North Georgia Foothills
Dulcimer Association, Inc.

Foothills Footnotes

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Mistletoe Jam
A Recap

There could not have been a better January weekend to have the annual Mistletoe Jam. It warmed up and the sun came out . . . just beautiful! The views from the beach house window looking out over one of Lake Thurmond's coves were stunning. Visitors were even able to use the patio this year for some demo dulcimer strumming.

A small group showed up for jamming Friday evening, with the rest filing in early Saturday morning and throughout the day. Sunday morning was filled with the music of hymns. A little more than 100 people came through, some playing, some just day tripping to listen to the music.

So, if you missed Mistletoe this year, you missed a good time. Mark it on your calendar now for January 2017 . . . it is always over Martin Luther King, Jr. weekend.

Dulcimer Fast Track∆
Case 2: Having Trouble Tuning?
by Gwen Caeli

"Why does my dulcimer sound out of tune, even though I use my electronic tuner?" asks the bewildered player. Tuning is a part of dulcimer playing and building where both art and science intersects. There can be several causes for sounding out of tune, one of which we will explore here

continued on page 2

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All other newsletter-related matters, including material intended for publication, should be directed to **Barbara Joe** at the email address listed in the above column. The deadline for publication submissions for the March issue is **February 22, 2016 at 6:00 p.m**. *Foothills Footnotes* is published monthly by the North Georgia Foothills Dulcimer Association, Incorporated.

Dulcimer Fast Track∆

continued from page 1

(more to come in ***Dulcimer Fast Track: Case 3***). It is called 'musical temperament', a system of tuning that slightly compromises the pure intervals of 'just intonation' in order to fit the dulcimer's system of fret placement. There are 12 musical tones in a full octave, arranged in 12 *half step intervals* allowing instruments to play in any key (as in the 'chromatic'-scaled piano with black /white keys, guitar, banjo and mandolin). The dulcimer uses 8 of those musical tones, arranged in *whole step intervals*, called 'diatonic' scale, forcing us to play in limited keys. In exploring musical temperament, we learn that it is impossible for dulcimers and other instruments to be mathematically and theoretically absolutely true in a tuning (pure with no disharmony or sourness).

As dulcimer players, we might hear this as being out of tune. Through the centuries as instruments were developed, different temperament remedies were also developed to temper false intervals in the instruments. 'Musical temperament' refers to a number of systems used to subdivide an octave in order to get the correct pitch frequencies (sound vibrations per second) of the needed musical tones for varying instruments. Each system remedy slightly shifts a fraction of a tone onto the next pitch, so that everything will be in sync at the end of the octave. This is all done with mathematical equations multiplying a vibrating string's length ratio by a pre-determined fractional ratio. There are many charts of mathematical calculations that generate ratios for each system. Four main temperament systems were used over the centuries:

- Pythagorean tuning
- Just intonation
- Mean-tone temperament
- Equal temperament

If your ears or tuner indicate a sour note, one a bit sharp or flat on any string at any fret, it could be the temperament and fret placement of your dulcimer is slightly off. If one of the pitches was adjusted slightly incorrectly, even by 0.5 Hz, you will be out of phase by a small margin and the string will vibrate outside of the frequency of the other strings. If you are buying a dulcimer, it is a good idea to check each string at every fret with an electronic tuner.

It all started in the sixth century when the inquisitive Pythagoras walked in front of a blacksmith's shop and heard variations of sound pitches emanating from the different weights of striking hammers on the anvil. Curious as to why different weights caused lower and higher sounds, he soon discovered 'intervals' of sound, known as 'pitches.' The intervals of sound on mountain dulcimer are created when pressing the strings in the interval spaces between the frets. Pythagoras was one of the first mathematical thinkers and his discovery of string lengths divided by simple musical intervals gave him the moniker 'the father of music.'

continued on page 5

About The Tablature . . .

The tablature from last month is being republished due to errors in the tab. Marianne Wurtele writes: "The song came to me one night in Arkansas, watching fireflies that climbed exceptionally high, but never approached the height of the white stars high in the black sky. I recalled my sister's comment as a teenager to the effect that she wished she could press her face against the black velvet that the stars were embedded in, and I imagined the fireflies having the same wish."

