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JUNE 2005 SAN DIEGO TRouBADours

Celebrate the Arts in June

by Paul Hornick

June doesn’t have the best of reputations here in San Diego. Winter and spring get a little chilly, with a fair amount of rain, and we have trouble with fires in the fall. But June in San Diego is the month of glory. While much of the rest of the country is enjoying warmth and sunshine, we’re under the cloak of state Capitol’s Cream of Mushroom Soups. Medicare metropolitan astrology aside, June can still be a time for fun, art, and music. These three artistic events this month will help you forget about the weather.

International Village Celebration

Beginning in 1987, organizers from other parts of the country, the rust belt, and other places “back East,” San Diego has drawn vast crowds from all over the globe. Whether you’re talking about Morningside, Vietnam, Russia, or Guatemala, it would be difficult to think of a country or area of the globe that does not have a representative living in our county. On June 4, the multiethnic-multicultural neighborhood of City Heights promotes San Diego’s international flavor to the city’s true adventurers. This year’s International Village Celebration will spend thousands of dollars and weeks of vacation exploring the world. Come on down to this festival that stretches from Friendship Park to Merito Avenue along University Avenue, and the three outdoor concert stages will feature some San Diego bands performing gospel, R&B, jazz, and hip-hop. Dance performances will greet visitors in the Bulletin Plaza and also with native dancers of Vietnam, Somalia, and other parts of the world.

Kids, along with some adults, can enjoy themselves at the Fun Zone with pony rides, giant slides, slides climbing, a petting zoo, and even a clown or two. The festival also features a job fair, with local businesses advertising jobs and applications. The health fair provides free information on health screenings and information on insurance and various health concerns.

Time: Saturday, June 4, 10 am-5pm

WHERE: University Ave. at Fairmount Admission: Free and open to the public.

ERRATA

Life on the Coast: Gnome Pocket and San Diego’s Fill Band Era

Last month’s profile of Gene Bockey should have listed Stovin Thorn as the author instead of Bart Mendoza. In addition, the photo accompanying the article was not Gnome Bockey but Jimmy Dorsey. The correct photo of Gene Bockey is pictured on the left. The San Diego Troubadour regrets these errors.

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The San Diego Folk Song Society Carries on with Tradition

By Allen Singer

I n 1957, Sam Hinton and a group of his students got together and created the San Diego Folk Song Society. Now, 48 years later, the San Diego Folk Song Society is still alive and well and singing on with old and young voices. Each month, a ritual takes place all over San Diego and outside its borders. Folkies tune their stringed instruments, clear their throats, and practice a special song or two based on a theme for the next Song Society song circle. You’d figure that by this time most of the themes and topics would have been played out and exhausted. But each month brings musical surprises with new sources of song and musical styles.

The folk process continues to be fed and sustained through the Society’s activities. All kinds of musical styles are strummed or plucked at the song circles. Where else could you find traditional, topical, bluegrass, blues, singer-songwriter, folk, and commercial folk played and sung together? Whether it’s a ballad, a 12-bar blues, a self-written tune, a certified folk process.

Back in the 1960s, and even before then, there were many who learned to play folk music by watching, listening, and playing with others in groups. From 1962 to 1965, I spent every Sunday playing in Washington Square Park in New York’s Greenwich Village. Many of us who played there went on to participate in the “great folk scare of the 1960s” (a term coined by Dave Van Ronk). The San Diego Folk Song Society continues to be an evolving, creative forum that evokes that same spirit.

We learned that playing shouldn’t be a chore but rather a learning experience. Play the songs, listen to the content, feel the writer’s theme and emotional message, play it slow and easy, build on your skill base, and listen to others. I learned by playing with a variety of talented people—some who went on to be famous. Playing is fun, and if it takes you down the road to a professional career, that’s terrific. Your goal should be to become the best musician you can be.

The San Diego Folk Song Society offers a great opportunity to have fun, play music, and meet others who are interested in the folk process and its varied musical genres. Age and background all meld and contribute to an exciting and different experience at each meeting. Guiteres, dulcimers, fiddles, Dobros, harmonicas, banjos, mandolins, and ukes play together, creating that special sound that happens when folk musicians get together. Folk music needs a place to be played and as the music is passed down, each generation takes it in its own direction. Cross-fertilization, jive techniques, and life experiences feed the music.

Each month the San Diego Folk Song Society sends out a newsletter, written and edited by Tanya and Larry Rose, which serves as a guide to the folk community’s varied activities, including concerts, coffee house performances, and jams throughout San Diego County. The Society exists because of you, the folk music community, as a place to learn and enjoy and meet others who play and love folk music. Folk music has always been a part of the evolving desire we all have to find a community by coming together to sing, to communicate, and to perpetuate the ongoing human story.

The San Diego Folk Song Society meets at 6 p.m. on the second Saturday of the month at Acoustic Expressions, 2852 University Avenue at Utah Street, in San Diego’s North Park. Membership is $10 per year. Whether you play an instrument, write songs, sing, or like to just listen, the doors are always open. We also sponsor special events for members, including a trip to Mount Laguna each year in July for a week-end of singing and camping. Those interested in participating are encouraged to bring their own creative song writing talents and test the musical waters with us. Folk music will always be here because people need to sing, write about the times, pluck their instruments, and be a part of a community that is always changing but is always there for all to enjoy.

We hope you’ll join us at the next San Diego Folk Song Society meet- ing. In the meantime, keep on picking and singing! For further information, go to www.sdfs.org.

