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**ROUBADOOR**

Alternative country, Americana, roots, folk,  
blues, gospel, jazz, and bluegrass music news

FREE



February 2005

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Vol. 4, No. 5

SPECIAL TRIBUTE ISSUE

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but in looking outward together in the same direction."*

— Antoine de Saint Exupéry



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Sun 6 • Bad Credit  
Mon 7 • Open Mic  
Tues 8 • Comedy Night W/ Mark Serritella  
Wed 9 • Radio Free Earth, The Natters  
Thurs • 10 Ember, Biddy Bums  
Fri • 11 Scarlet Symphony, Smug  
Sat 12 • Alfred Howard and the K23 Orchestra  
Sun 13 • Just John, Pete Stewart  
Mon 14 • Open Mic  
Tues 15 • Comedy Night W/ Serritella  
Wed 16 • Quincy, Stephen Clare  
Thur 17 • Acoustic Underground-Keltic Karma with Fred Benedetto and Chris Vitas Plus KEV  
Fri 18 • Susie Suh, Gregory Paul, J. Turtle  
Sat 19 • Bobby Rock Bio Tribe, Chasing Paper  
Sun 20 • Jose Sinatra  
Mon 21 • Open Mic  
Tues 22 • Comedy Night W/ Serritella  
Wed 23 • Arman, Anna Troy  
Thurs 24 • Campaign for Quiet  
Fri 25 • Robin Henkel  
Sat 26 • 7th Day Buskers CD Release  
Sun 27 • Gregory Page  
Mon 28 • Open Mic

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# welcome mat



## Remembering Lyle and Ellen Duplessie

It has been a year since the passing of Ellen Duplessie (February 24, 2004), one of the founders of this publication and, really, the one who conceived of the idea. The breast cancer, which had been diagnosed years before, finally claimed her life. Four months after her death (June 17, 2004), her husband, Lyle, died of a heart attack unexpectedly while enjoying a day at the beach with his children. As publishers of the San Diego Troubadour, we have dedicated this issue, one year later, to the Duplessies by inviting those who knew them to write a few words. It is but a small gesture for the kind of people they were, people who gave so much to their family, friends, and the community. (KJ and EA)

### 8

#### Kent Johnson Friend, Troubadour Co-Founder

##### Troubadour Beginnings

It was a very special time for music during the three-year period when Java Joe's was located on the corner of Bacon and Santa Monica in Ocean Beach. Many of the finest local singer-songwriters converged there, bringing inspiration and aspiration that infected any and all who would hang out after hours, playing music or pool or just practicing interpersonal communication. I became acquainted with Derek Duplessie and his mother, Ellen, then. Ellen and I drew to one another immediately.

On December 30, 2001, Derek and I sat in the back room while Steve Poltz graced the stage. It so happened that Derek turned 12 years old at midnight that night. As I congratulated him, I said, "Now I have to give you 10 bucks. It was a special moment that continued for the next three New Year's eves, increasing 10 bucks more each year, a small gesture for such a good kid. As Ellen and I got to know each other better, I mentioned that my wife, Liz Abbott, had a duo that specialized in Byrds' music. Ellen said, "Oh, my Lyle loves the Byrds. You should call him and get together at our house and play." Well, Liz and I started singing together when (Byrds founding member) Gene Clark died. We both loved his original songs and were obsessed about learning more about him. He became a catalyst for forming our singing duo, Hanna's Parents, a clever name we came up with, or so we thought.

The first time Lyle and I got together and jammed on Byrds' songs, I related how much I loved Gene Clark's music and Lyle told me how he met Gene out in front of his house on Nautilus Street. Well, it turns out that Lyle got together with him a few times and got to know him. He even had a stack of photographs a foot high to prove it.

That was the beginning, although we didn't know it at the time, of a Byrds' tribute band that included former King Biscuit Blues Band virtuoso guitarist Gene Rochambeau and drummer-percussionist extraordinaire Randy Hoffman. Lyle played bass, Liz played tambourine, I played rhythm guitar, and we all sang a lot. We named the band, aptly, Fowl Play. We had all been such avid Byrds fans since the '60s,



Ellen and Lyle Duplessie

that it was really a special time for all of us to be able to play our favorite songs from our youth.

Call it fate, but a few nights after the day Lyle and I first jammed together, I was at Java Joe's when Ellen mentioned to me that she wanted to start a music publication called the San Diego Troubadour but didn't actually know how she was going to go about making it a reality. I said, "Well, you're in luck. My wife, Liz, is a graphic designer and knows all about publication layout. She is also an experienced editor. I am a distribution expert, having delivered the Ken Cinema film calendars for the past 20 years." Her eyes lit up.



Lyle and Ellen at the home of Liz Abbott and Kent Johnson celebrating the first issue of the San Diego Troubadour.

After introducing Lyle and Ellen to Liz, we talked about forming a partnership, and the *San Diego Troubadour* became a reality. The four of us developed a very special relationship over the next three years and the newspaper we started evolved into a valid respectable publication.

One year ago this month, Ellen developed severe respiratory problems from the chemotherapy she was undergoing to treat her breast cancer and died of cardiac arrest. Four months later, while surfing at Mission Beach with his children, Lyle suffered a heart attack. He came out of the water, sat down, and died. We were stunned then

and, frankly, we still are. To say we miss Ellen and Lyle terribly is an understatement. Words cannot express the sadness we feel. We joked when Lyle would call himself "keeper of the vision." He was also a wonderful writer and was especially knowledgeable about local music history — a thorough researcher and incredibly astute with his facts and details. During the few months following Ellen's death when I would go up to La Jolla to check the Troubadour p.o. box, I'd drop in to see Lyle and we'd go on long walks, sometimes for two hours or more. We'd talk and talk and discuss about every subject you could think of. He really wanted to remain positive and move on to another stage in his life. As a friend, business partner, and band member, I loved him dearly. He was a special guy.

I still see and hear Lyle and Ellen in my mind and also in their three very special children: Megan, Jenna, and Derek. The next generation, Ellen and Lyle's grandchild, Vega DeLeon, daughter of daughter Megan and her husband, Ben, just had her first birthday. Already an obvious music lover, she is undeniably a Duplessie. Lyle and Ellen would be proud.



#### Megan Duplessie DeLeon Daughter

##### The Upper Room

Trying to write something about my parents is a difficult task. There is so much to say, too much actually, which in some weird way makes me almost unable to say anything at all. Which story do I pick? Where do I even begin?

At the heart of our family were our parents. Like any great couple (i.e., Ricky and Lucy, Homer and Marge Simpson) they were best of friends, totally in love, and always up for an adventure. My dad was full of truth, faith, and righteousness. He was level headed, very intense, and completely content. My mom was all of these things as well but, at the same time, she always seemed to have one or two wild ideas rattling around in her head. Anybody who knew her will attest to

Continued on page 5.



### MISSION

To promote, encourage, and provide an alternative voice for the great local music that is generally overlooked by the mass media; namely the genres of alternative country, Americana, roots, folk, blues, gospel, jazz, and bluegrass. To entertain, educate, and bring together players, writers, and lovers of these forms; to explore their foundations; and to expand the audience for these types of music.

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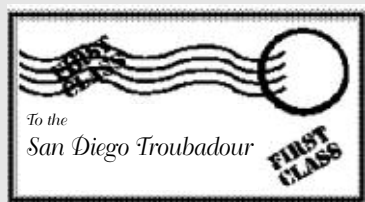
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### WRITE TO US!

We'd love to hear from you! Send your comments, feedback, and suggestions by email to: [sdtroubadour@yahoo.com](mailto:sdtroubadour@yahoo.com) or by snail mail to: San Diego Troubadour, P.O. Box 164, La Jolla, CA 92038-0164.



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Lou Curtiss

## Adams Ave. Roots Festival: The Beginnings

For the first 20 years the Adams Avenue Roots Festival was called the San Diego Folk Festival and for 17 of those years it was held on the campus of San Diego State University. Things started, for me at least, when I arrived at SDSU as a student in the fall of 1962. The previous summer a Folksong Society was organized by Michael Cooney so he could bring Sam Hinton out to the campus for a concert, and I was talking to Curtis Carlisle Bouterse, who I'd just met in an African history class, about the sad state of folk music in San Diego and how almost none of the really traditional and old-timey artists ever came our way.

We called a meeting of Michael's group, the Campus Organized Folksingers and Folksong Society, and were pleasantly surprised when some 50 or 60 people showed up. For the next few years the Campus Folksong Society sponsored Tuesday meetings and Thursday hoots in the Rose Arbor behind Scripps cottage. We also assisted and encouraged a college-area book store (the Sign of the Sun on College Ave. near El Cajon Blvd.) to start a concert series of old time and traditional music. Among those the Sign brought to San Diego were Mississippi John Hurt, Jean Redpath, Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee, Skip James, Ramblin' Jack Elliott, the New Lost City Ramblers, Jean Ritchie, Rosalie Sorrels, Bessie Jones, Hedy West, Fred McDowell, Rev. Gary Davis, Slim Critchlow, the Kentucky Colonels, Guy Carawan, and a host of others.

Some of the music at the bookstore began to spill over into the area coffee houses. This was the period of time Utah Phillips called "the great folk scare" and we were starting even then to talk about a folk festival.

## UCLA Folk Festival

In 1963, UCLA started a series of traditional folk festivals and our SDSU group went to them en masse. I guess those festivals more than anything else, which ran for the next three years, led to my involvement in a San

## Recordially, Lou Curtiss



Diego festival.

There was music around the clock. The concerts ran until midnight followed by song swaps until 3 a.m. I took it all in and stayed 'til the last note. Later, during the run of San Diego Folk Festivals, I would get into trouble with the sound and light people, trying to emulate the atmosphere and particularly the late hour of the UCLA concerts. I guess I was more energetic in those days. It seems easier today to stick to a schedule and shut down at 10 p.m.

D.K. Wilgus and Ed Pearl, owners of the Ash Grove in L.A. and organizers of the UCLA festivals, were my greatest inspiration. The artists I saw there included Clarence Ashley, Bill Monroe, the Stoneman Family, Maybelle Carter, Doc and Arnold Watson, the Moving Star Hall Singers, Son House, Carl T. Sprague, Doc Hopkins, the Blue Sky Boys, A.L. Lloyd, Gaither Carlton, Bukka White, Almeda Riddle, Clint Howard and Fred Price, Lightnin' Hopkins, Pete Seeger, Mance Lipscomb, Elizabeth Cotton, Jesse Fuller, and so many more. This was an inspiration, a model to build on, a dream.

By late 1965, folk music was on a bit of a downturn in San Diego. The UCLA festivals were no more, the number of area coffee houses had dropped to three or four, and the Sign of the Sun had moved to La Jolla to become the Unicorn Theater and discontinued its live music concerts. A folk festival at Cal Western University in Point Loma that year drew a modest crowd who came to hear Sam Hinton, Stu Jamieson, Hedy West, Bess Howes and the Kentucky Colonels bluegrass group, but for the most part you had to go up to L.A. to a club like the Ash Grove or back East where they still had traditional music festivals.

## First Annual San Diego Folk Festival

I don't exactly remember where talk of the first San Diego Folk Festival began. It was probably in a conversation with Curt Bouterse and Carol McComb at the Blue Guitar (or in Carol's living room behind the Blue Guitar (located on Midway Drive at

that time), or possibly at one of those Folksong Society meetings at SDSU. Along the way I approached Gary Solbue (SDSU Associated Student Advisor) about money, and he came up with an organization that had to sponsor something to keep its charter.