Marianne grew up in Florida but spent every summer on the Blue Ridge Parkway. It is there that she came to love folk craft and mountain music, and was introduced to the mountain dulcimer when her father gave her a dulcimer kit to build for her 19th birthday. She moved to Texas after college to work for Texas Instruments, lived in that state for 20 years, Arkansas for seven years, and has lived in North Georgia now for eight years. She is a member of the Allatooners Satellite Group.

Black Velvet Night

Marianne Wurtele

TabEdited by
Marianne Wurtele

Page 1 / 2

25
26
27
28
29
D
A
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Dulcimer Fast Track∆

continued from page 2

If you divide a string in half between the bridge and the nut, you have a mathematical ratio of 2:1. Divide that in half and you have 3:2, divide that in half . . ., etc. This is a simplistic view of how we get intervals of frets on the dulcimer. If you have a longer dulcimer where the 'vibrating string length' from the bridge to the nut (known as VSL) may be 28", 29" or more, the intervals between your frets will each be longer. If you have smaller hands or shorter fingers, it might be difficult to reach into those intervals to form some chords, a shorter instrument might fit you better.

A very knowledgeable dulcimer friend, Howie Mitchell (see previous **Dulcimer Fast Track: Case 1**) introduced me to intervals and musical temperaments. His understanding of the science of music far exceeded mine and he was kind enough to expand my knowledge base. He wrote, "It was just wonderful to see you again . . . it's hard to grab much time for visiting during these dulcimer workshops, but I think we succeeded quite well!" In 2000, Howie sent me his white paper entitled, "A Brief and Relatively Simple Discussion of Musical Temperament, as Might Be Applied to Fretted Stringed Instruments, Especially Those of the Plucked Dulcimer."

Sample string divisions (can be divided many ways)	**2:1** (7th fret dulcimer)	**Perfect octave** (halfway point on your dulcimer's length, where you find the best 'harmonics')
	3:2 (4th fret dulcimer)	**Perfect 5th** (in DAD tuning you are tuned in fifths or 1-5-8, DAA tuning is 1-5-5)

The Evil Metronome

by President, John Shawhan

I have been experimenting with the proper way to use a metronome to improve my rhythm. I found the metronome dates back to the early 9th century with a patent in 1815. Most of us already know most humans do not play music at an exact tempo. I remember reading one of the ways Earl Scruggs taught his son banjo was to have both of them start at the front porch picking a tune and walking around their house in opposite directions and rejoining at the back porch to check timing. He found the rhythm was not an exact tempo but an expressive tempo based on the inflections of the music. I have also heard Metronome Time is not the same as Musical Time. This is expressed in a book on metronome technique written by Frederick Franz in 1947. To sum it up, Franz understood metronome technique as playing along with the metronome and not in an exact tempo with the metronome. I have experience both the mechanical dilemma resulting from too much dependence on the precise nature of the metronome tempo making the music sort of mechanical to the other end of the spectrum of suffering from the tempo wandering far away from satisfactory musical time. Most of us know that a good performance is full of small retardations and accelerations of tempo. We often refer to that phenomena as feeling. The technical name is harmonic structure. The dilemma each of us faces is how to develop a tempo that allows the expressive flow of the music. My experience has shown me when I am in tempo with the metronome, I do not hear the clicks of the metronome but when I vary from the tempo of the metronome, the clicks become more distinguishable. That lets me know how close I am to a set tempo but allows for the subtle tempo deviations to make the music that makes it most enjoyable.

Spotlight on Satellites

Land of Waterfalls Dulcimer Players

This is the month when some of our folks hit the road for warmer weather so the group is spending January and February playing a list of new music and finding which pieces are workable for the group. Lots of Irish music in anticipation of some playouts in March.

The beginner/novice players are gearing up to play out each month at a local nursing home playing lots of sing along pieces and familiar music. Two of the club members attended Lorinda Jones' class at Unicoi and brought back her book of songs for seniors which will be helpful in future planning.