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JUNE 2005 SAN DIEGO TROUBADOUR
Well, another Roots Festival is behind us and we’ve already started the listening sessions for the Adams Avenue Street Fair. We’ve listened to about 100 of some 400 CDs that have been received so far. We’re hoping to get the booking out of the way early this year in order to have a bit more time to get the word out and the crowds in. Steve Kader is coming aboard this year. He used to do booking at the late, lamented 4th & B to help us hire the talent as well as for some wheeling and dealing. We also have a group of people with wide tastes in music who are willing to sit down and listen to all the CDs and decide, in a democratic format, whether they give the music a thumbs up or thumbs down. These are fine, talented people with fairly wide tastes in music. I’m not going to list them here because they don’t need musicians pestering them about being hired. That’s what I’m here for, and, besides, if you drop off a CD and promo package to me at Folk Arts Records and see all the fine discs I have, you might be tempted to buy one and help avert the major economic depression that we find ourselves in today.

The music committee folks don’t own record shops but some of them are Adams Avenue business owners, and if you follo out there support these festivals like we do, you should do your browsing on Adams Avenue and tell the businesses there that you appreciate what they do. I have personally put together 32 Roots Festivals, 12 Street Fairs, and five other kinds of festivals, which means the one coming up in September will make it 49 festival events that date back to 1967. It always makes us feel good to get a pat on the back, and when you tell local business community members that you like what we do, it makes us feel more apt to continue doing it.

Now, about getting booked for the Street Fair. Please note that if you submit a CD, it will be listened to and judged, but take into consideration that it’s pretty much luck of the draw unless you are just so damned good that we’re going to want to hook you after the first iteration. However, since our committee is going to sit down for an evening session and listen to approximately 100 CDs, no matter how good the CDs are, the first ones are going to sound better than the 98th one. That’s because we’re tired and many similar groups begin to sound alike by the end of the evening, and lame is lame, but of course the better the CD, the louder the applause. Elena Fremerman played at our festival a few years back with Buck Wayne and the Buckshoots and the Hot Club of Cowtown as an early morning act and is now playing fiddle on Bob Dylan’s new album. Over the years, we’ve hired performers for our festivals who go on to become so popular that we can’t afford them. And that’s okay. We want to continue to be known as San Diego’s Leaping Off Place.

Now, on to another commercial (my column seems to be full of them this month!): Friends and Neighbors. Do you suffer from bilious humors, nausea, nausea, nausea, nose, nausea, or oscillations? Well, if you do — and, let’s be perfectly honest, in this day and age, almost everyone does — then today is your day. Lucky day. We present to you our artfully assembled WONDER CUBE! We have outraged and fumigated the medical profession in bringing you this MIRACLE OF MODERN PHYSICS, the same exact principle that makes it possible to transmit the Lord’s Prayer to our ASTRONAUTS on the MOON. SONIC WAVES are everywhere and it is through the artful orchestration of these ubiquitous oscillations that we are able to imbue even inanimate objects with vibrant life and new vitality. At the heart of the process is VINTAGE OLD-TIME ROOTS MUSIC. From the hills to the honky tonks, from the old front porch to the old barn dance, from the juke joints to Carnegie Hall, to our ASTRONAUTS on the MOON. MIRACLE OF MODERN PHYSICS, the same exact principle that makes it possible to transmit the Lord’s Prayer to our ASTRONAUTS on the MOON. SONIC WAVES are everywhere and it is through the artful orchestration of these ubiquitous oscillations that we are able to imbue even inanimate objects with vibrant life and new vitality. At the heart of the process is VINTAGE OLD-TIME ROOTS MUSIC. From the hills to the honky tonks, from the old front porch to the old barn dance, from the juke joints to Carnegie Hall,
Where to Go to Hear Acoustic Music in San Diego

First in a series covering San Diego’s best acoustic music venues

By Dwight Wenden

Carey Driscoll has done a worthy thing for our city. He has established a quality acoustic music venue that brings top quality national acts to San Diego in a comfortable and effective listening environment. There are no noisy bar patrons or “number 12, your pizza is ready” background noise in the church, which serves as the concert hall. The venue seats about 250, with good listening from all seats. For many concerts, the seats in the front several rows can be purchased for a small price premium for those who want to be up close. And, if you are unhappy for any reason, Driscoll will refund your admission at the intermission, no questions asked.

Driscoll sets up and runs a quality sound system that presents well in the pleasant acoustic environment of this beautiful old church. The sanctuary, which doubles as a stage, is elevated and large enough to be visible from every seat, and contains a piano that is used by some performers. It is a wonderful space to hear and listen, and an enjoyable place to perform. Parking is catch as catch can in this Normal Heights neighborhood, but a free space on the street can usually be located a block or two.

Having grown up in San Diego, Driscoll remembers listening to great acoustic music throughout the 1960s and 1970s. As he puts it, after that time period there were no San Diego venues presenting acoustic music above the coffee shop level and below the bigger time venues, such as Humphrey’s by the Bay and the Belly Up Tavern. So, he decided to set up his own to fill the gap.

During the several years he has been in operation, he has brought many noteworthy acts to San Diego, including Chris Hillman of the Byrds, John McEuen, David Wilcox, Al Kooper, Geoff Muldaur, and other well-known acts. It is important to note that Driscoll books top quality, lesser-known talent as well, focusing on strong singer-songwriters such as Vienna Teng and many other first-rate writers and performers on their way up. What Driscoll has set out to do — with marked success — is offer the kind of concerts where music lovers can attend with confidence and know they will hear great music even if they haven’t heard of the particular performer. However, if you are looking to hear local bands, this may not suit your needs since Driscoll generally does not book local bands. Look for future articles in this San Diego Troubadour series to learn about local venues where you can hear local bands and acoustic music performers.