That group was the SDS Associated Men's Students. They came up with \$350 to pay performers and another \$100 or so for posters and publicity. We spent \$250 on Bill Monroe and the Bluegrass Boys and the rest on the Possum Hunters String Band (Dave Polacheck and Graham, Ginnie, and Gurden Wickham), Sam Hinton, Stu Jamieson, Gil Turner, Sandy and Jeanie Darlington, and Kathy Larisch and Carol McComb. Bill Monroe played on Thursday night, and since the bus his regular band was riding in broke down in El Centro, Doug Dillard, Dean Webb, and Mitch Jayne (of The Dillardards) came down to back Bill and his regular guitar player on Friday night. Friday night's concert also featured Curt Bouterse, Wayne Stromberg, the Eddystone Singers (Walt Richards, Pat Rusconi, and Leslie Kapp), Ray Bierl, Cave Campbell, and Pam Ostergren. That first festival took place on May 11, 12, and 13 in SDSU's Peterson Gymnasium.

After we got the first festival under our belt, a group of us were looking for a project that was more year round. The result came in the form of Folk Arts Rare Records, which opened at its first location on July 31, 1967. Four partners had ideas for a shop that would sell records, traditional crafts, and sponsor concerts throughout the year between festivals. Along with that, our first non-profit group, the San Diego Folk Music foundation was formed to sponsor the concerts. In that first year we brought Peter Feldman and the Scragg Family as well as blues artists Mance Lipscomb and Bukka White and held "old wine in new bottles" concerts with Kathy Larisch and Carol McComb, the Blue String Grass Boys and some others. However, the original festival and shop by committee was starting to break up.

## Second Annual San Diego Folk Festival

In 1968 I took full ownership of Folk Arts Rare Records. That spring brought the second festival and some problems too. Merle Travis showed up for a series of workshops on Saturday and then disappeared. We found out 10 years later from Smokey Rogers that he had met Merle and they had gone down to Mexico to do some clubbing. We also booked bluesman Skip James who, as it turned out, didn't like airplanes and got off halfway to San Diego at a stopover in Kansas City and

took a bus home.

However, Hank Bradley made it down for his first appearance and even then showed promise toward being the finest Arthur Smith-style country fiddler alive, along with all the other things he plays as a member of the Balkan Kafe Orchestra today. Also appearing for the first time were folk-country songsters Larry Hanks and Mayne Smith, who dueted with Ray Bierl. Scottish singer Jean Redpath made it down, as did folk-blues singer guitarist Mitch Greenhill. Stud Jamieson brought down Bill Cunningham and Tom Luke for some fine old-timey string band stuff. Returning from year one were Kathy and Carol, the Possum Hunters, Sam Hinton, and Ray Bierl. Also appearing for the first time was long-time San Francisco Bay area folk-country songster Merritt Herring. We moved out of the gym and into the campus little theater and lab school auditorium. The second festival had a flavor all its own.

## Third Annual San Diego Folk Festival

By the third festival things were going in several different directions. Some of the committee wanted to turn it into a pop folk festival; others wanted you name it: bluegrass, international, blues, etc. We wound up with a bit of all of the above. The guy doing our festival tapes took off with them, never to be heard from again. Booking by committee brought us first-time appearances by Mississippi bluesman Sam Chatmon, Fresno old-timey mandolin man Kenny Hall, singer-songwriter Mary McCaslin, Dr. Humbeads New Tranquility String Band (with Mae Benford, Sue Draheim, and Will Spires), and country songsters Jim Ringer and Ron Tinkler. The festival, the first held in SDSU's brand new Aztec Center, also featured bluegrass band Aunt Dinah's Quilting Party, international group Chonguri, and returnees Larry Hanks, Ray Bierl, Hank Bradley, Pam Ostergren (who appeared in duet with Mary McCaslin), Stu Jamieson with Bill Cunningham and Tom Luke, Bessie Jones and the Georgia Sea Island Singers, and, as always, Sam Hinton.

## Fourth Annual San Diego Folk Festival

Festival number four was the first one I booked solo. Before then I had always had to answer to a committee. Now Gary Solbue decided that one person should be responsible and I was that person. This festival was the first to feature old-timey duo Ray and Ina Patterson from Woodland Park, Colorado, and U. Utah Phillips, the Golden Voice of the Great Southwest, a rumor in his own time and all that

stuff. Bessie

Jones and the Georgia Sea Island Singers returned and we had

Louisiana bluesman Robert Pete Williams, Houston Texas bluesman Weldon "Juke Boy" Bonner, Hollendale Mississippi bluesman Sam Chatmon, and Texas by way of San Diego bluesman Thomas E. Shaw. Mayne Smith and Mitch Greenhill had teamed up with Mark Spoelstra into a band called the Frontier Constabulary, and Kenny Hall, Ron Tinkler, and Jim Ringer now played together and called themselves the Sweets Mill String Band. The festival audience was growing and our budget was starting to reflect that growth. I was beginning to find out that you could book unknown performers or unknown kinds of music at a folk festival and still guarantee them a crowd of appreciative listeners. People were starting to trust my taste in music.

## Fifth Annual San Diego Folk Festival

Festival number five was the first that showed the results of quite a bit of field work. That year we reunited Cliff Carlisle and Wilbur Ball, who had last played together in a recording session for blues yodeler Jimmie Rodgers on June 15, 1931. The tune was "Lookin' for a New Mama." We also featured blues harmonica player and one-man-band Model T. Slim (Elmon Mickle) at the only music festival he ever worked. Jean Redpath was back with us and we featured a band called the Fat City String Band (Mac Benford, Walt Koken, and Bob Potts) who would shortly change their name to the Highlands String Band. Also making his first appearance at the fifth festival was Tom "Tomcat" Courtney who played with his long-time partner Henry Ford Thompson and also did a set with bluesman Phillip Walker, who brought his city blues band to the festival. It was the first festival to feature Virginia bluesman John Jackson who would come, fortunately for us all, many times more throughout his life and career.

And that's the first five of what was to become 20 and then 32 and hopefully a lot more. We'll write more about the earlier festivals and who was there next time around.

Although we just got through a rough year (2004) with the loss of Ellen, then Lyle Duplessie, a lot of good music has gotten us through the sad and hard times. And hopefully it will continue to do just that. Ellen and Lyle got us off the ground as a voice for the kinds of music they loved and we all continue to love. It's up to us to do what we can. Be good to each other.

Recordially,

Lou Curtiss



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## Remembering Lyle and Ellen Duplessie

continued from page 3.

MEGAN DUPLESSIE DELEON, CONT.

the fact that even if you thought her idea was absurd she would persist and could somehow persuade and convince you to go along (whether you wanted to or not).

I'm a person who likes a good comedy whereas those tear jerking chick-flick dramas are the last thing ever to enter my mind as so called enjoyment or entertainment. I could write something about my soft-hearted amazing father that would bring you tears but instead I chose to center this piece around my mom a bit more because she was a serious character, with a personality unlike any other.

My mom was a bit obsessive compulsive, a trait she passed down to all of us kids as my sister Jenna's husband and my husband can attest to.

Whatever she invested her time in or was interested in at one time or the other would consume my mother almost completely. So, during the mid '90s I began writing songs and singing in coffee shops as did my brother Derek. I don't know what she enjoyed more, the coffee or all the music that would come pouring out of these places, but whatever it was, she was hooked.

It took a little convincing, but it wasn't long before my dad was on board and the family became busy painting, building a stage, gathering art, and booking singer-songwriters to perform in our coffee house, which was called the Upper Room. Now, it would be a stretch to say that any of us were good at running a successful small business. Much of the coffee and pastries were given away to our customers because, after all, most of them were our friends. On top of that there were days that we just couldn't pull ourselves away from a beautiful day at the beach, so we just would not open (which is never a good idea if you're trying to make money, and I'm pretty sure that's why you open a business to begin with). The characters who came through our doors are a story all their own. Sometimes people would burn sage in the bathroom to cover up who knows what and when the sage was burning, my dad would panic, completely convinced people were "smoking dope in there."

One band that played there had a very nice looking lead singer who I met very briefly but would later come to be known as my husband. (As an interesting side note, my mom also met my husband, Ben, that night and was immediately convinced that he was the one for me. They only talked for a few minutes but somehow she just knew. A few years went by but my mom remained certain that he and I were meant to be. She persisted with this idea despite other relationships we both had, all of which were to become complete disasters, at least for me, but of course she already knew that.)

Eventually I decided to give her idea a chance so I asked the boy out. Within a week or two Ben and I were both rather pleased that I took her suggestion. I guess it just goes to show that mother always knows best.

The Upper Room was an amazing experience for all of us, marking a period of time that is now so distinct and one that I will never forget. It gave me

an outlet to express everything that was bottled up inside, which, at times, seemed more than I could bear. The vision my parents had for the Upper Room was to create a place where people could belong. A spot to come and rest regardless of who you were or what you had to give. Much too often the gifts people possess go unspoken or unheard. We have gifts that never make it out of our homes but remain locked inside our journals, our guitar cases, and our hearts. My parents knew this. They had an uncanny way of making people feel they belonged and that they were loved and worth more than words could ever express. I love my parents and miss them immeasurably but am truly thankful for every second I had with them and for all that they taught me. I am thankful for their great love of music, which leads me to where I am today, writing to all of you. I am grateful for the opportunity to share a small piece of our family history, knowing the more I share the more I will remember.



Lyle Duplessie, age 20



Ellen Owens, age 17

**Jim Wakefield**  
Friend, Bandmate

*Birds of a Feather*

In the early to mid-'80s, I rented a little beach bungalow at Windansea in La Jolla. I was programming computers and although it was like chewing on pebbles, I was stuck in the gig ... it paid the rent and La Jolla wasn't cheap then either. One day my landlady, Hope Owens, told me her daughter Ellen and son-in-law, Lyle, were moving back to La Jolla from Brawley and that Lyle was a musician, a bass player.

I was always strongly influenced by the Beatles and the Byrds, because being the age I am, they were the cool groups at the time. I was 17 when the Beatles hit the U.S. Although they were the ones to use the Ricky 12-string first, what really grabbed me enough to go buy an electric 12-string guitar (hey, wait, can't leave Dylan out) was the Byrds release of *Turn Turn Turn* and *Mr. Tambourine Man*. Those songs had this jingle-jangle thing that was compelling. I was always more interested in the 12-string, and when Dylan said he was influenced by 12-stringer Huddie Ledbetter, I went and bought a Smithsonian discography and album set compiled by Alan Lomax, the folk historian. I recommend listening to Huddie. He would keep such a beat going and play on top of it, a talent he developed playing solo for dances around the Texas-Louisiana border area. It was loud and strong and able to penetrate the din of a beer joint without amplification.

Well, Lyle and I were on the same page musically. He was seven years younger than I but had siblings and was ushered into the music. We started playing together as soon as he hit

town. We were next door neighbors, so it was quite easy and casual. We later added others. Then, we started a band called the Ravens, We weren't the coolest Byrds band going, just like ravens aren't the coolest birds, but the Eagles had already been

it all. But we did have our moments and I have some tapes that are fun to hear 20 years later. Occasionally Lyle would say, "Let me give you shun constructive criticism ...." and I would always laugh.

We grew. Lyle continued playing as did I along with our steel guitar buddy George, who loved to call Lyle Monterey Jack, alluding to his cheesy sound. And we all got better. Almost as a corollary, we began to age out of the time frame when it is reasonable to think something could happen in the realm of pop music of any genre. But I do feel that we got to a point

before Lyle passed on — he and George and I — and we could sound pretty good. But George became involved in making some of the finest steel guitars I have ever seen ([www.georgeboards.com](http://www.georgeboards.com)) and doesn't care about playing with bands very much. He just does his solo Hawaiian gig now and then.