Frettin' On Faith

The Frettin' On Faith dulcimer group played for their meal on Jan. 14! The event was at Morris Hill Baptist in Chattanooga and the performance included old fiddle tunes and old timely gospel songs. The audience loved all the old songs and helped the group sing as well. Last year it was cancelled because of ice on roads, but thankfully it

continued on page 6

Spotlight on Satellites

Frettin' On Faith

continued from page 5

was good weather this time! Several of the group were picked as judges for a soup tasting contest, which they really enjoyed! The Fretters love playing here!

Yonah Pickers

Following the whirlwind of Christmas performances, the Yonah Pickers is enjoying returning to their regular schedule. While they had great fun with all the special Christmas music, they have also enjoyed returning to some of their all-time favorite music and weekly practices. At a recent practice, the group was delighted to have 26 members in attendance!

Changes are happening. They have decided to change their time on their Monday practices to 2:00–4:00 at the same location. Other changes are underway. New music is being explored based on member suggestions and familiar songs are being expanded with special attention to harmonies and staging.

The newest member of their group brings the foundation sound of the autoharp to the ever developing and expanding sound of the group. At a recent performance, several different instruments were highlighted to the delight of the audience. These and various embellishments combined with audience participation bring great joy to audience and performers alike. One of the members of a respite care program has a beautiful voice and had a career in music instruction. She too was highlighted as a member of the group came and sat with her as she sang into the mic. With the lyrics in front of her, she sang the entire song! This group is always sensitive to the requests they receive. They have recently added four new songs based on numerous requests from audiences. This sensitivity is also reflected in their intragroup support.

If you find yourself in the area on a practice day, you are always welcome to join in. For more information about anything in this article please contact bswhitmire@windstream.net.

Hilltop Strummers

With summer behind us, the Hilltop Strummers have published a new winter playlist. A lot of opportunities are available here.

The club continues to welcome newcomers and offer special help to accelerate the learning process to new players.

The Hilltop Strummers are busy with play outs including Bascomb UMC, Woodstock, Georgia, and the Canton Moose Club, just to name a couple for the first quarter.

The Hilltop Hammers are on a hiatus due to two members running off to Florida to stay warm for the winter and one member suffering a broken hand. The club should be back in true form by mid March.

Visitors are welcome, so please check www.hilltopstrummers.com for additional information and meeting times.

Gainesville Strummers Now Gold Country Players

Changes have taken place in Gainesville. The Gainesville Strummers Satellite has made a name change and a leadership change. The Gainesville Strummers are now the **Gold Country Players**. The new leader will be Ro Johnson. Her contact information is goldcountryplayers@gmail.com. It was a challenge to come up with something original, but as 'there is gold in them thar hills,' the group felt it would be appropriate. Bob Weaver has retired from the role of head honcho after guiding the group through the transition and Ro Johnson has taken his place.

All other aspects will remain the same, with weekly sessions offering beginner lessons, jamming and time to spend focusing on new tunes. If anyone would like more information, or knows of someone who would, the email address is goldcountryplayers@gmail.com The group is looking ahead with enthusiasm; 2016 is going to be another exciting year.

Upcoming Events

March 4-6, 2016

Mountain Dulcimer Workshop. Long time mountain dulcimer player and instructor Charlie Mink will be at the Wildflower all weekend to provide instruction on playing the mountain dulcimer. Friday night will consist of an introduction/meet-and-greet with finger foods, sweets, and drinks provided. On Saturday, Charlie will play for breakfast before providing group and individual instruction. In the afternoon, the group will take a tour of the McSpadden dulcimer shop, led by owner and dulcimer maker Jim Wood. There will be a final session on Sunday before you leave. Available for beginners and intermediate players.

Brand new? Just want to try it out? A dulcimer will be provided for you during the workshop.

Times/hours/schedule: All weekend

Cost: $100 plus room rate

Website: http://thewildflowerbandb.com/event-specials/#dulcimer

Contact: Wildflower Bed & Breakfast On the Square. Call: (870) 269-4383

Email: innkeeper@thewildflowerbandb.com

More to Come!