Concerts at Acoustic Music San Diego begin at 7:30 p.m. and include two sets and an intermission. During the intermission snacks, coffee, and soft drinks are available (no alcohol) in the church’s social hall, and the audience has an opportunity to meet the performers who have set up a table from which to sell their CDs. The atmosphere is friendly, with those in attendance coming to listen.

This very active venue held 58 shows in 2004 (that’s more than one per week on average) and is looking to host 50 to 75 events in 2005.

Since Driscoll books nationally traveling acts when they are in town, performance days vary, with some occurring on weekends and some during the week.

In addition, there are lots of good places to eat within walking distance: Italian, Greek, and vegetarian, to name a few, so the venue is perfect for an early dinner followed by a concert.

To stay informed, check the web page at www.acousticmusic-sandiago.com or call 619/303-8176. While on the website, or at any concert, sign up for email announcements of upcoming events. This month’s roster includes Fairport Convention, a British folk rock band; Slaid Cleaves, Americana; and the Alison Brown quartet, acoustic bluegrass/jazz along with other great acts scheduled for the remainder of the year.

The downsides of this venue are few: there is no reserved parking, no local bands, and limited advertising — you need to sign up on the email list to know who is coming.

Do yourself a favor and visit this great venue. You won’t regret it!

Carey Driscoll
T

he music industry isn’t what it once was: commodity status
unique “heritage” artists like Neil Young, Bob Dylan, Joni
Mitchell, and Van Morrison—who were allowed to be themselves and
who were actively encouraged to develop long-term careers—have
given way to mass-marketable, dis-
posable faces like Ryan Cabrera,
John Mayer, and Ashlee Simpson.
The resulting music has likewise
gone from warts-and-all soulful to
shiny and R&B-flavored, and most
major label artists now seem
disposable as a toy’s batteries.
Pop culture’s priorities—and our
increasingly attention-deficient cul-
ture’s needs—have undoubtedly
taken a toll, would we seem now as
thought contemporary artists who
embody those former standards of
authenticity and depth so
abundant in the sixties and seven-
ties would have hard-pressed to
find a place in the modern scheme of
tings. Lee Tyler Post, however, is
proof positive that one can still
emulate the old school in one’s
own postmodern way, that it can
be built upon for the future, and that
it can be conducive to positive change.

The youngest of four children,
Post grew up as a shy, lacrony
boy in a poor household in Poway.
He listened to soulful music that
shook an internal chord and that
became an oasis during his difficult
formative years. Led Zeppelin,
Bob Marley, Marvin Gaye, The Doors,
Bruce Springsteen, Prince, Otis
Redding, Ray Charles, Aretha
Franklin, Tina Turner, Patti Labelle,
and Janis Joplin (who just a few of the artists that
became his spiritual guides through a tough but
blue-collar life. He wasn’t until his early twenties, however, that
he would be motivated to learn how
to make this kind of music by
and for himself.

“I won on my way to one day and
Bob Dylan’s ‘Knocking on Heaven’s Door’
came on the radio.”
He recalls that his life literally
changed right then and there. He
went out the very next day and bought
a 12-string acoustic guitar and began
learning how to play and
sing. To this day, he’s never taken a
lesson and he’s never played a sin-
gle cover tune.

The music this Poway’s son
makes is a channel from that au-
teristic spirit of the aforementioned “golden age” of music. It’s rooted in the
formative hardships of poverty and shaped by the way
society tends to selectively reward
or punish its losers. Post’s sound is
much as “the Boss” (Springtime)
and Van Morrison as it is Otis
Redding and Al Green: blue-collar
heartland grit mixed with Motor
City soul.

Over time, and through unful-
filling seminal experiences singing
his own words over other people’s music,
Post has slowly coalesced into his current, self-defined form.

“It didn’t take long to figure
out that I liked being solo as much as
or more than fronting a band, so I
decided to do both.” Since
that time he has progressively focused
more energy on solo performing,
booking and playing his own shows,
and using the sheer power of his voice to deliver the stories
and messages of his own songs.

Although he disparages his guitar
playing, the dearer harmonic choice
he makes on his jumbo acoustic guitar
are a crucial ingredient of the
soulful whole.

Post had spent most of his
life there in San Diego until about
two years ago. After ten relatively
invariably years on the San Diego scene
he began to ponder whether he
really had been born in the wrong
place and time, since his old-
school musical style—and even
he as a person — seemed incongru-
ous with the general prodigities of his
fellow San Diego denizens. And
so it happened that in the autumn
of 2003 he put his life into storage,
packed up the van, rounded up his
long-suffering and supportive wife
Jodie, and moved to Austin, Texas.

After less than a year in Austin
he returned to Nashville, where
he’d spent a previous year during
the late nineties, in an attempt to
honor his craft and learn what he
could about himself and the music
industry.

“During my first stint in Nashville I
found out pretty quickly
that there’s a lot more to
singing and playing than just
singing and playing,” says Post. “I met and
played alongside people who
lived the life of a song—a
kind of folks who came straight from
work with pipe glue still on their
jeans and lyrics written on crum-
pled-up paper. I was also shocked
at how many really good songwri-
ters there were who had come from
all across the country for the exact
same reason: to find out where they
stood.”