I moved up into the mountains and began expressing myself musically by way of some quite unsophisticated country-folk songs that I love to write. I got away from computers and the viable living they provided and began to use my liberal arts background to write a few newspaper articles, music

reviews, advertisements, songs, and lyrics ... and to basically starve. But I had no regrets. I'd do it again in a minute. "Blowin' down the highway like a dixie cup" works for me. But I wish I had been free to partake in that impractical indulgence when I was young. Somehow I was burdened to do what seemed practical in the same way Lyle taught in the schools for decades. But to me, he was a musician first and foremost, and it is the only way I have ever thought of him over a span of more than 20 years.

As next door neighbors, we had many parallel interests. We went biking around, fished the surf, brought our catch home for Ellen to fry for our Friday night garage band practices, and had many a good time. He liked sports cars, too. We would talk cars and music and cars. One time he said he was going to get this new car coming out called a Miata. He got one of the first ones. We had to go to Indio to pick it up and he had me drive it home so he could look at it. It was in the days of those two-foot long video cameras, so I brought one along and filmed our trip to Indio going and coming back. He flipped that car off Wildcat Canyon Road ... and totaled it but didn't get a scratch. Got a red one to replace the white. I had this pretty cool '67 Jag with right hand drive and about that time my one other cool thing was a '66 Rickenbacker 360 12-string.

One Friday when I came home from work and was parking on Nautilus, Lyle runs up to me and says, "Jim, you won't believe who is coming to our practice

Continued on page 6.

## Why did the chicken cross the road?



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# parlor showcase



Lyle Duplessie and Ellen Owens, 1977

1977



Lyle and Ellen with Megan, Jenna on the way

1978



Lyle with Megan

1979



Megan with Ellen

1980



Ellen with one-year-old Jenna and Megan

1981

## Remembering Lyle and Ellen Duplessie

Continued from page 5.

JIM WAKEFIELD, CONT.

tonight: Gene Clark! He was walking by and I recognized him and started asking him questions and talking...he is great. He's coming!"

Well, Gene came that night and he came back again and again. When he was in town to play at the Belly Up, we would ask him to come stay the night if he needed to and he often would. We would play at Windansea after he had already played a gig. I will be remembering Gene forever as a genuine troubadour who loved to play. I also really liked him for being so willing to play with us, even when we made sounds that would make me wince.

In fact, I have a tape of a couple of hours of Lyle and me playing with Gene that I have never played for anyone. I'll just say that Gene sounds pretty good on that tape. I have a great memory of driving up to L.A. to the Central (later the Viper Room) and parking in the one available parking place at the front door, stepping out of the Jag (it was right hand drive, remember) right at the curb, and nudging into a line of patrons waiting to enter the Byrd's show ... getting my Rickenbacker out as the line parted and being ushered in by the doorman and going backstage with those guys. Closest feeling I'll ever have to being a rock star. I owe some great adventures to my friendship with Lyle.

Ellen is the other half of a great love story. I don't mean that I know any intimacies of their affection for one another

er — that was apparent — but Lyle and I never talked girls much. It was music and cars! But I am a romantic and I think of the greatest love as enduring, having that quality of tenacity that reflects the character of the people. These two made a life together. They were parents to several golden-haired children and partners through blessings and adversities. Ellen was gracious as a friend to Lyle's friends. The kids are young adults now. They're musical and coming into their own. If you don't know of Derek Duplessie as a musician already, you probably will soon.

Ellen was so supportive of the music, and I have the feeling that as our times pass all too briefly, we will see those two again in the not too distant future. Those of us who knew them as friends, as publishers, as parents, and as musical people to the utmost have something precious. I hope my ramblings have done a little justice for this memorial issue.

Treasure your friends. Lyle called me the morning of his heart attack, sounded great, and left a message on my answering machine. "Hey, Jim! I need to pick up that music stand I left at the gig in Julian. We have a practice tonight!" Love you, my brother.

I miss you both.

**Peter Bolland**  
Friend, Bandmate

*The Duplessies' Special Gift*

**N**one of us has very much time. We're only here for a short while, then we're gone. I learned

a lot from Lyle and Ellen Duplessie, and that's the thing I think about the most: This could be your last day, I tell myself. What are you going to do with it?

Lyle Duplessie walked through the door and came upstairs. Mark Jackson and I were auditioning bass players. Lyle had answered an ad Mark placed in the *Reader*. He pulled out his big Rickenbacker. We probably played some Merle Haggard song. Right away we knew that Lyle was a great fit. We loved all the same bands, and Lyle had a passionate, encyclopedic grasp on all things West Coast country rock. I didn't really think there were guys like this out there walking the earth, and there he was. Jackson and Bolland had become a trio.

I guess I first met Ellen at a Derek Duplessie gig. In every sense of the word Lyle's partner, in every sense of the word Derek's mother, Ellen brought her considerable focus to bear on the task at hand, whatever that task was. Her energy was the twine that bound it all together. Everyone came to count on Ellen. She just had that power. A natural ally and friend, once you met Ellen, the world got a little kinder and safer.

Lyle and Ellen came into my life at a time when I was exploring the balance between my professional career and my musical career. At the time I labored under twin delusions. Either you were a broke, itinerant musician, or you were a corporate suburbanite with a career and an expensive guitar you never played tucked under the bed. Neither model worked for me, and I was trying to find a way to bring the two worlds together. The Duplessies showed me how in their characteristically graceful fashion.

Like me, Lyle had a career in education. But he was uncompromising in his passion for music. Their home was a hub of musical activity. Guitars and amps lined the walls of many rooms. Mic stands and drums were always set up. They were living the life they wanted to live. What a concept.

Inspired by their example, I began to work harder on my musical ambitions. They showed me it was possible to be good at several things at once. I could have a career and be a serious musician too. And they showed me there was a place in the San Diego music scene for country rock, folk rock, alt country, and roots rock — you know, all that stuff. When they launched the *San Diego Troubadour* with their friends Liz Abbott and Kent Johnson, it was yet again another example of dreams becoming real through the simple application of effort and energy ... and an unwillingness to be limited by narrow definitions of what grown men and women were "supposed" to do.

And, of course, I met Danny Cress through the Duplessies. He was playing drums in Derek's band called the Desert Poets and in another band with Lyle called the Scavengers. I had admired him from afar for a long time before I finally got up the nerve to ask him to join Marcia Claire and me in our original music project. I walked up to him on stage before his set with the Desert Poets at the Adams Avenue Street Fair in September 2002. He said yes. It was that simple. Two and half years later, The Coyote Problem is going strong, and the spirit of Lyle and Ellen run through everything we do. They made a place for this kind of

music in San Diego.

Socrates said that a philosopher rehearses his own death. It's an awareness of one's own death, not just as a distant intellectual concept but as a concrete fact clarifying our otherwise muddy decision-making process. Death guides us to the path with heart. Making decisions firmly knowing that this might be your last year, your last month, your last day shortens the list of options and greases the skids of decision. We are nothing but the result of our own choices and actions. We choose. We act. We invent ourselves. If we're smart we look around for good examples. Lyle and Ellen taught us how to live fully in the glaring reality of our own dreams. No one else was going to start a paper like the *Troubadour*, so they did. No one else was going to help Derek make great records so they did. They were creators, never victims. They chose to act in the face of limitless options, the kind of limitless options that paralyze so many of the rest of us.



Jenna

**Brad Owens**  
Brother of Ellen Duplessie

*Ellen Duplessie, B.C. (Before Christianity)*

**M**ost of the readers of the *San Diego Troubadour* knew Ellen Duplessie from the time she entered onto the San Diego music scene. This period began when she and her family lived in Ramona — around the time they opened the coffee house, The Upper Room. Of course, Lyle had been involved in music long before that, but Ellen's participation up to that

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# parlor showcase



Jenna, Lyle, Megan



Jenna, Lyle, Megan



Lyle, Jenna



Lyle, Megan, Ellen, Jenna

1982

1983

1984

point was more as a "groupie." In fact, while Lyle and the kids had musical talent, the same could not be said, with any credibility, about Ellen. She was the manager, the stagehand, part of the road crew for that posse, but not a musically talented member. By that time, Ellen had found her religion and it had become a focus—along with music and her family—that was central to her life.

Before her emergence on the music scene—long before that—she lived a life that was "less guided by Christian principles" (if we wanted to be generous) or downright unreligious (if we wanted to be a bit more accurate.) Since most of the readers of the *Troubadour* are more familiar with the Christian part of Ellen's life, I thought that I might be able to add some depth and dimension to her life by providing a few anecdotes to describe the "before Christianity" period.

Ellen was almost six years younger than I, so for most of her life, she was my little sister. We didn't have many common friends or interests, due mostly to the difference in our ages. What I remember most in our early years was how she used to tell our parents if I was doing something I shouldn't. That's right. She used to rat me out to our parents. It doesn't seem possible even now, but it's true. The result was that I kept a cautious distance, particularly when I was doing something that I wasn't supposed to do, which was a majority of the time.

By the time she began high school, I thought she deserved another chance. I felt it was time to give her the benefit of my years of experience in the school system. When I explained to her how she could skip school and provide a flawless forged note from home, she told me she knew how to do that. In fact, she told me she had been doing it for several years already. I figured she must have fallen in with a bad group at Sacred Heart High School, but if she hadn't been caught, they must have been a competent group at least.

Another time, I remember wondering why Ellen always seemed to get away with so much more than I did. When I wanted to do something that my parents wouldn't allow, I would fight tooth and nail to prove I was right. Of course, it was a fight I invariably lost. In a moment of self-pity, it came to me: her approach was to ask if she could do something and when she was told no, she would simply say, "Okay," and then do whatever she had been told she could not. I choose to believe it was my "mentoring" that helped her to recognize how to avoid these recurring conflicts.

Ellen also did several amazing things while she was in college: She traveled alone by train through Mexico to Guatemala and then hitchhiked alone across the U.S. When I think back on those two trips, they seem pretty remarkable to me for a young blonde American girl to travel on her own.

However, these trips epitomize what Ellen was made of. She was strong, independent, and resolute—sometimes to the point that it drove me crazy, but that was my problem, not hers.

As we all know, she was also a loving, kind and thoughtful person, both B.C. and after. We all miss Ellen a great deal. But even as we miss her, we feel the sincere and strong sense that we were lucky that she had been a part of our lives. For me, the Ellen B.C. and since was and is my sister, and my life has been better for that. And to her credit, all that was good about her life lives on through her three great kids: Megan, Jenna, and Derek.

## Mark Jackson

Friend, Bandmate

*Bass Player Looking for a Band*

The ad in the *San Diego Reader* read something like . . .

*Bass player is looking for a band to play some Sunvolt, Buck Owens, Whiskeytown, and Merle Haggard. Call Lyle and leave a message!*

It was 1996 and with the alt country movement just swinging into high gear, it was so cool to find someone who would mention Sunvolt and Merle Haggard in the same ad. Peter Bolland and I had been performing as a duo for several years and weren't particularly looking for a bass player, but when I read that ad I knew we had to call. Over the next several years Lyle and I not only performed together with Jackson-Bolland and in a handful of other music projects but we also became good friends and fellow lovers of great country music.

