domnic Leshinski, born in Lorain, Ohio on November 15, 1914, met Murad while both were in the Marines during World War II. Both spent some time in Borrah Minevitch's Harmonica Rascals. Albert Fiorentino was born in Chicago on December 30, 1922. During the first couple of years, the Harmonicats all had to work day jobs (which in Murad's case included building and repairing harmonicas) but in the fall of 1946 they landed a steady gig at Club Vodvil in Chicago.

Armenian, Pole, Italian, Pals, Blew Their Way to Fame and Fortune

The Milwaukee Journal (front page) - Milwaukee, Wisconsin - October 17, 1947

By Don Dornbrook, of the Journal Staff

"There's no business like show business."

A little more than a year ago the Harmonicats were just three more guys playing mouth organs in a Chicago night club. Then they made their first record, "Peg O' My Heart,"



an old tune bigtime artists had vainly tried to revive for years. It was the record company's first record, too.

The rest is musical history. Since then more than 1,400,000 copies of that record have been sold. When a record passes the 400,000 sales mark it's going great. The Harmonicats, now at a Milwaukee theater, have had three Hollywood offers -- plus requests for radio work and personal appearances. They went into the Oriental Theater in Chicago for a one week engagement; they were held over for four. A two week stint at New York's Roxy was stretched to five. At the Hippodrome in Baltimore they held over five days with a completely new show -- an unusual occurrence in show business.

After the first million records had been sold no less than 17 other record companies copied it. The Harmonicats sent every one a polite "thank you" note, pointedly pointing out that they call themselves the Harmonicats, "not the Copycats."

Jerry Murad, 28 year old Chicagoan who organized the group in 1944, got the idea for making a record, even at the start. Jerry wanted to use an echo chamber -- used to create eerie effects in radio murder mysteries. He figured that if the boys played into a wall the sound would be reflected into the mic; that it would be the echo -- not the music itself -- which would be recorded.

He went to a number of established record companies with his brain child, but they wanted to charge too much. At this stage Murad was willing to pay a company to record the Harmonicats as a means of getting bookings. Then he met Bill Putnam, president of Universal Transcription Co. Uni-

(Continued on p.5)

HARMONICA BIOGRAPHY (from p.4)

versal was a Chicago firm which specialized in recording speeches and radio shows for small fees. The \$25 the Harmonicats had raised by pooling their resources was not enough, said Putnam, but he was willing to foot the entire \$108 bill himself -- for a half interest in the receipts from the sale of the first 1,000 records.

The Harmonicats then cut five records -- including "Peg O' my Heart." The hit tune took the boys 20 minutes to make. Putnam was so enthusiastic about the record he gave one to Eddie Hubbard, a Chicago disk jockey. After Eddie had played it on his program one night, he got so many calls the first 1,000 records were sold in the next two days. Bill Putnam realized he had a hit on his hands. But he had paid an established record company, Mercury, to make "Peg." There wasn't much in that for him. If only he could make his own records like hot cakes he could sell them the same way. People were crying for "Peg."

So Putnam took his \$300 share of the proceeds from the 1,000 records and all the money he could scrape up and borrow from friends -- some \$50,000 -- and formed the Vitacoustic Recording Co. just to make Harmonicat "Peg O' My Heart" records. He also set up three factories to press platters.

Today his firm, now called Universal Recording Co., is worth \$1,500,000. Putnam figures he has another hit in the Harmonicats' revival of "I Love You," from the play, "Little Jesse James." In three weeks he has sold 70,000 "I Love You" records. Plans are afoot to revive the play because of the success of the tune's revival. Putnam also will make records of the Ralph Marterie band. Marterie, former trumpeter with Harry James, Paul Whiteman and other name bands, is Putnam's idea of "the Dave Rose of the middle west."

The echo chamber technique of recording, incidentally, is being used extensively by other record companies, now. Jerry Murad started something and the echo hasn't died out yet.

Murad, leader of the trio, was born in Constantinople, Turkey of Armenian parentage. He came to America at 6,

learned to play the harmonica at 9. His father wanted him to be a carpet maker but at Chicago's Steinmetz high school he joined the Harmonica Club. Here he met Al Fiore, destined to become the trio's funny man. Then came the war. Jerry enlisted in the Marines; Al wanted to to join him but was refused -- he weighs 265 pounds.