“During my time there
I decided my approach
would not be to see fame or accolades,
but that the craft or art of it
would be the reward. Finally, after
five years of live performing, I
felt like I belonged. Playing late
in smoke-filled rooms, with out
fathers at every table waiting their
chance to tell their tale, really
formed a true, supportive blue-col-
tar atmosphere for me.”

Through his travels Post has
learned that times are tough every-
where for solo artists who reflect
the artistic paradigm that he
lives, that the potential fans who
are looking to connect with music
from an artist on a deep and soul-
ful level are now seemingly as rare
as he is.

This self-professed vagabond
will be returning to his native land
for a short while to explore
the heretofore uncharted regions of
the West Coast, to be close to his
parents, and to record a new album
up at his self-constructed Poway
studio, Miracles Somethings.

Post’s goals are modest. He
just wants to make a living with his
art by touring and recording.
He wouldn’t mind—but it isn’t
dead-set on—signing with a label
that would give him the freedom of a
long, loose tether to do things his
way (no small feat), and also to
make a contribution back to the
community.

One of his main priorities is to
continue funding his Marshall
Saint Mission Foundation, which
provides assistance for homeless,
abused children and recovering
addicts, and to establish a Rock the
Saint Foundation, which will bring
aid to cancer-stricken children
and their families.

For Lee T. Post, not being
philanthropic through his life and
art is, he says, “kind of like
taking an accident on the highway
and not stopping to help. You hear that
voice inside saying ‘Stop! See if
anyone’s hurt,’ but most of the
time you keep on driving because you
have your own agenda. You can
ever imagine by calling
on your cell phone and reporting it: ‘I’m
the kind of guy that
listens to this voice say-
ing ‘you have
to stop.’”

Perhaps
one of Post’s
favorite
quotes, from
Rene
Ricard’s
The
Adventures of Lee Tyler Post

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JUNE 2005
by Laura Preble

When her family moved to New Orleans when she was in junior high school, her exposure to the sometimes overly traditional Dixieland in the Crescent City turned her off; when her voice "broke" at 13, she gave up singing for a time. Eventually, though, jazz caught up with Peggy Claire.

She didn't begin her own musical journey as a jazz chanteuse, however. In the early '70s she had planned to simply winter in San Diego before heading to the West Coast to be a self-described "rockabilly musical twist."

In 1973 Claire had planned to simply winter in San Diego before heading to the hip capital of culture, San Francisco, but she never left. During a stop in Ocean Beach she hooked up with two excellent musicians and agreed to sing harmony with their original music if they allowed her to improve, a practice that she thinks eventually led her to jazz. Primarily based in Ocean Beach, Claire spent three years with the trio, traveling up and down the California coast with guitars and backpacks. "I have a lot of rich experience from that," she says, "improvising, doing my own music, making lead, which served me well for jazz."

After three or four years, Claire quit the minstrel life and settled in Ocean Beach for good. By that time she was playing guitar and putting her own lyrics to music. With her ten-piece band, O paleye, she carved a niche for herself locally; she even frequented places like Winston's where, with a young Jennifer Batten on lead guitar, she played to packed houses full of rival bike gang who left their conflicts at the door to listen to her original tunes supplemented by Jimmy Reed and Chuck Berry standards. "I became a favorite of the Hell's Angels," she laughs. "The president of Hell's Angels even built speaker cabinets for me that were so big I had to have Hell's Angels roadies to help me load them."

Until she met local drummer and KSOS radio personality Barry Farrar, Jr., Claire said she "never could find a drummer I liked." Joni Mitchell used to say that until she met Jaco Pastorius, every bass player she had met had built a stone wall right down the middle of her songs. "I couldn't find a drummer who didn't go Bam! Bam! Bam! I was at wits' end." Claire was writing music that was complicated rhythmically, which she jokingly describes as white blues, punk folk, and progressive Dixieland. "In 1980 I finally found a drummer I liked. It was Barry Farrar."

"When I first met her, she was kind of an OB hippie chick," Farrar says. "We played in OB and around and we recorded a little bit." But by the late '80s, gigs for guitar-strumming female singer-songwriters were all but nonexistent; it just wasn't the flavor of the day. It was then that Farrar introduced Claire to the clas sic jazz style by which she has come to be associated. Since Farrar's early influence had been jazz (his father, Barry Farrar, Sr., hosts a weekly big band rehearsal where some of San Diego's premier jazz players meet to jam), it was a natural progression that he would mention it to Claire eventually. "I remember him saying how much he hated the R&B stuff that were doing," she recalls. "I thought I was going to lose him. He said he liked jazz and that "Bye, Bye Blackbird" was one of his favorite songs. I didn't realize that was jazz." Up to that point Claire's opinion of jazz had been rather low. She remembers hearing some all white, less-than-stellar musicians in New Orleans and hearing old songs played badly. The fact was that no black musicians were allowed to play Dixieland on Bourbon Street in the famous rooms where all the tourists (and local whites) went. The only place in the heart of the French Quarter where black Dixieland players were allowed was at Preservation Hall, but no alcohol was sold there. Black musicians could play in R&B bands on Bourbon Street or in jazz bands in their own neighborhoods where white people were told it was "too dangerous" for them to go. When Farrar shared his Miles Davis records with Claire and a tape of Bill Holiday at Carnegie Hall, she says, "I heard Lester Young, Harry Sweet Edison, and I said, 'These are the kind of musicians I want.' Barry said, 'Well, if that's the kind you want, you better stop singing R&B and start learning jazz standards.' I thought about it all night, and the next day I decided to put down my guitar, stop playing my own music, and fired the entire band. I found a jazz pianist, got charts, and started buying records and listening."