This issue of the *San Diego Troubadour* is dedicated to Ellen and Lyle Duplessie, two folks who, through their tireless devotion to raising public awareness of the local roots music scene, helped forge a true community of musicians and fans. Lyle spent most of his days as a school teacher to provide for his family, but in the evenings he would be off rehearsing or performing with an endless variety of bands, playing everything from old rock and roll to original hard core country. His love for '60s and '70s country rock was passed on to his son Derek who, together with the Desert Poets, went on to perform with Chris Hillman. While Lyle and Derek (and sometimes Jenna and Megan) were on stage and in the studio, Ellen was always there building the relationships that are so important to any community. It wasn't much of a surprise when I received a phone call from Ellen one day to tell me they had started a small monthly news letter about San Diego's acoustic, bluegrass, and country music scene.

When a community loses two good friends, there is always tremendous sorrow and grief. But over time these

feelings lessen some as we get back to our daily living. In our memories they become two folks bound together with family and friends to share a great love for music that made a mark on this earth. When we are on stage playing and singing our hearts out or sitting in the audience moved to tears we may hear Ellen's calm voice or Lyle's laugh and know they are still with us.

## Jeff Berkley

Friend, Musician

*A Passion for Music*

I remember the way Lyle and Ellen would stand completely still, faces glowing in the side stage light, watching their kids perform. As though they were under a spell, they would just stand motionless and gaze at the lights.

Lyle and Ellen, your infectious love and fiery passion for music is already being multiplied by your children, but we'll miss seeing it in person. Rest in peace.

## Jenna Duplessie Pabalate

Daughter

*Retroskate Skateboards*

In our house an idea was always a dangerous thing. The best ideas generally turned into spending a lot of money and time going all over the city until the goal, whatever it might be, was accomplished. In the summer of 1996 the big idea was a '60s-style skateboard like the kind my parents rode as kids growing up in San Diego. I don't know what started it, probably watching old surfing documentaries or seeing a photo, but one of them must have turned to the other and said, "Why don't they make skateboards like that anymore?" which must have led to a big discussion about how cool small boards were and, finally, the ultimate conclusion, "We've got to bring them back!"

At least that's how I imagine it. I wasn't there. I must have been out of town during that time, because I remember that when I came back home my mom wanted to show me something "really cool," a big surprise. In typical Ellen Duplessie fashion she coerced me into the car and drove us up to North County without telling me where we were going. It wasn't until we were in the surf shop that she revealed why we had come. "This is what we're going to do," she told me, pointing to a wall of classic boards. "We're going to start making these kinds of skateboards." Hence, Retroskate Skateboards was born.

Before the dust had settled or any plans had been made, we were all busy thinking up logos. Soon the UPS guy became a familiar face as the boxes of nuts and bolts and roller skate wheels filled the living room. My parents put

them together at the dining room table and my mom took them to surf shops around town. We all had a board and soon our whole family — kids and our eccentric parents alike — were riding a Retroskate.

I still think an old time '60s style board could make a huge comeback. I'm waiting to see it. But that takes persistence and neither of my parents wanted to devote their lives to making skateboards. The idea was always to have fun, never to hit it rich, and soon such issues as liability insurance, the boring humdrum of assembling them, and waiting for a sale took its toll until they were ready to move on, to lie in wait for the next great scheme.

All that remains now is a box of nuts and bolts and spare wheels in the shed, two of our finest Retroboards mounted on the living room wall, and the occasional person, who asks every so often, "Do you still have any of those skateboards?"

## Danny Cress

Friend/Bandmate

*Duplessies, Me, and Music*

Meeting Lyle and Ellen Duplessie was one of the best things that ever happened to me. As two of the nicest, kindest, and friendly people anyone could meet, I was very lucky to know them. The shock and sadness of their untimely passing just can't be put into words.

I got to know Lyle when he played bass with the Scavengers, a cover band I had been playing in. Shortly after he joined us he asked if I would play a gig with his son, Derek, at the Del Mar Fair.

Derek was 12 years old when I first met him four years ago, but his talent, focus, and maturity exceeded most musicians three times his age. I continue to play in bands with him and hope I always will. He and his sisters Megan and Jenna are truly fine, together people. They are a living testament to Lyle and Ellen's legacy.

The dozens of gigs, rehearsals, and dinners we shared left me with many nice memories of them that I will always cherish. They also introduced me to many lovely people who have brought me so much happiness both personally and professionally. There are so many I can't begin to name them all. They know who they are. Lyle and Ellen changed my life for the better. For this, I will always be grateful. I will always miss them and know they are still with us.


## Sherrie Ackerman

Sister of Lyle Duplessie

*My Brother, My Friend*

Lyle Duplessie was my brother and my fantastic, multi-faceted friend. His loss is still so close. Our final conversation seems so fresh and yet a lifetime ago. He was so much with me on our final day together. It was a lovely late spring day as we shared one of our favorite pastimes, a leisurely breakfast at his favorite La Jolla spot. We spent the day together in conversation about so many things important to us and we laughed until we cried and cried until we laughed again. He had definite goals to accomplish that day,

*Continued on page 8.*



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# parlor showcase



Ellen



Lyle and the girls



Gene Clark playing music at Duplessie house



Gene Clark and Ellen, pregnant with Derek



Lyle

1984

1985

1986

1987

1988

## Remembering Lyle and Ellen Duplessie

Continued from page 7.

SHERRIE ACKERMAN, CONT.

but as usual, he took a circuitous route through downtown San Diego. We walked until I had huge blisters on my heels. Two weeks later, he was gone. The blisters were still sore at his memorial service, a reminder of our precious day together. I never wanted those blisters to heal!

Lyle was a man of convictions and passions and he had a lot of them. He ardently attempted to imbue his students with an appreciation of history and learning. He loved his students and his fellow teachers. He developed his art of teaching for the kids' sake, but he often felt cornered by the political quagmire he was forced to wade through.

Lyle would feverishly argue his point of view about national politics, music, beer, whiskey, cigars, or the merits of the best skateboards ever made. As intense as he was regarding any subject he cared about, he would patiently listen and seriously consider the position of family members and friends on topics that they found important. This could go on into the wee hours, until the coffee ran out, or until he was ready to walk it off on the beach until another debatable subject popped up. Lyle could be as dismissive to those who he termed "knuckleheads" as he was passionate with those about whom he cared.

Lyle was the most whimsical guy I have ever known. He could verbally create a pessimistic image with huge

exaggeration. He would conjure moods, situations, and events à la Murphy's Law and the Domino Effect, imagining aloud disastrous outcomes of epic proportion with hysterical consequences. When the situation called for it, he would realistically and optimistically accept the inevitable and resolutely act to effect a positive outcome. In all matters, his faith was great and his trust in God was absolute.

After the passing of his beloved wife Ellen, Lyle said he felt old and without direction. Soon, his optimistic zeal returned as he contemplated his future. Lyle truly loved being young and he had plans. He looked forward to more years as father, grandfather, uncle, and great uncle. Becoming a grandfather was the most exciting event he had experienced for a long time. He was excited at the potential in all of the kids he loved and anticipated the role he would play for each of them. He lives on in his children, nieces, nephews, and granddaughter. Still, his physical presence is gone too soon.

Today there is a huge chasm in my heart because my precious brother is gone from my sight. Yet my heart is full because Lyle will always be my brother. Lyle, I'll miss you forever and I'll see you soon. Until then, I'll pretend you're stuck in Lodi again.

**Liz Abbott**  
Friend, Troubadour Co-Founder

### Happy Memories

The planets must have been aligned at the time we got to know the Duplessies, because in retrospect it seemed like it one of those meant-to-be meetings. It was during the height of Java Joe's success at his Ocean Beach location when the Bacon St. stage saw a multitude of major players, both locally and internationally known. It was also during that time

that the Duplessie's son Derek was carving a name for himself as a singer-songwriter at the tender age of 12. My husband, Kent, loved to go over there to hang out after hours with the Java Joe regulars, which at the time included Jason Mraz, Jeff Berkley, Steve Poltz, Gregory Page, Jon Edwards, Mary Dolan,

and Lisa Sanders to name a few. As for me, I preferred to stay in my cozy nest at home to work on various projects, read, or whatever. Oh, we often went together when it was early enough in the evening to catch some music. We even had a little heyday of our own, singing with José Sinatra either with his band or as a trio. It was fun. But once the music ended, I usually headed home.

Kent was the first to get to know Ellen and Derek, since he was at Java Joe's so often and so were they. He was taken by Derek's talent and soon he and Ellen were chatting the evening

away. When she found out we were huge fans of the Byrds, especially Gene Clark, she suggested that Kent give Lyle a call and get together with him to jam. That day came one Sunday afternoon and the two of them played Byrds' songs all afternoon. They were in heaven. By the time Kent had to go home, they were both giddy from the joy of playing music. That led to our participation in open jams at the Duplessie's house with other friends of Lyle's who were into the Byrds as well. The Duplessie home was always warm, inviting, and friendly. Ellen would usually keep to herself upstairs while the boys and I sang every Byrds song we could think of.

And so began a friendship based on our mutual love for music. Whenever the four of us got together the energy was electric. We talked incessantly, we laughed, we argued, we had fun. So I guess it was natural for Ellen to turn to us one day to share an idea she had, which she didn't want to tell us over the phone but rather wanted to drive down from La Jolla to tell us in person. Although Ellen had already talked to Kent about it one night at Java Joe's, Ellen and Lyle formally presented to us both their vision for a music newspaper, one that would include — rather than exclude — those involved in the local music scene rather than merely the few around town who had

become "famous." Ellen found out I worked as a freelance graphic designer for a living and had more than 20 years' experience writing, editing, and coordinating the production of publications. Perfect. Kent piped up that he knew all the ins and outs of distribution from his 20+ years delivering the Ken Cinema schedule. Perfect. They looked at us with surprised shock. No one needed

to say a word. It was understood that we'd be



Megan, Jenna



partners. We grew more excited as the pieces of this puzzle began to come together. Ellen had already gotten print estimates, had solicited various music-oriented businesses for advertising, and rounded up people like Lou Curtiss, Paul Abbott, and Russ Bauder (aka Gus Williker) to write columns. She and Lyle would write the main stories. It sounded so homespun, it reminded me of one of those Judy Garland-Andy Rooney movies in which they're planning to stage a play in the barn or something and somebody pipes up, "My mom can sew the costumes!" At any rate, Ellen had done her homework. Now all she had to do was figure out how she was going to put it together and get it out there. She found her answer in Kent and me. With Lyle as head writer, Ellen's vast network of local music connections, me as graphic designer and editor, and Kent as distribution guy and advertising salesperson, our team was complete.

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# parlor showcase



Ellen and Derek



Derek



Lyle and Derek



The whole family on vacation, 1995



Lyle, 2002

1989



1990



1993



1995



2002

So I set out to design a logo. Already Ellen was pushing for a September delivery and here it was August already. She wanted to be early enough for the Adams Avenue Street Fair people to advertise on the back page. So I humped. Most mornings, after Kent and Lyle had both gone to work, Ellen would drive down from La Jolla after dropping Derek off at school to bring me photos, handwritten articles from Lyle, calendar listings, and whatever. It was our little morning



ritual. I saw her just about every day.

And so, despite all the snags, snafus, and misunderstandings, we did it. One Friday afternoon Ellen picked up the papers from the printer in Poway and drove them down to our house. We finally held the first printed issue in our hands. Unbelievable. We were proud. And this was just the beginning. We had a million ideas: articles to write, people and topics to research, events to plan, and ways to bring the music community together. We had a vision.

Maybe we weren't the smartest business people on the planet to publish a newspaper but we had plenty of heart. Lyle's criteria was always when publishing the paper stopped being fun, we should quit. Sometimes we'd disagree or argue, but things always seemed to work out. In fact, at times I would be furious with her. That usually happened when she wanted to change something at the last minute. And me, being the pushover that I am, would give in and then cry out of frustration or complain to Kent. For a designer, last minute changes are a nightmare. As the last guy on the production line before a publication goes to print, the work piles up like a log jam when the designer gets it — all the tweaks, corrections, layout changes — there are a million things to do. And then you worry. You worry so much about typos and errors, you're afraid to look at the finished piece when it comes back from the printer. I still go through that.