While stationed in New York Jerry met Don Les, who was playing with Borrah Minevitch's Harmonica Rascals. Jerry was later discharged from the Marines; he, too, joined Minevitch. A couple of years later -- in 1944 -- Jerry and Don left Minevitch. They found Al and formed a trio -- the Harmonicats.

Their first booking was a St Louis burlesque house. Their reception was less than terrific. For a long time they had to disband after each booking and find other work. Jerry would go back to carpet making and repairing harmonicas; Al would take a flier at shoe making; and Don would work as a shipping clerk at Goldblatt's department store in Chicago.

In the fall of 1946 they wangled a four week engagement at a Chicago night spot. By then they had a neat arrangement of "Peg O' My Heart." They tried it on the customers. They were held over 16 weeks; then they made their first record.

In addition to repairing harmonicas -- he fixed 'em for Larry Adler, John Sebastian, Carl Freed and Charles Newman -- Jerry designs and makes his own instruments. Al Fiore, 24, the fat boy, plays a 30 inch harmonica. Fans get quite a kick out of him making like a hungry man with a huge cob of corn on "Harmonica Boogie." He's a Chicago boy of Italian parentage.

Bespectacled Don Les was born in Lorain, Ohio, of Polish parents, 29 years ago. He was born blind, but an operation restored his sight when he was 12. When he was still in grammar school a pal dared him to learn to play the mouth organ. Three months later, after nightly practice in bed (under blankets so as not to disturb his family and neighbors) he had mastered his trumpet style harmonica. Don plays the bass harmonica with the trio and takes hot jazz choruses on a small 50-cent mouth organ.

* * * * *

Invitation is made to any club member who has not yet had their harmonica biography published! At some time, it is our intention to make a booklet of all the past bios and it will surely be a great remembrance of our fellow club members. Please contact the editor for instructions or assistance.

SOLUTION(S) TO “HISTORY MYSTERY”

Reprinted from *The REED* – May 2005 issue of the newsletter of the Garden State Harmonica Club Submitted by Sidney Wolff

Who says nobody reads *The REED*? When we pointed out, in the April issue, that a “Mouth Organ” had been mentioned in the eighteenth century, harmonica great Stan Harper picked up on it, and sent us the following:

The “Free Reed” (“isovibrant reed” – one that vibrates on three sides) was invented around the 5th millennium in China, by the Emperor Nyn Kwa, in an instrument called the “Sheng.” This was a hollowed gourd in which about 15 bamboo tubes were inserted. Most of the tubes had an isovibrant metal reed. The gourd’s stem was also hollowed out and acted as a mouthpiece. Each “pipe” had a hole near the bottom that you covered with your fingers. Upon blowing and releasing your fingers, the air in the pipes equalized and the pipe sounded. The instrument was made to resemble the mythical bird, the “Phoenix”; the non-playing pipes were used to increase the resemblance to a bird’s tail. The instrument is still made. In China it’s carried in funerals. It is also still made in India, in the Himalayas. Some are 10 feet tall.

The Sheng was brought to Europe about 1750 by a French Jesuit.

The Harmonica proper was developed by Friederich Buschmann, who put a few reeds on a small plate and then laid it over a cut-out wooden block. He took out patents in Vienna in 1821-22.

The “mouth organ” that was described in the 1750s had to be a Sheng. (See “History Mystery” in *The REED* for April, 2005.)

Thanks for that great and informative writeup, Stan. We now belatedly recall that Cham-Ber Huang showed us a Sheng ages ago!

By the way, another friend of ours – not a harmonica player – suggested the following:

The “mouth organ” mentioned might have been some sort of pan pipe, which does work very much like a full-scale pipe organ and could be thought of as a mouth-operated version thereof, especially to a German unfamiliar with the English definition of “mouth organ.” The pan pipe is prominently employed in Mozart’s opera “The Magic Flute” [“die Zauberflöte”].)