Thus far, music had been a natural thing to Claire, something she had never really had to work at. "I'd never spent more than a few hours learning a melody. I was singing 'Body and..."
I knew Joe Marillo was an important jazz musician in town, so I went to a club one Sunday afternoon. I took a pianist I had been working with and asked to sit in.

When the band started playing, Claire realized that singing jazz standards with a band could be much more challenging than she had anticipated. "The bass player played one wrong note and it threw me off, and I never found my way back. This was the first time this had happened to me in my life. I got off that stage and realized I had found a type of music that I knew was going to take study and practice. I didn't think I had a handle on 'Body and Soul' for years."

One of the best stories Claire tells (and she tells a lot of great tales) is about a visit to New Orleans after she had made the decision to study jazz. "I stopped at a little jazz joint called Tyler's," she recalls. "The band playing there was made up of what I now know were the top four avant garde jazz players in New Orleans. There were only a few people in the room, so I asked if I could sit in."

She called Farn's favorite tune, "Bye, Bye Blackbird," and waited for the band to start the traditional intro. "These guys started playing something I couldn't make heads or tails out of. I couldn't find the first note, I couldn't figure out where one was. I stood there for what seemed like an eternity. They were not going to give me one break, not one clue, and all of a sudden a really thin young black man with an alto stood up so fast he nearly turned the table over. He took out a flugelhorn and played an absolutely gorgeous introduction. You'd have to be dead, dumb, and blind not to know when to come in. He brought me back into the tune and didn't even give the other guys a solo. He guided me out so that everything was perfect."

That was 16-year-old Wynton Marsalis, and he wasn't the only famous jazz musician Claire encountered over her tenure as a torch singer.

Part of her informal jazz education took place in part at a club called the Blue Parrot, where world-renowned alto saxophonist Charles McPherson played every week in those days. "I knew he was famous," she remembers. "I had no idea what he was doing, but I figured if I went to hear him every week, that was a way to learn. One week he came up and asked, "Who are you? Are you doing it here?" I told him, 'I want to sing jazz, and I'm here listening to you trying to understand the music that you're playing.' He asked if I'd understood anything, I told him it sounded like a form of the blues, even though it didn't sound like blues. 'That's pretty good,' he said. 'Very few people can hear the blues in bebop. That's a good start. If you hear the blues in bebop, then you can learn jazz.'"

That encounter led to a friendship, and McPherson is still involved in Peggy Claire's life, even though his work usually takes him outside San Diego now. When he learned about Claire's illness, he offered to organize a benefit for her. At first she refused. But with mounting costs and alternative therapies, it became clear that, like many Americans with health problems, Claire would need a little help from her friends.

McPherson called in some favors, Humphrey's by the Bay donated the space, and in April, a slew of musicians gathered to jam and help raise money for a fellow player. "I think it lifted her spirits," McPherson says. "It was nice to see so many people there. It's one thing for people to give well wishes, but to see them physically in one spot, in one congregation, that is pretty much demonstrating they care."

The benefit was well-attended, and it was also an amazing musical event, although Claire herself did not perform that night. "Peggy had a better time than anyone in that room," McPherson laughs. "And for a person dealing with something that heavy, you'd never know it from her demeanor. She looks great."

Most recently, Claire took the stage herself at Humphrey's with Pat Dana on guitar and L.A. bassist Ben May. She had been playing with them in September of last year when she was first diagnosed with small-cell lung cancer. "It was after this very intense gig, one of the most wonderful I'd had in years."
**Bluegrass CORNER**

**Jimmie Martin**

By Sven-Erik Seaholm

Jimmie Martin, known as the King of Bluegrass, has departed this world. Jimmie left for the great beyond in a Nashville hospice on Saturday, May 14. A true original, and one of the formative pioneers of bluegrass music, Martin leaves a legacy that few can match as well as a reputation for individuality and hard living that marks him as one of the most colorful characters in bluegrass history.

Martin was born on a hog farm in Hancock County near Sneedville, Tennessee, where he hunted possums and sold the skins to buy a guitar when he was 10. After being fired from a factory for singing on the job when he was 21 years old, Martin was hired for the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville and talked his way backstage, where he persuaded Bill Monroe to sing a couple of songs with him. Impressed, Monroe hired him, which fulfilled Martin’s life long dream of becoming a member of the Bluegrass Boys, with whom he was lead singer and guitarist. Martin stayed with Bill Monroe for five important years, helping with the writing of such classics as “Uncle Pen,” “I’ll Meet You in Church on Sunday Morning,” and others.

In 1953 he teamed up with the Osborne Brothers, Bobby and Sonny, to record some of bluegrass’ early classics like “She’s a Cute Thing,” “I Can’t Let You Go,” and “Save It.” After his stint with the Osborne Brothers, Martin formed his own band called the Sunny Mountain Boys, appearing regularly on the WJR Barn Dance show in Detroit.

In 1956 Martin and his Sunny Mountain Boys signed with Decca Records (now know as MCA) and cut some of his best classics, including “Sunny Side of the Mountain,” “Hit Parade of Love,” “20-20 Vision,” and “Freeborn Man,” hits that charted regularly on Billboard, Cash Box, and Record World magazines.