On one occasion, Ellen was due to come over, but she called to kind of warn me about a change that I knew would take hours and hours to do. Why couldn't she have thought of it earlier? I was angry when I hung up the phone and Kent jumped up immediately, demanding to know what she had said. Despite my protests, Kent called Ellen back and read her the riot act. I certainly didn't want it to escalate into this! I called her back to apologize. She wasn't there. I left a message. I emailed her and apologized. When she pulled up in front of our house, I ran out to the car and threw my arms around her. "I'm sorry I'm such a bitch. I love you, Ellen." She said, "I love you too. But I hate Kent," which caused us both to begin roaring with laughter. That's what I loved about Ellen and Lyle. We accepted each other, warts and all.

We actually accomplished quite a bit during the short time before Ellen's health limited her involvement. We held a successful Troubadour Showcase down at Dizzy's, we played a major part in reuniting the Scottsville Squirrel Barkers for the first time in 30 years, we helped promote and were actively involved in the Adams Avenue Roots Festival and the Adams Avenue Street Fair, we organized a day of gospel music one summer Sunday afternoon on the huge lawn in front of the Duplessie's church, and we began hosting a Troubadour Holiday Open House, a tradition that is still going strong.

Now they're both gone and Kent and I are still going. I don't know how or why — well, I know why — but we manage to hold it together. Producing the paper still gives me a lot of satisfaction. I love researching new ideas for potential stories. Will Edwards and Chuck Schiele are working more closely with us now, in a way filling the void that Ellen and Lyle left. I miss them. I still cry.

At Lyle's memorial service last July, the neighbor at whose house Gene Clark was staying when Lyle noticed him walking down Nautilus Street one day got up to speak. Following one of the first afternoons Lyle and Gene got together, the neighbor recalled saying to Gene, "It must have been an honor to spend time with someone who has idolized you since he was a teenager." Gene Clark looked at his host and said, "No, the honor was mine."

**Russell Bauder**  
Friend, Former Troubadour Columnist

*A Birthday Gift from Ellen*

The tee shirt is packed away somewhere. The Bible is on my bookshelf. And the beer is long gone.

It's my birthday, about four years ago, and I'm hanging out with a few friends at my apartment in Pacific Beach. (Some of you may ask why I was living in P.B. I can't really answer that, but the mistake has been rectified; I'm now in West Mission Hills. Turns out overhead airplane noise, train whistles, and ship horns are much quieter than Mesa College drop-outs on beer benders. Who knew?)

Right before my li'l birthday bash had begun, I was on the phone with Ellen Duplessie. She wanted to come by and drop off some Troubadours, so I could deliver them in the beach area. I mentioned that I had a few people over for my birthday, but it was cool for her to drop by. That was her advance warning... about ten minutes. I didn't expect or ask for anything, but shortly thereafter she's at my door, with several stacks of bundled newspapers and a bag full of birthday gifts.

It was one of those birthdays where everyone sits around and watches the birthday boy open up all his gifts and then dutifully thanks each thoughtful gifter. I got a pair of really nice J. Crew boxers from my friend Sherri. Chad gave me a glow-in-the-dark toilet seat. My girlfriend, Devan, got me a slang dictionary and the Hedwig and the Angry Inch soundtrack. I didn't remember any of these gifts; I had to be re-informed by my lady. (In the middle of writing this, I yell out, "Baaaaaaby, do you remember what gifts I got from our friends for my birthday, in P.B., the one when the Duplessies dropped by?!" She rattled them off like they were written on the back of her hand. Unreal.)



Derek

We had already opened up all the other gifts, but the gift-givin' group was still assembled around me. I took the gift bag from Ellen and, one by one, I pulled the packages out. First: the tee shirt. It was a Derek Duplessie and the Desert Poets shirt. Makes sense, and I showed it off to the crowd. A pretty normal reaction, with some scattered comments like, "cool" and "you'll wear that." Second: a Bible. Now, my close friends know that I'm a hard core agnostic, but I don't advertise it. I'm sure there were some stifled giggles when I held up my New Century Version soft cover. Heretic or no, everyone needs a Bible, so that's cool. Third: a beer?! I remember looking at friends who were wearing smirky almost-ready-to-laugh faces. I almost lost it when I said, "And a beer. Thank you, Ellen!" (Another outburst in real time...) "Baby, you don't remember what kind of beer it was, do you?!" She responds, "No, but wouldn't you be scared if I did?!" I'm pretty sure it was some sort of micro brew though, definitely not Coors, Bud, or Corona.

Now, I can't be the only person who's received a Bible and a beer

together as gifts, but it's probably a select group. It was pretty funny, but it also demonstrates what was so great about Ellen. The tee-shirt: she loved music, knew I was a supporter of her son's band, and was a tireless promoter of him. The Bible: Ellen was strong in her convictions, and she practiced them faithfully. She never tried to convert me, but it was clear what she believed in. I love that. The beer: I don't think Ellen tiptoed through life. That's not code for being some kind of party girl—I really don't know—but she seemed to soak up every wonderful thing about life. Maybe that included some suds? She knew I liked beer. That much is for sure. The strange combination of gifts—while silly in some ways—demonstrates what I really loved about Ellen. She was generous, thoughtful, and a little offbeat. I miss her.

**Bart Mendoza**  
Friend in Music, Troubadour writer

*Remembering Lyle and Ellen*

Sitting here at four in the morning as I try to type this, it becomes apparent to me how difficult it can be to put feelings into words. Hard to believe it's been a year since we lost the Duplessies and time hasn't diminished the loss. If anything, it becomes more apparent with each passing day what a rare breed they were. I met Ellen first, as she made the rounds promoting and supporting Derek's initial musical forays. She was a hard worker, gathering up gigs and info, and any help that she could get to let the world know about her son's music. She was enthusiastic and determined and, as

we have seen in Derek's continued musical growth, absolutely correct about his potential. I became accustomed to her calls and e-mails about an upcoming this or that, and then as Derek played more gigs I would run into them at various shows. Her tireless efforts always impressed me and we spoke about the local music scene often. I last saw her at a gig a few days before her passing, and it's a testament to her strength that no one I knew suspected we would lose her within the week.

Lyle and I bonded a bit later as the Troubadour began to establish itself. At first we saw each other mostly at gigs and street fairs, discovering that we had much in common — as well as some differences — and I looked forward to our conversations. As we became friendly, at pretty much any party we would both happen to be at, we'd always end up in a crowd deep in discussion. Lots of laughs were involved, of course. It was common, on the occasions that we would get together, to start talking about the state of the music scene, politics, guitars, the environment, or any number of things, with the knowledge that these would only end when one of us had to leave. Some of my fondest memories revolved around rehearsals with Derek in the Duplessie's music room adjacent to the living room in their La Jolla home. Complete with a ton of great vintage gear, Beatles and surfing memorabilia on the walls, as well as pics of Gene Clark's visit to the house looking down on the proceedings, I always had the feeling that the Duplessies had to truly love music or

*Continued on page 12.*



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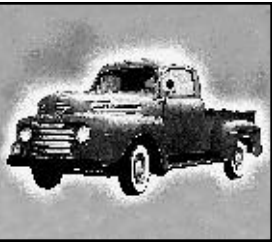


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# ramblin'

## Bluegrass CORNER

by Dwight Worden

### BLUEGRASS IN THE SCHOOLS

In addition to playing great music, San Diego bluegrass musicians do many good things for the community that you may not be aware of. Let's take a look at one of them: Bluegrass Music in the Schools. Maybe you are a teacher, or know a teacher, who would like to make use of this program.

Backed by the sponsorship of the non-profit San Diego Bluegrass Society, The SDBS Bluegrass in the Schools Program



Wayne Rice

was started many years ago by then SDBS president Liz Burkett and KSON's banjo-playing Wayne Rice. In those early days the program was called Grassology, a program that Wayne and Liz and other members of Wayne's band Lighthouse took into the school classrooms. They would play some bluegrass, do a show and tell with the instruments, and combine entertaining with educating their young audience. The early program was very well received and developed a pretty good curriculum.

In more recent years, Emma Radcliffe and her Gut Bucket Band have carried on with a SDBS-sponsored school outreach program. Emma's Gut Bucket Band is comprised of a floating group of about 20 musicians who volunteer their time, and when given the call, anywhere from four to ten players show up. The program typically starts with a tune or two, followed by an entertaining instructional portion of the program in which each instrument is introduced and played. More songs are performed and then the program is highlighted by a demonstration of how bluegrass music is put together with a live demonstration of a classic bluegrass tune, wherein the instruments add their voice one at a time. A lively question and answer exchange is encouraged throughout the show as the classroom becomes acquainted with the history of bluegrass music. The students, and teachers love the show.

Emma's Gut Bucket Band has visited



Emma Radcliffe and her Gut Bucket Band

schools in Escondido, Clairemont, Chula Vista, National City, San Diego, and elsewhere. They have played for individual classes as well as at all-school assemblies. A typical program is 50 minutes long. The Gut Bucket Band has also performed at many local rehabilitation hospitals, nursing homes, church events, mobile home parks, and the like. The group is available for any worthwhile cause, and the price is right because it's free! If you would like to participate as a musician, or know a school that might like to invite this great program to its campus, contact Emma Radcliffe at aradcliffe@san.rr.com. Or contact the SDBS at dworden@adelphia.net.



### LOST AND FOUND



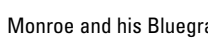
Lost and Found

The San Diego Bluegrass Society brings Lost and Found, a top national band, to the First Baptist Church of Pacific Beach on Saturday, February 5 at 7:30 pm. Founded by original members Allen Mills, Dempsey Young, Gene Parker, and Roger Handy in 1973, Lost and Found has penned and performed some true bluegrass classics, including "Love of the Mountains" and "Wild Mountain Flowers for Mary" among others. Several of the band's CDs have been issued on the Rebel label, and they are all good bluegrass listening. Current band members include Allen Mills, Dempsey Young, Scottie Sparks, and Ronald Smith. This is a rare San Diego appearance that you won't want to miss. There will be a 30 minute opening set by SDBS's own Full Deck, led by John Deckard, to get the evening started. Admission is free, although a goodwill offering will be requested, so come on down for what looks to be a great show. The church is located at 4747 Soledad Mountain Road in Pacific Beach.

### THE PERFECT STRANGERS ARE COMING!

Not to be confused with San Diego's Virtual Strangers, Perfect Strangers are a touring national band. Founded four years ago by well known artist Chris Brashears, the band features Bob Black on banjo — who played with Bill Monroe and his Bluegrass Boys — along with multi-grammy nominee Jody Stecher on mandolin and Peter McLaughlin, national flatpicking guitar champion, on guitar. Anchoring the group is Forrest Rose on bass. With several of their CDs out on Rebel records, this band can be counted on for a great show. Don't miss their first San Diego appearance on February 20 at the Normal Heights Methodist Church, 4650 Mansfield St., for another in the series of great concerts hosted by Acoustic Music San Diego. For tickets and info: [www.acousticmusicsandiego.com](http://www.acousticmusicsandiego.com)

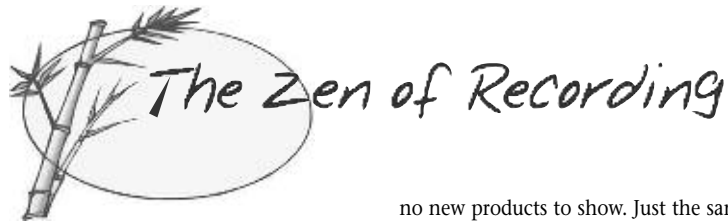
Chris Brashears and Peter McLaughlin of Perfect Strangers



LYLE AND ELLEN DUPLISSIE

Good-bye Lyle and Ellen. Gone too young and too soon, you will be missed. But, your little paper lives on! We honor you by continuing to play the music you loved and by writing about it in the paper you founded, the *San Diego Troubadour*.