Sheng photos courtesy of GHC member Tony Wilbraham

GHC EVENTS CALENDAR

WEEKLY EVENTS

Tuesday evening meetings at Rock Hill Baptist Church, 9125 Manchester, St. Louis, MO 63144:

- 6:30 PM - Blues Group, led by Louise Cook — Everyone welcome
- 7:00 PM - First Tuesday of month: Business Meeting — Everyone welcome
- All other Tuesdays: Band Rehearsal — Everyone welcome
- 8:15 PM - Open Mic — Everyone welcome

GIGS AND OTHER EVENTS

- 7/7/2005 (Thu) 10:00 AM — MEAA Senior Center: 14535 Manchester Rd.--From highway 141 go West Past Baxter Rd.. After you pass Walgreen drug store, turn right at the second driveway. The place is in the back of the building. We've been there before
- 7/13/2005 (Wed) 7:00 PM — Willows at Brooking: 211 South Woods Mill Rd. St. Louis, MO 63017 -- Take Hgw. 40 (I-61) West to Hwh 141. get off to the right. At stop sign turn right and to Conway Rd.-- turn left. Go to the light and turn right. Go about 1/4 mile and you will see a large Bldg. This is it. Please note: This is a small area and small group. She asked that we hold the group to a max of 10.
- 7/25/2005 (Mon) 8:00 PM — Prime Timers: Immaculate Conception Church at 2300 Church Rd., Arnold, MO 63010. Take Hwy. 55 South to Hwy. 141 at Arnold/ Fenton exit. Turn right on Hwt 141 and go to Church Rd.. Left on Church Rd. You can also get there from Hwy 40 and East on 141.
- 8/11/2005 (Thu) 7:00 PM — Garden Villas South: 13457 Tesson Ferry (Hwy 21)--on Highway I-270 going South, get off to your right onto Tesson Ferry. Go right. At top of incline at stop sign go right (East) to the address.
- 8/16/2005 (Tue) — SPAH 2005 Convention - Kansas City — thru 8/20 (Sat)
- 9/17/2005 (Sat) 2:00 PM — St. Richard's Picnic: Going North on Lindbergh Blvd., pass Olive St. Rd., go to the red light at Schuetz Rd.; take a left at Schuetz Rd. and go to 11223 Schuetz; turn left into the church grounds.
- 10/6/2005 (Thu) 7:00 PM — Gambrell Gardens: #1 Strecker Rd. -- Ellisville, MO 63011 -- Take Manchester Rd. West from I-270 (or Hwy. 141 South to Manchester) about 1 mile beyond Clarkson Rd. (hwy 340) and it is the large Building on the corner of Strecker and Manchester.
- 10/27/2005 (Thu) 7:30 PM — St. Bernadette 50+ Club: 68 Sherman Rd., St. Louis, MO 63125 (Take I-270 South--Get off at Telegraph Rd. -- Go left toward the City--Turn right on Sherman Rd--Go about 2 miles to 68 Sherman Rd. and the Church)
- 11/13/2005 (Sun) 2:30 PM — Garden Villas South: 13457 Tesson Ferry (Hwy 21)--on Highway I-270 going South, get off to your right onto Tesson Ferry. Go right. At top of incline at stop sign go right (East) to the address.
- 12/8/2005 (Thu) 2:15 PM — Florissant Valley Community College: 3400 Pershall Road -- Performing in Student Center --Multipurpose room off of Highway I-270 at West Florissant Rd.
- 12/16/2005 (Fri) 8:00 PM — St. Albans Senior Golf: St. Albans Country Club--Go west on Manchester Rd. pass Clarkson Rd and pass Highway 109. Continue until you reach Highway T. At that point turn right and go about 2 miles. You will see the Club.
- 12/19/2005 (Mon) 6:00 PM — Parkside Meadows: 59 Randolph Dr. St Charles MO 63301
- 5/7/2006 (Sun) 12:30 PM — Seniors' Celebration: Parkway Baptist Church--12465 Olive St. Blvd.--On the corner of Olive and Ross. From I-270, go West a quarter of a mile pass TGIF restaurant to the next stop light. The Church should be on the right



CHRISTMAS IN JULY
MID-YEAR PARTY
July 5, 2005