As his reputation grew, Martin traveled to Louisiana and joined the Louisiana Hayride and the Hee Haw Jamboree. He moved to Nashville in 1963 and made many appearances on the Grand Ole Opry.

Martin collaborated with many artists throughout his career, including the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band. His voice is the first heard on the 1972 album Will the Circle Be Unbroken? and his performances on late albums brought his feisty spirit to audiences that might never have attended a bluegrass festival.

Martin lived his days at his home in Hermitage, Tennessee, performing up near the end of the day, drinking, watching boxing, hunting, and always loving bluegrass music.

In a time when so much music is middle-of-the-road publiah, we will indeed miss the creative originality of Jimmie Martin. May the King rest in peace.

**LOCAL Happenings**

Rhonda Vincent and the Rage will be at the La Paloma Theatre in Encinitas on Sunday, June 19, with an opening set by San Diego’s 117º West. The show starts at 7 p.m., tickets are $30 in advance, $35 day of show, and are available at all SDBS events or at www.lapalomathena.com. You won’t want to miss a chance to see the reigning Queen of Bluegrass and her oh, so hot band.

Mark your calendar for the Bluegrass Bluegrass Day at the Fair on Sunday, June 26, noon to 10 p.m., where there will be bands, a band scramble, and lots of fun. To sign up or for admission to the fair, keep pickin’!

**The Zen of Recording**

**Sven-Erik Seaholm**

Time. Of all the things we value most, it would appear that the saving of that precious commodity gets the highest share of attention with regard to new innovations and technologies. Since the industrial revolution at the turn of the 20th century (we will even get used to that?), there has been an all out effort to wring every last drop from the working time we have in order to free up more of it for other concerns, like sunbathing, partying, watching Brains Hot Wrigley marathon, or seemingly getting more work done.

Sure, the operative words used to be “faster and easier,” which is how we come to love washing machines, spray paint, and Google.

At late hour, it’s just about faster. Ever tried text- messaging? You type in a message on your cell phone, and the person you’ve addressed it to can get the whole gist just by looking at his or her phone. Ever played videogames? You’ve suddenly gigantic thumbs are now stomp ing all over your screen, and you’re getting a genuine buzz, new friends, even. So much more is happening in a fraction of the time it used to take, and the excitement is contagious! A couple of cool little projects presented themselves recently, and both sides of this slippery coin did as well.

**PONG**

The first was the opportunity to complete last November’s Nettforo show onto DVD. I used Sony’s Vegas + DVD Production Suite 6.0 ($179) for this task. Having had some experience with Vegas (I still use version 2.0 as my main track- ing environment) I was eager to start slicing and dicing the great performances from the event into DVD format.

Lots of improvements to the program have been made with regard to editing, and I found that this made things quite a bit faster, particularly with regard to editing grouped clips. Video capture is well integrated, and the ability to import video to a variety of formats and resolutions helps greatly, especially when you know what your intended final medium is.

Documentation and support are appallingly low priorities for Sony, however, and all of my questions were posed (and sort of answered) by the company’s online newsgroups. Having direct contact with customer support costs extra, which is a growing trend among software manufacturers and a terrible way to treat your customers in my opinion.

I eventually got things to where I was ready to render and started the process. The counter said “Time remaining: 4:26,” and then nothing. I re-rendered, and nothing. It turned out to be the “Production Interrupt” segment. I grabbed Smart Loops, Pro Drum Works Volume One ($179) and went to work. The Pro Drum Works’ ingenious labeling system made it very easy to find the styles, sounds, and tempos I was looking for, and their inclination of count-ins, hits, and free form endings was so intuitive that I began to feel guilty that I wasn’t working very hard bringing them all into Acid was a breeze and when the tempo was changed, the bass and lead melody quality was very apparent. Crash and ride symbols were added at accent points to create a very realistic drum performance in less than one minute that would have taken to set up and record it. Acid’s seamless compatibility with Vegas made them an indispensable combo, and I was quickly able to add additional bass, guitar, and vocal parts. At the end of the session, I was even able to burn a red book-compliant CD directly from Vegas. I didn’t save 80 hours, but I did get it done in extra time of Pac Man-ward.

By Sven-Erik Seaholm and comments by Sven in his studio

**Jude Solo Shows**

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Garnet Rogers

Sunday, June 19
7:30pm, $20

Hailed by the Boston Globe as a “charismatic performer and singer,” Garnet Rogers is a man with a powerful physical presence — he is almost six and a half feet tall and has a voice to match. With incredible range and thoughtful, dreamy phrasing, Rogers is widely considered by fans and critics alike to be one of the finest singers anywhere. His music is intense, passionate, highly sensitive, and deeply powerful as demonstrated by his extraordinary songs about people who are not obvious heroes and about small, every day victories.

RESERVATIONS and INFO: (619) 443-9699

Radio Daze

by Jim McInnes

In the late 1980s I hated to do remote broadcasts. I loved the comfort and anonymity of the studio, where I could create “Theater of the Mind” and where I could control all the show’s elements. Mostly though, I hated to go outside of the studio because I was a friggin’ TUNA! When I’d walk down the hallways at work, potted plants would topple over, the glass would rattle, and records would skip! My face was like two big red beachballs separated by a pair of elbows and a mustache!

But when my boss suggested doing my show from a few of San Diego’s great summer attractions to celebrate the first day of summer in 1989, I couldn’t refuse. I went out in the station’s van with my co-worker and pal, Dianna Eades, a woman who never shed away from a good time. Even better, she drove. But best of all, I’d let Dianna write the next part by paraphrasing her email, so here it is, in her own words. She promised to remain “as honest as a nun!”