I hope you all had fun at the Blythe Bluegrass Festival and at the Ralph Stanley concert! See you next time!



by Sven-Erik Seaholm

### NAM-A-LAMM-A-DING-DONG

There I was again, stumbling through the hallowed aisles of the NAMM show, eyes and ears futilely sifting through the spectacle and cacophony to catch some glimmer of innovation, something cool, anything new. After reviewing my findings, maybe I should just say that I'm glad to be back home, wearing my cozy slippers and my "Jimmy Olsen, cub reporter" fedora, and leave it at that...but I guess that wouldn't make for much of a column for this month, would it?

Progress is a fishy beast when viewed from the perspective of the makers and buyers of music-related products. This year's breakthrough is next year's update, and last year's standard is this year's clearance item. Yet every 12 months, retail merchandise buyers return to the Anaheim Convention Center with high hopes (though one might suspect increasingly lowered expectations), and the manufacturers spend the next four days exhibiting smiles with the tensile strength of steel girders and an equally robust sales pitch.

Software manufacturers are the most interesting case in point. They are virtually required to have "version 2.5" of whatever their product is ready to show by that date regardless of its current state of readiness. Consequently, there's tons of "new and improved" stuff in their booths. There's also, by consequence, a great deal of buggy code that slips through, virtually guaranteeing a constant stream of updates among major version upgrades. There are, of course, many exceptions, and, generally speaking, the really big names like Cakewalk (Sonar, Guitar Tracks Pro, Project 5) and Propellerhead (Reason) aren't going to risk tarnishing their sterling reputations with such semantics. Similarly, tiny little startups like Poland's PSP (Vintage Warmer, EasyVerb, Nitro) aren't quite as susceptible to such pressures. There's generally fewer "cooks" for their products, resulting in higher personal accountability and lower margins of error. Were a hardware manufacturer to rush out a product in such a fashion, costs of correcting any consequential errors would be astronomical, and the company's good name (and profits) would be all but scuttled into obscurity or, worse yet, infamy.

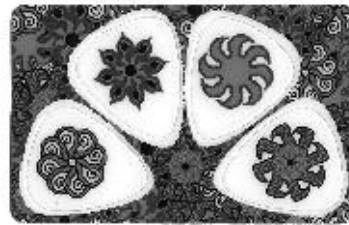
This all plays out somewhat accordingly. Guitars, keyboards, and other instruments didn't really change all that much from last year. Nor did microphones, preamps, and other P.A. and recording equipment. Essentially the same stuff, with new cheaper versions at the low end and the introduction of expensively made "boutique" items at the high end.

Then there are companies like Avalon Design. All their stuff is of the highest standard and is also, for many of us, prohibitively pricey. So there they were for the fourth year in a row with

no new products to show. Just the same great luxurious stuff. In fact, one of the most recent product reviews I found on their website was from June 2001 ... and I wrote it! Here's a link: <http://www.avalondesign.com/review29.html>

Still there's always something new, even if it is harder to find some years than others. Here are a few: Earthworks introduced its new Drum Kit™ system (\$2,100), which includes two of their TC25 omni directional mics for overheads and a SR25 cardioid mic for the kick. Also included is their KickPad™ (available separately for \$120), an inline impedance pad/filter that supposedly optimizes any microphone for use on bass drum.

Blue Microphones spun off a new subsidiary called (of course) Red. The new company will focus on vintage-style parts and accessories and has its own microphone, Type B (\$699). Noteworthy of the Red mic's design is its ability to use interchangeable capsules, including Blue's complete Bottle Cap line and classic Neumann-Gefell models.



My favorite "cool little thing" from the show had to be the PikCard (\$1.99, pictured). Basically the size of an ATM card, it houses four die-cut medium gauge picks. You just punch one out when needed and press it back into place when you're done. Great for those of us who never seem to have a pick handy. Now it's as close as your wallet!

Equally useful and inexpensive, the Neck Sock (\$19.99), is kind of like a golf club cover for your guitar. It covers your



Sven-Erik Seaholm

headstock, neck, strings, bridge, and pickups, protecting them from the corrosive effects of rust, dust, oxidation, and humidity. Velcro straps make for easy access come gig time.

Mike Matthew's Electro-Harmonix is still going very strong, adding tons of new stuff to their already burgeoning product line and branching out specifically into the realm of our fave subject, home recording.

Here's just a partial list of EH's new offerings (list prices not yet available, but not super expensive either): The POG is a "polyphonic octave generator" effects pedal that can add one octave up, two octaves up, and one octave down, and blend all of them together with your original signal. It even works on chords, giving your guitar the ability to sound like a 12- or even 18-string instrument. The NY-2A is an eight tube, rack-mountable studio compressor that features dual mono, linkable stereo audiophile-quality performance. The White Finger is a pedal-style mono, non-tube, multiple FET compressor that looks like the answer to many a budget-minded recordists' prayers.

Sure, it's easy to become a bit jaded with regard to NAMM's lack of "blockbuster" action this year, but there's always something cool if you look. And, once again, I'm glad I did.

Sven-Erik Seaholm is an independent producer for Kitsch & Sync Production ([www.kaspro.com](http://www.kaspro.com)). He is also a recording artist who performs with The Wild Truth, and will be performing Saturday, February 26 at Cosmos Café, 8278 La Mesa Blvd., 7-10 p.m.

### THE SAN DIEGO FOLK HERITAGE PRESENTS



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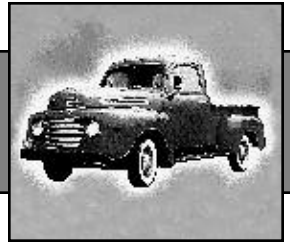


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# Hosing Down

by José Sinatra

Grief, according to one modern sage — either Ashlee Simpson or O.J. (I can't really be sure. I often get the two confused.), is a state of sentiment containing something demonstrably less positive than its distant cousin, Joy. Now, Joy has always been one powerful and enchanting little lady and will always remain a major score. But the bitch Grief is ultimately more memorable, more powerful, incredibly infectious and uniquely devious.

Only time can loosen Grief's grip on a heart; even then fragments of her filthy nails will remain embedded. The best we can do is try to ignore her residue and conscientiously avoid transferring the taint to others.

Despite days, months, years until we begin to feel we've ditched her, she'll never lose the scent of our trail. She'll hover secretly nearby and await her next opportunity to jump our bones and rape our hearts.

But you gotta hand it to her. She's beautiful, seductive, and hornier than Wacko Jacko at a Cub Scout jamboree. And she, too, seems amazingly beyond justice. Because she really is.

Last year, in two of my columns, I responded to two more of her ugly assaults. I honestly explained my feelings after first Ellen Duplessie, then her husband Lyle, were removed from our physical fellowship. No sarcasm or twisted irony for once. Make that twice.

Earlier this week I reread those words and was happy that I had been so honest.

Somehow I feel it would be useless to add to those words now — I wouldn't think of reprinting them because they seemed almost genetically "of the moment" and anyone who gave a rat's ass about my feelings would have already read, absorbed, and/or discarded them.

Seeing so many new tributes and memories expressed elsewhere in this issue is a wonderful thing, and I'm

happy that the young whippersnapper, Derek, has them in print to read, remember, and cherish. A big thank you to Liz and Kent for fostering this tribute. As another late, beloved friend of ours used to say, "You're the Best."

Enough hindquarters-kissing. After all, a whole paragraph was mistakenly deleted from my column last month, rendering it even more inscrutable than it normally is/can be/thinks it is.

Like an unlubricated assault from the rear, Grief ravished me and left me embarrassed and humiliated. The only reason I'm able to have regained a somewhat meaningful life is that I began to compare Grief's insidious degrees — the loss of a paragraph, for example, against the loss of two parents. My resultant shame must have immediately made me something of a lousy lay; the vicious vixen exited swiftly, entirely unsatisfied.

Lost paragraphs have their own lessons, it seems.

Every day I'm reminded of Ellen and Lyle by the weirdest, strangest things, and my grief at their absence is tempered by the real joy of having been allowed to know them in the first place.

Now I'll turn my focus upon someone whom I continue to admire and always enjoy encountering.

Any kid who can survive being a plaything — perhaps the youngest, most innocent victim — at two of Lady Grief's deluxe orgies within such a short period of time commands an uncommon amount of respect.

No one could have more respect for him than I, I stupidly tell myself, succumbing easily to the worn charms of common American hyperbole and arrogance. Forgive me. That can't be right, can it? What is?

Deny him respect, and I'd bet you'd be inviting more Grief. This is a kid to watch, folks. The love and music and faith he grew on isn't about to shut down. To many, many people, he'll prove to be the greatest gift his parents could ever have given.

Photo: Brinke Stevens



The scintillating Mr. Sinatra

Little does the public know, however, about his "lost weekend" — a period of desperation, dishonor, and delinquency; depths of depravity, determined to drink, debauch, do drugs despite ... oh ... excuse me. I was confusing myself, uh, someone else with Derek. Damn.

Yeah, now that's the kind of paragraph to drop: b.s. with a capital W, no value or truth at all. Unlike the one last month, which of course I am so over.

Like I said, there are degrees. These aren't tears — a fly just flew into my eyes, I think. No, it's because I'm happy Derek still has family who are willing and determined to nurture and guide such a fine young man, to make sure he never has a paragraph dropped from any of his own writings, which can be really hurtful to someone too sensitive to take it. Trauma of this kind sometimes makes writers do weird things like taking the first letter of each paragraph to create a message or some other twisted affectation.

Each person develops his/her own way of Banishing the Bitch (Grief) and eventually Jumping for Joy. Derek Duplessie is on his mark now. When he lands, my bet is that it'll be a perfect bulls-eye, and Joy herself will soon be jumping, right before taking his hand and leading him in an ecstatic and enduring dance.



# RADIO DAZE

by Jim McInnes

## QUE VIDA!

I first met Ellen Duplessie at the annual Troubadour holiday party in 2003. When she attempted to take a photograph of me I warned her, "Careful, cameras don't work when you try to take my picture!" Her camera failed. But she did convince me to write for the *San Diego Troubadour*.

My life has had many little cosmic events like that one. Let me tell you about a few of them.

I was at a birthday party at Tom Ham's Lighthouse for one of my radio business acquaintances. We were talking about local musicians who had been screwed by the big record companies. I was raving about the album *Sleep Convention* by Trees. Trees was basically two guys: drummer Marty Eldridge and keyboardist-singer-composer Dane Conover. Dane had moved to Japan a few years earlier and I hadn't seen nor heard from him in the interim. After raving about the album to my friend, I turned to go to the bar and upon completing a 180 degree about face, I looked into the smiling face of ... yes, Dane Conover! Out of all the gin mills in all the cities on this great big planet, there he was! He and I talked for a few minutes, he walked away, and I haven't seen him since!