The Foothills Dulcimer Club of Shelby, NC

presents the

17th Annual Mid-Winter Dulcimer Festival

March 5, 2016

Workshops: 9 a.m. Concert: 5 p.m.

Shelby, NC

Featuring Jeff Hames, Joe Collins, Bradley Ellis and a host of others to be announced

Pre-register and SAVE!!!

If you preregister*, the cost for the entire day is $43. The price includes 4 great workshops of your choice, two concerts, and a wonderful lunch. Put it on your calendar now and look for more information coming soon at www.jcdulcimer.com.

Preregistration period ends on February 26, and preregistration is not complete until payment is received. Registration after February 26 is $52 and does not include lunch.

You will soon be able to preregister by credit card at www.jcdulcimer.com

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SATELLITE	AREA	FREQUENCY	TIME	LOCATION	CONTACT
Allatooners	Kennesaw, GA	Monthly, 2nd Mon.	6:30-9:00	First United Lutheran Church of Kennesaw 3481 Campus Loop Rd (formerly Frey Lake Rd.)	Peggy Martin 678-478-2456 martin.pb@comcast.net www.allatooners.org Satellite Scribe: Diana (DeeDee) Nash muffyqnash@yahoo.com
AlphaFretters					Not Currently Meeting
Bent Tree Strings	Jasper, GA	Monthly, 4th Thurs.	2:30-4:30	Club Tamarack Dining Room in Bent Tree. Bent Tree is 6 miles east of Jasper off Cove Road.	Carol Lesley 770-893-2019 Carol.Lesley@tds.net
Blue Ridge	Blue Ridge, GA	Bimonthly 1st & 3rd Mondays	1:00-3:00	Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church Hwy. 515 at Forge Mill Road	Anne Bailey 706-632-3854 Teri Godfirnon terig@windstream.net
Dalton Dulcimers	Dalton, GA	Weekly Wednesdays	2:30	First United Methodist Church 500 S. Thornton Ave.	Sherry Patterson 706-278-7256 jspatts@windstream.net
Dixieland Dulcimers	Griffin, GA	Weekly-Mondays	10:00	Crestview Baptist Church fellowship hall, Griffin, GA	Donna Harpe 770-228-5597 phillip_harpe@bellsouth.net John Garret 770-223-8405 jgsped@yahoo.com Dave Graves 770-227-4890 drg636@gmail.com
Garden City Strummers	Evans, GA	Monthly, 3rd Mon.	6:00-8:00	4537 Glenda Lane Evans, GA 30809	Pat & Bill Colbert 706-860-3437 pogosbill@aol.com
Gold Country Players	Gainesville, GA	Weekly – Thurs. Beginners Everyone	 12:30 1:00-3:00	First Baptist Church Room 208, 751 Green Street, N.W.	Ro Johnson goldcountryplayers@gmail.com
Gwinnoters	Lawrenceville, GA	Monthly, 3rd Sun.	1:30-4:30	Fairview Presbyterian 857 Duluth Hwy. (Hwy. 120)	Gwen Caeli 678-863-4342 gwencaeli@gmail.com Linda Depkin suzie.d@mindspring.com
Hammered Dulcimer	Support Group for Hammered Dulcimer Inquiries				Agene Parsons 423-718-5730 ageneparsons@gmail.com
Hart String-Strummers	Hartwell, GA	Monthly – 1st Mon. Monthly – 3rd Sat.	12:30 12:30	Member's Home Hartwell Art Center	Call Mary Alice Ray at 706-371-0176 for directions to the Monday meeting or for more information
Hilltop Strummers	Woodstock-Canton, GA	Weekly – Tues.	1:30-3:30	Canton First UMC 930 Lower Scott Mill Road, Canton, GA Exit 16 at I-575	Bob & Sandra Hange 770-265-5308 bhange65@gmail.com
In Town Down Home	Atlanta, GA	Monthly, 3rd Sat.	2:00	Tenth Street United Methodist Church 425 Tenth Street, NW	Cathy Watts 770-377-8734 chwatts@mindspring.com Rudine Davis H 404-250-0605; C 404-790-7179