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THElineUP

by José Sinatra

Gef funded by Chester B. Kerber Foundation, Inc.

Hosing Down

by Jim McInnes

Not that it matters in life’s most puerile schemes, but I’ve been a Guinness record holder for exactly three decades this month. It was at a lively clink called Barnaby’s in Whaatan, Maysland, that I swallowed more ounces of Guinness ale than any other human being could within one minute. To this day I remain secure in that rather auspicious accomplishment, since records are not made to be broken but to be played on turntables.

At one point, shortly after my victory, I realized a sudden urgency to “powder my nose” in Barnaby’s well-appointed boutique de l’hygiène. I realized a sudden urgency to “powder my nose” in Barnaby’s well-appointed boutique de l’hygiène. I realized a sudden urgency to “powder my nose” in Barnaby’s well-appointed boutique de l’hygiène.

I’m sure it was the freezing weather. The freezing weather. The freezing weather.

Now, that is so Twentieth Century, my dear! I hate to do (or even think about) the “portable phone.” (This was cradled in a five-pound battery pack!) As I began my report to the studio, the penguin cops, the big guy, waddled over and untied my shoelaces! I was stunned. The tourists and schoolchildren outside the glass were slapping each other on the shoulder, pointing at me, and laughing! I’m sure it was a sight that made their vacations worthwhile!

But, of course, I didn’t read that. This is the Aughts, remember? And we are in the U.S. of A., are we not? No, this is what the studio has the franchise fee.

I went out in the station’s van with my co-worker and pal, Dianna Eades, a woman who never shed away from a good time. Even better, she drove. But best of all, I’d let Dianna write the next part by paraphrasing her email, so here it is, in her own words. She promised to remain “as honest as a nun!”

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11
**Hillbilly Goth Comes to the Adams Avenue Roots Festival**

by Dwight Worden

The Earl Brothers perform at the Adams Avenue Roots Festival

Hillbilly Goth. That's how the Earl Brothers describe themselves and their music. Coming from a background in Goth-style rock 'n' roll bands, Bobby Earl Davis (banjo), John McKelvy (guitar and lead vocals), Josh Sidman (bass), and Larry Hughes (mandolin) all dress in black as they present their unique style of old time music. But with roots of early Stanley Brothers music (Ralph and Carter Stanley) the Earl Brothers do a foot tapping job of presenting an original show of “new” old time music, having definitely captured that classic sound but varnished with their own unique polish.

With tunes like “Rattlesnake Highway’s song stanley brothers music (Ralph and Carter Stanley), the Earl Brothers do a foot tapping job of presenting an original show of “new” old time music, having definitely captured that classic sound but varnished with their own unique polish.

Stanley Brothers music (Ralph and Carter Stanley) the Earl Brothers do a foot tapping job of presenting an original show of “new” old time music, having definitely captured that classic sound but varnished with their own unique polish.


don’t drink from a whiskey bottle,” “I’ve been sitting here drinking,” and “The songs of liquor and hard living with the conviction of those who have “been there, done that.”

Asked about their reputation for partying and hell raising, the band says two things: first, that there is some truth in the rumor, which they like to cultivate, and second, that with their current heavy touring schedule the partying has slowed considerably. Still, the Earl Brothers, who are not brothers by the way, are all single and unencumbered by family and still know how to have fun on the road.

The Earl Brothers started when Bobby had, as he calls it, a “gothic idea.” Bobby and John McKelvey do all the writing for the band, and the band rarely perform anything other than originals. At the Adams Avenue Roots Festival last month the “Brothers” were very well received as they performed all original material, except for a clever version of “Cluck Old Hen.” The band’s ability to sense and transmit a classic old time sound with a new twist is, no doubt, partly due to the fact that Bobby, who grew up in Virginia, and John, who grew up in Florida, were both being steeped in mountain and bluegrass music as kids. Now Bobby reports that he tries not to listen to music, preferring to allow his original thoughts and melodies to “percolate” untainted by the influence of others. If he does listen to music, Bobby reports it is usually something very different in order to maintain that purity of separation.

The band members are having a great time, with a heavy travel and performance schedule to keep them busy and out of trouble, at least sometimes. With one CD already out and a second expected in this band to continue to carve its own creative niche in the venerable Goth. You gotta love it!

Steve Denyes wears many hats. He is a singer-songwriter who has six albums to show for his 15 years performing throughout the U.S. and abroad. He is author of Caging for a Living: Conrado Conversations with Independent Working Musicians, a book chronicling the ups and downs in the lives of musicians. He is a music educator who teaches music to children in kindergarten through sixth grade in the Escandalo school district. And he is an arts advocate who currently serves as vice president of the 101 Artists’ Colony in Encinitas, a non-profit organization dedicated to bringing art to the community. He is also an actor and playwright with one musical play, Waiting on Arleen, to his credit and another — in a Gringo Bar — ready to made its debut at the North Park Vaudville Theater on June 11. The play is the second in a series based on the lives of a coffeehouse barista, a hotel manager, and Arleen, the woman they love.

In a Gringo Bar is set in a bar in Zihuatenejo, Mexico, a place where Denyes, a lifelong San Diegan, recently came to know first-hand last year when he was invited to perform at the International Guitar Festival there. “When I arrived, my host took me to a little place in town called Rick’s Bar and immediately fell in love with it,” Denyes explains. “The place was filled with characters — a great mix of locals, expatriates, travelers, and misfits who all found their place at this little watering hole. I know right away that I’d have to write about it.”