When the wife and I separated at the start of 1997, she moved out and I was living alone in our big Tierrasanta spread. About a month after the split I got a call at the radio station from a former colleague, the British deejay/flamenco guitarist/gypsy Digby Welch, from whom I'd not heard a peep in over 15 years. I said, "Well, mate, if ya need a place to stay, I got lotsa room!" So Digger moved into one of the many spare bedrooms. When my wife, Sandi, and I reconciled, we put the house on the market. It was Digby who fixed up the house and yard in exchange for rent. We sold the place for a nice profit, moved into new digs in Kensington, and Digby left for points unknown. We haven't heard a peep from him in seven years!

My wife and I were on a bus in Ireland taking us from the Dublin airport to downtown Dublin. As we were chatting away, we were ignored by the locals as just a couple more Yankee tourists. I said to Sandi, "I've been to the Grafton Plaza Hotel before, but I don't have a clue how to get there now." Just then an elderly man with a kind face and a twinkle in his eyes turned around in his seat and said, "I can take you there." All right! We got our bags off the bus and walked along with this guy. He told us his



Jim McInnes

name was Red Skelton and that he had been a pilot in the R.A.F. during WWII. "Wow, my dad was a pilot for the U.S. Navy in the war," I said. As we walked down the pedestrian plaza, the crowds of people seemed to part to let us pass. When we got within a block of our hotel he said, "There's the Grafton. I must go now. Nice to meet you. Enjoy your stay in Ireland." I bent to pick up my bag, turned to say thanks, and he was gone. Poof! And I am not making this up!

A few days later, while I was in bed, somewhere between awake and asleep, at the same hotel, I was visited by my mother, Jeanne. She had passed away when I was with her in Illinois four months earlier. As sure as I am sitting here writing this, Mom came to tell me everything was going to be okay and that she was fine. It was the most mind-boggling experience of my life! (She also visited my wife Sandi in much the same way.)

Most recently, during the big rains last month, our telephone line shorted out. We were without a phone from Thursday, January 13 until Monday, January 17 ... except ... on Saturday the 15th, when the phone rang!

Sandi and I looked at each other in disbelief. She answered. It was a call from Chris Carmichael, publisher of an online radio fan site ([www.sdradio.net](http://www.sdradio.net)), who wanted to let us know he was all right because he had been hit by a car while crossing Sports Arena Boulevard and had broken both an arm and a leg! Five days with no phone service and *this one call* gets through!

This is for Derek Duplessie, in memory of his parents. You may not see them, Derek, but they're there with you.

Remember, your life is amazing. You just have to pay attention.

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Play Guitar Naked



# parlor showcase

Continued from page 9.

## BART MENDOZA, CONT.

they wouldn't have allowed us to annoy their neighbors like that. They always made us all feel welcome and the rehearsals were something to look forward to. That said, it was the time we spent following the rehearsals were something to look forward to. That said, it was the time we spent following the rehearsals that was the most special. Lyle would come downstairs, and Danny, Dylan, Derek, and I would gather and then the debating would start.

Even as it was happening, I knew these were moments to remember. Voices were raised, contradictions pointed out, and ideas flowed freely. Politics was a big deal, and on at least one occasion there was a spirited debate on the Iraq war. Another week we discussed corporate America. But the last few times I saw Lyle we were talking about the Yardbirds. Lyle loved the British beat era group and had recently acquired a new biography of the band by author Alan Clayson. He had a touch of writers block, and we had begun a long discussion on different writing techniques. Bottom line was that he didn't care for Clayson's writing style and had me read it to see what I thought. We discussed it in the minutiae that only hard core music junkies can appreciate, with the side debate about whether Clapton, Beck, or Page were the best guitarist sadly left unfinished. It really did feel like Lyle was very much a kindred spirit.

Like Ellen, he was also deeply proud of Derek's accomplishments. But truth be told, as one of San Diego's biggest supporters of local music, even if Derek weren't his son, he would have champi-

oned him anyway. The facts surrounding the co-founding of the San Diego Troubadour have been detailed before, but I do want to mention how great his articles on San Diego music history were, with an attention to detail to be envied. He was thrilled to help spark interest in San Diego's musical past and was especially happy to have been part of getting the Scottsville Squirrel Barkers to reunite for a series of gigs, with the weekend they played at the Adams Avenue Roots Festival, he told me, one of life's biggest thrills.

But what I really admired about him the most was the fact that with all the activities of being a dad, working full time as a teacher, writing for the newspaper, and helping Derek with his gigs, he still found the time to be not just a musician, but a prolific one. He truly loved music and took every opportunity to play in numerous groups and on any occasion. He had fun; it showed and was infectious. I loved the daredevil side to his playing and he was willing to tackle anything, no matter how unrehearsed, with a smile and a shrug. This was never more evident to me than at one particular Troubadour party when a group of us attempted a ramshackle Beatles tune, held together solely by his adept bass playing. We all laughed, and it's a favorite memory.

The Duplessies are very much missed. The e-mail inbox is much quieter these days, but it still hasn't quite sunk in that they're gone. The suddenness of it all has certainly made me appreciate people more, and the finality of it all comes to mind more often these days, but truth be told I still sort of expect to see them at a show. I'm sure they'd be happy to know that their musical legacy continues in Derek's music as well as with the Troubadour,



Lyle with Gene Clark (center) and Jim Wakefield, 1988

through which they set the bar higher in the local acoustic music scene. Most of all I think they'd be happy to know how much of an impact they made on so many lives.

## Millie Moreno Friend, Troubadour Photographer

### Memories and Pictures of You

I'm glad it's 2005. Last year was a difficult year. We lost our founders, Ellen and Lyle Duplessie. How I miss them so. I still can't comprehend that they are not here. They were such an inspiration to me, to so many people.

I can recall the first time I picked up the *San Diego Troubadour*. I found it in a coffee shop in Ocean Beach. I fell in love with it. It covered the genres of folk, roots, Americana, gospel, jazz, country and bluegrass — all of my favorites. I was in love. Then, I saw the photo page. Being an avid photographer since the age of nine and all throughout my high school newspaper, yearbook, college, and thereafter, I thought, okay, it is now a new dream to take pictures for this publication. I could have the best of both worlds: listening to the music I love while taking pictures, something I equally love. So, I looked at the credits page and found Ellen's name. I thought, this woman must be superwoman. Not only is she the founder and editor-in-chief, but she is also the photographer and a writer, along with Lyle Duplessie. I thought this must be a married couple who probably likes to do everything for the publication so I probably don't have a chance. But, being the overly optimistic person I've always been, I decided to put together a portfolio proposal and give them a call.

When I met Ellen, I was shocked at how much of an angel she was — so sincere, so welcoming, so kind and easy going. She said, in a way that only those who knew her can relate, "Oh yeeeeeah, we'd love to have your help, yeahhh, that would be great." She had a soft, yet slow, way of speaking, stressing certain syllables of her words. (This makes me smile now when I think of her.) So, I began to take pictures for the *Troubadour*...that was over four years ago.

I later met her 12-year-old son, Derek and her husband Lyle. They played and sang together and later started a band, The Desert Poets. Lyle was such a sweet and understanding man. You could go to him with a significant challenge and he would have such a simple, yet wise answer, which would make the once huge challenge seem non-existent. He was so caring and calm.

I came to find that Ellen, Lyle, and



Lyle and Derek, May 2004

their entire family were huge lovers of music. Music was their life as if it was a part of them, within their soul. Ellen and Lyle were so young at heart. They explored their dreams together in several different markets, such as the Skate Board shop they started, surfing, and the coffee shop they had in Ramona. Being very spiritual people they were also members of Mt. Soledad Presbyterian Church.

Their children are talented, smart, intelligent, and sweet, including Derek and two beautiful daughters, Megan and Jenna, all of whom I have come to love, over the years, like family. They were such a close, perfect family — successful, talented, good-natured, responsible, spiritual, educated, people who gave back to the community, just overall ideal.

Sometimes when I was late with my photography submission deadline, Ellen was never angry. I kept waiting for her to voice her disappointment or anger but she never did. The more I came to know her, the more I realized, she never showed it because she never felt it. She would always say, and I mean, always, "Ohhhhh, that's okaay. Don't worry about it. we're just happy to haaave you." I used to think she was just this way with me, but at her memorial service I realized she was this way with everyone and she treated everyone equally. (I wanted to speak at Ellen and later, Lyle's memorial service but I was so upset, I knew I would have fallen apart so I refrained. I hope they have forgiven me for this.)

I can recall a time when I started having house concerts at my new venue, Millie's by the Bay. I got the idea from my friend, Lizzie Wann, who hosts the Meeting Grace house concerts. I thought it was an awesome way to hear the music I love and support musicians and local music in general. I could always count on Ellen for her support in everything I did. She was never judgmental or negative. At my first show, when Gregory Page performed (she adored Gregory and absolutely loved his voice and music), she brought friends and family to help fill the seats, since I wasn't sure if people would actually show. She also brought Derek who performed a few opening tunes reminiscent of Chris Hillman and Gram Parsons. It all made for a beautiful night. She was always there no matter the weather.

When she passed on Ash Wednesday last year it was shocking and unexpected. I knew of her health complications but she seemed so healthy and fine. Her spirits were always high. I can remember seeing her one night when she had just had chemotherapy hours before and she said she felt great; she was just having a problem catching her breath sometimes. I still can't bring myself to under-



Liz Abbott, Lyle, Kent Johnson sing Smokey Rogers' "Gone" at Dizzy's

stand that she is not here. I can't erase their name and home phone numbers from my cell phone. Makes me feel like they are still here — I think that's called *denial*. After Ellen died, I kind of hung onto Lyle. We had a few meaningful phone conversations and celebrated his birthday in April with a large barbecue with family and friends on his front lawn. I don't know why, but I thought I would always have him around and now that Ellen was gone, I decided to spend more time with him and the family so we could all miss her together. He invited me for coffee and said to call when I wanted to grab a cup and chat. I wanted to go so bad because I loved him and loved spending time with him and I knew we both needed to reminisce about Ellen. However, you know how it is when you work everyday and "life happens," you lose track of time. Unfortunately, not even two months later, as I'm standing on the side of the road, taking down information from a driver who had just totaled my car, I get the call that we had just lost him too, just minutes ago. My world was shattered. I so regret not calling him and making that coffee visit a priority. I have since changed my views and priorities about what is really important in life and I now make the most of everyday with those I love.

Time has passed now — but only a short 6-10 months since their passing. They both passed within less than four months of each other. I think this due to their amazing, eternal love for each other — like Johnny Cash and June Carter Cash. It is still very tough to think of them not being here and I cry as I write this but I'm slowly getting better. Only time will heal...along with the fact that I know I will see them again in Heaven.

When I look at Jenna and Megan, I see Ellen as a young girl and think of all of the dreams and aspirations she must have had. I see her straight, blonde hair blowing in the wind as she rides the waves. She loved to surf. It breaks my heart, but it also fills me with warmth and happiness because she lives on in my thoughts.

When I hear Gram Parsons, Chris Hillman, and Herb Pedersen singing the songs Lyle loved so much, I can almost hear Lyle singing with them. I sometimes think I actually do hear his voice. It hurts but it makes me smile. Then I see him smiling back and it makes it easier to carry on. He was such a gentle, knowledgeable man.

Thank you, Ellen and Lyle, for taking me into your family. Thank you for your continuous love and support, your kindness, your wisdom, your visions...for sharing your lives with me.

You will always be loved, remembered, and a part of all of our lives.