LaGrange Dulcimer Troupers	LaGrange, GA	Weekly, Thurs. mornings Weekly, Tues.	10:45-12:15 11:30	First United Methodist Church for jamming & prac. Beginning classes	Ann and Perry Wilder 706-882-5027 perrylwilder@bellsouth.net
Land of Waterfalls Dulcimer Players	Brevard & vicinity, NC	1st, 2nd & 3rd Wed.-Practice 4th Wed.-Playouts	1:00-2:30	St Philip's Episcopal Church 256 East Main St Brevard, NC	Mary Sherwood 828-966-9628 sherwood@comporium.net Ann Brown 828-877-5506
Middle Georgia Dulcimer Club	Macon, GA	Monthly, 2nd Sat.	1:00 Lesson 2:00-4:00 Jam	Young America School of Music 6361 Zebulon Road	Barbara Stevens 478-457-6539 gbs468@aol.com Karen Stewart 478-954-6759 galadybug53@gmail.com
Mountain Sounds	Blairsville, GA	Bimonthly 2nd & 4th Tues.	1:30-3:30	Senior Center	Roxanne Gill roxannegill47@gmail.com
Oconee Belles & Beaus	Salem, SC	Bimonthly, 2nd Thurs. 4th Tues.	2:00-4:00 1:00-3:00	Keowee Key (Routes 130 & 183 So. of Salem, SC) Activity Center, Whitewater Room	Joan Krech 864-944-7094 joankrech@bellsouth.net Bonnie Lamarand 864-888-3328 lmrnd@att.net
Peach Pickers	Peachtree City, GA	Monthly, 2nd. Sun.	3:00-5:00	Peachtree City Library	Pat Hobson 770-461-2522 pohobson@gmail.com Wanda Dawkins 678-899-0453 hrwmdawk@yahoo.com
Sonic Sounds Dulcimer Club (EDIMGIAFAD)	Centerville, GA	Weekly, Thurs.	6:00-6:30 Lesson 7:15-Jam	1st United Methodist Church 600 N. Houston Lake Rd.	Laneah Maddox 478-971-8223 912-687-3621 laneahmaddox@yahoo.com http://wrmusic.tripod.com/sonicsoundsdulcimerclub
Whistle Stop Pickers	East Alabama/ West Georgia (Auburn-Opelika area)	Weekly, Sat.	1:00-3:00	Lee County Historical Society Museum 6500 Stage Road (Hwy 14) Loachapoka, AL	Allen & Deborah McCord 334-821-1301 334-703-3646 (cell) mccord0304@gmail.com
Yonah Pickers	Cleveland, GA Clarkesville, GA	Bimonthly 2nd & 4th Sun. Bimonthly-Beginners 1st & 3rd Mon. Bimonthly-Everyone 1st & 3rd Mon.	2:00-4:00 1:00-1:45 2:00-4:00	First Presbyterian Church of Cleveland Bethlehem Baptist Church in Clarkesville	Lynn McCollum 706-499-3212 Lynnmccollum50@gmail.com Email lynnmccollum50@gmail.com for details.

NGFDA sanctions these groups as satellites, but each one sets its own agenda, meeting place and procedures. Last Updated 01/22/2016

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Please start/renew my membership in NGFDA, including a subscription to the monthly *Foothills Footnotes* newsletter. Tab books available to members only, one copy per member at a cost of $10 (if mailed, add $2 mailing fee). Individual membership: $20. Family membership: $30. Please make checks payable to NGFDA. Dues, according to NGFDA bylaws, are renewable each November regardless of when you join.

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Home Phone_____ E-mail address*:_____

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Playing Level (check one): ☐ Beginner ☐ Intermediate ☐ Advanced

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Do you want to order a Tab Book? (check one) ☐ Yes / ☐ No

Please add $12.00 for Tab Book and postage

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