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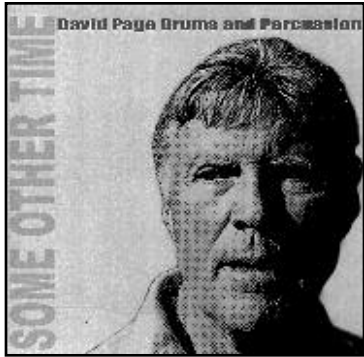


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## David Page Some Other Time

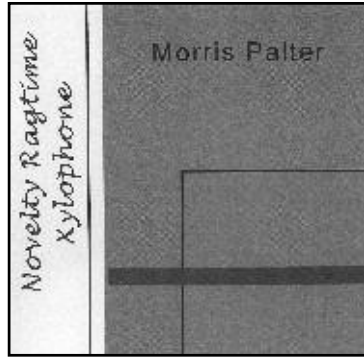
by Paul Hormick

Filled with recordings on which he has taken part, *Some Other Time* is a musical Curriculum Vitae for drummer David Page. Nephew Gregory Page has put together samplings and snippets from his uncle's career that show off his strength of time, feel, rhythm, panache, versatility, and all the other qualities a great drummer should have.

It was once said of Ornette Coleman that his musical genius was so great that he was one of nine persons in the world who could jam with anybody. With this disk Page shows he is in the running for a nomination to this nonet, being something of a Swiss army knife on the drums. He performs some great jazz in France with San Diego guitarists Joey Carano and Art Johnson on "Green Dolphin Street." He really swings with some big band style drumming, and the heritage of his native Ireland is included as Page gives us the snap and clatter of the drums on "The Green Hills of Tyrol" and "The Banks of Allan Water." His playing is all over the map, literally and figuratively.

Besides performing, Page has also invented a line of drums that known for their firm and resonate sound. One of the cuts, "Wind in the Bamboo Grove," features Evelyn Glennie, the world's greatest percussionist, executing a 5/4 as though she had been weaned during a Dave Brubeck practice session.

In particular if you're a member of the baby boomer generation, Page has been part of the soundtrack to your life. Here you find the "Colonel Bogey March" from the film *Bridge on the River Kwai*, including the stiff upper lipped whistling of the British POWs. There's a snippet from a Marilyn Monroe film, in which Page helped to musically illustrate the sex symbol's famous bum. For you Python fans Page was one of the musicians on the recording of Sousa's "Liberty Bell March" that started each episode. As you listen to these selections one by one, the different styles and recording techniques, coupled with the intermingling of memory, create an evocative pastiche, almost a collage of mind, melody, and memory.



## Morris Palter Novelty Ragtime Xylophone

by Paul Hormick

The instructional banners that hang in every first grade classroom to illustrate the alphabet start with Apple, Box, and Cat. At the end, right before the words yardstick and Zebra comes Xylophone.

That's usually about as much exposure to the instrument as most folks ever get. Your uncle might have some old Zappa records that have some xylophone passages, but for the most part xylophones are about as common as ugly women in beer commercials. It's just not a common instrument. Quick: Name five friends who have a xylophone. See what I mean?

Things were different around 1900. The xylophone was commonly performed, usually as part of a comedy schtick with a bug-eyed xylophonist hammering away on a vaudeville stage. G.H. Green, however, was one man who took the instrument seriously. A prodigy on the instrument, Green thought the xylophone as noble and worthy as the piano or violin and penned serious compositions for it.

Morris Palter, a doctorate of musical arts candidate at UCSD, has given us *Novelty Ragtime Xylophone*, a compilation of Green's compositions. (One, "Dill Pickles," is by composer Charles L. Johnson.) Backed by a trio, Palter plays these compositions with extraordinary precision. Every note is exactly where it should be, even on the most up-tempo of the tunes that test a xylophonist's ability to bring mallet and wood together.

The term ragtime is applied a bit loosely here, referring to the general genre in which Green worked. The compositions run from a fox trot, to a Spanish tinged melody, to a waltz. Additionally, Green played around with these forms, making them ever so slightly off-kilter. It seems as though he stretched the forms to fit in all the music he wanted in a short space and time.

Although Green was a serious composer, his compositions are still fun. They don't have the self-reflective irony of Joplin, but they still have that pluck and pizzazz that comes to mind when you hear the term ragtime.



## Jocelyn Yard String Theory

by Frederick Leonard

This CD contains 10 sweet guitar tracks that transcend folk and classical styles. Slinging a Cordoba and a Takamine, Jocelyn Yard teams up with producer/engineer/instrumentalist Jonathan Gardner to render a soothing and engaging document of guitar instrumentals, occasionally accompanied by vocal, percussion, mandolin, bass, and subtle studio antics including stock samples of thunder and/or square wave noise through a phaser. If I had to guess off the top o' my head as to what five CDs were in her CD player right now, I'd say: Lawrence Juber, Andre Segovia, Chet Atkins, the Romero Brothers, and Kansas.

I have to listen to this in two ways.

The first way you won't find anything that rivals the seeming nonchalant fluidity of Andre Segovia, nor the sensuality of Juber, nor the adept seasoning of Chet Atkins. But I don't have anything bad to say about these cuts. (She actually plays above many of the slingers I've seen and know.)

The second way is that — judging by her photo — she's hardly 20? At such an early place in hopefully a long career, she is way ahead of the game. Way! Playing in classical, Latin and folk-rockish picking styles, she gets around the fretboard just like the hot skateboarders around here who get around by hopping the plaza steps. She grabs her strings with the confidence of knowing "the music" and not just a bag of tricks and a few A7s. She's written most of the cuts and they are also well composed, interesting. A few of them are rudimentary but are still worth the ride. "Mosaic Jungle," however, is a wonderful, wonderful guitar composition. It's the kind of fretting likely to inspire other guitarists to learn for the sake of their own guitar ego. Along with that, I was most happy to listen to "Moonlight Sonata," which demonstrates her proficiency in allowing the soul to speak through the playing.

If this is her first CD I can't wait to hear the next one. Further, I can't wait to say I was one who reviewed her first CD long ago when she gets around to releasing her tenth. If she maintains the relentlessness of this head start, she'll be noticed in big ways.



## Kirsten Dehaan Conform

by Frederick Leonard

This CD opens up with a slinky-sly sexy rocker called "Money Sinner." There's a killer little groove going on here, and the title is very intriguing. Kirsten Dehaan wrote this and sang it, and occasionally played acoustic guitar on it. Enlisting Al Pitrelli on guitars, Dominic Galucci on guitars, Chris Miles on bass, and Phil Ashley and Rob Arthur on piano, she is supported in a modern and danceable rock sheen not far off from Garbage and, say, the Devinyls.

Musically speaking, this sucker is tip-top. The players are tight, well-arranged, and have fun with guitar sounds. It's clean, smart music and this Pitrelli guy plays some cool, tasty solos. Dehaan holds her own and is perfect for delivering the heaviness of her tunes, which specifically (and generally) focus on being the one caught on the wrong side of a break-up. It's arranged in a way that would render itself wonderfully played live as well. My favorite track, "Fade Away," is just a voice and a guitar in a Mazzy Star-ish sort of coffeehouse ambience. Even though I think the band is superb, and they serve up appropriate and groovy arrangements, this is the most honest moment we get from the girl. It is heart-bearing, heart-breaking, vulnerable, and dark, yet sweet. An absolutely delicious take.

This is definitely a rainy day album. The songs, when heard right after breaking up, make you feel as if each one is speaking personally to you. In half the songs she pretends that she's "moved on" even though she's still talking about it. In the other half she's not coping quite as well. "...You say to me/And could you possibly be the one for me/But you know I've heard it all before," is one of many lines, in kind, that represent this singer's anguish, specifically the point of anguish where apathy, courage, and passion become confused and indiscernible from one another. The interesting thing is that while simply reading the words I found them subtly spiteful — a touch at a time — with a dose of reserve. In contrast, Dehaan never really delivers a spiteful expression, but rather alludes to hope in her low, sweet cry of delivery.



## The Coyote Problem Wire

by Ed Burns

The Coyote Problem's debut album strikes a perfect mix between familiar Americana style and heartfelt songwriting expertise.

In fact, *Wire* plays out like a master's course in roots rock style, each song distinct, yet effortlessly fitting into the overall theme.

It's hard to miss the Eagles' influence that runs through much of the album. Singer, guitarist, and writer Peter Bolland seems to have situated the arrangements in order to put his voice in the upper limits of his register, much like Don Henley. It's a savvy move that gives the material a sense of urgency and angst.

But when you think you've got *Wire* figured out, the band turns the wheel and gives you a fresh look. From tunes like "Goin' to Vegas," which feel slow, heavy, and cynical, to "It's Easy," which sings along with a Dave Matthews-like bass line and upbeat harmonies. And despite the variety, bassist and backing vocal wunderkind Marsha Claire's alto provides the connective tissue that holds the mix of styles right on the track.

The band really shines when Bolland is allowed to stretch out and assume the role of balladeer. His mournful voice almost seems genetically designed to bring life to sad songs of loss and undiscovered redemption. "Hold On" is a perfect example. Its simplicity showcases their greatest strength: long slabs of two-part harmony that seem the perfect soundtrack for a long lonely ride out to the desert.

Perhaps the best surprise *Wire* provides is its set of upbeat, irreverent, and pop tunes. While Bolland's first solo release (2003's *Frame*) focused exclusively on ballads and intense narratives, The Coyote Problem has made a point of collaborating with San Diego hero Dave Howard and others to bring a lighter touch to several cuts. "It's Always 4:20 Somewhere" and "You're So Damn Pretty" (cowritten with Howard) leading the charge.

Released on Long Road Records, *Wire* will be available soon on the band's website: the-coyoteproblem.com





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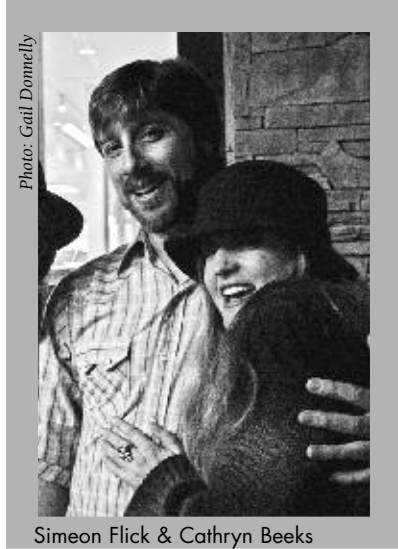
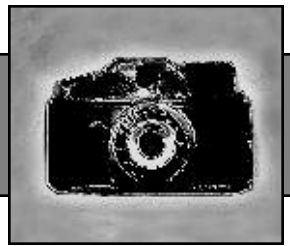


Photo: Gail Donnelly

Simeon Flick & Cathryn Beeks



Photo: Gail Donnelly

Sven-Erik Seaholm at Beatles Tribute 3



Photo: Gail Donnelly

A.J. Croce & Steve Poltz in the studio



Photo: B. J. Morgan

Timm Mudd at benefit for tsunami victims



Photo: Steve Covault

Al Kooper at Acoustic Music San Diego



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Patric Petrie at benefit for tsunami victims



Photo: Gail Donnelly

Michael Tiernan, host of Cosmos Cafe new Open Mic



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Sara & Sean Watkins at benefit for tsunami victims



Photo: Tim Woods

D.C. Hathaway at Just Java Open Mic



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Wayne Johnson Trio at benefit for tsunami victims



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Martin's one millionth guitar at NAMM



Photo: Gail Donnelly

Bagpipers at NAMM



Photo: Greg Gross

Tim & Jessi Woods at Just Java open mic



Photo: Tim Woods

Monty McIntyre at Just Java open mic



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Josh Cass & Tim Graves at Just Java open mic



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Bob Arsenault @ Just Java Open Mic



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Greg Gross at Just Java open mic



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Jerry Pena at Just Java open mic



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