That experience and a quote from the bartender on duty that night who said, “It’s a small world in a gringo bar!” proved to be inspiration enough for Denyes to change the direction of the play he’d been working on and set it in Zihuatanejo. He returned to perform at this year’s Guitar Festival to share the results. “My old friends from Rick’s came out to the show and got a big kick out of being included in some of the songs,” says Denyes. “I had changed their names and a few details but they all knew exactly who I was talking about.”

Two musicians will provide accompaniment during the play, but Denyes will carry the plot of the story himself using only the songs and short monologues. In a Gringo Bar North Park Vaudville Theater 2031 El Cajon Blvd. 8 p.m., June 11, 18, 25 Reservations: 619/220-8663 or 858/755-0085

Steve Denyes

**Steve Denyes**

**In a Gringo Bar**

**San Diego Troubadour**

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**BRENTWOOD FOLK HERITAGE PRESENTS**

**SAN DIEGO FOLK HERITAGE**

Phil Harmonic Sez:

"Don’t talk unless you can improve the silence.”

— Veronica Proverb
Marklyn Retzer

**Beach Days**

Contrary to the old adage stating not to—do I still start judging an album by its cover. Even in this day of the bonus album or CD, I still want the cover to visually point me in the right direction toward the musical themes and structures inside. Beach Days’ CD cover promises something lush and far away. The exquisite photography captures a world beyond a simple sunset that happened to stand in the way of the camera lens. Likewise, the liner notes ring of a “bushy, bushy blonde” surf safari—yet touching poetics into his tattooed road journal.

The first track on this solo guitar outing, amply spritzed through—alone (in his room, not Brian Wilson’s). I listened to “Coolgroove,” the first track on this solo guitar outing, and it meanders through with overdubs of ukulele and a second guitar. Good stuff. Good ideas. But it also feels a bit lonely. Even with over-dubbing, Retzer seems to be alone (in his room, not Brian Wilson’s). I listened through several tracks and although I’m not expecting virtuoso guitar work of, say, a Joe Pass, I still feel a little more.

“Can’t get me wrong. Retzer really knows his stuff. And if this were a guitarist’s demo, I’d be jumping on board. ‘Nice burn’? But this is an album comprising songs that, for the most part, are skeezy with working a surf reference muddled together into a composite that could easily be renamed “Obedience by a Guy Practicing Late at Night While Sitting on the Edge of his Bed.” Track seven, “Ascending,” which has superb rhythm flourishes, would work as the Shout Chorus. With “Shoutest,” things start to get interesting. Leave it to an old blues shuffle, this one with Latin ornamentation, to provide something new. With “Ritmo del Mar,” I finally feel as if my VW van is crossing the border into Baja. And it strikes me: The B-side is better. “Squid Roe” is a gross pun but a nice rag of sorts that seems to take the first nine skellets and roll them into one successful song (which you should have been done in the first place.).

The guitar and uke pickers out there are certainly going to appreciate Retzer’s chops. For the rest, perhaps this work would better be a sound track to a movie filled with awesome surf footage that intersperses with a group of beach bugs banquetting out “Barbara Ann” around the campfire.

Otoscope

**Pure Speculation**

This disc bears an uncanny resemblance to a mid-eighties soundtrack accompanying one of those countless (teen-tam) coming-of-age movies that came out back then. Good looking rebel high school senior drives his convertible into the parking lot all at the girls stare, cue music … Said teen male is given the “stop being a bad boy” speech by his good-hearted girlfriend, cue music … Same guy quits job at fast food joint and drives off in a blaze of glory to meet his posse for some underage drinking and meaning of life banter, cue music. Pure Speculation by Otoscope could have found a good home as one of these soundtracks. The drum sounds, the soaring background vocals, the guitar tones, the settings effects, and the lead vocals all sound like they were lifted from the very same set of skaters and blues from when you’re keen on eighties’ power rock à la Survivor, Honeymoon Suite, Journey, etc., then this disc could be a pleasant addition to your collection.

Track one, “Shallow,” and the last track, “I Save You,” represent the most effective straight-up rock tracks while “Lover’s Leap” stands out as the best overall effort with its clever and heartfelt lyrics. Otoscope clearly put a lot of heart and effort into this recording and certainly it is well executed, but it is a musical blast from the past to be sure.

Well, that oversight is about to be corrected. The forthcoming issue is a double audio CD, featuring more than two and a half hours of tunes and stories, many of which were recorded live at the San Diego Folk and Adams Freightliner Rosas Festivals. The astounding harmonica solos on this album include Celtic, American, and Latin inspired reeds, melodies, reeds, jugs, double jugs, airs, fiddle tunes, yiddish melodies, hymns, hoedowns, and hornpipes. This should be required listening for all potential harmonica players. Even you cross harp guys ought to be made aware of this man. M y favorite two tunes.

Joe Rathburn

**Master of the Solo Diatonic Harmonica**

On March 31, Sam Hinton celebrated his 88th birthday. The Sam Hinton Folk Heritage Festival will be celebrated at Grossmont College on June 4th (see page 3 for more information about this festival). In addition, Sam’s latest recording, Sam Hinton, Master of the Solo Diatonic Harmonica, will be released on Eagle’s Whistle Music. You can order it by writing to them at P.O. Box 620774, Woodside, CA 94062, calling 650/804-2049, or visiting www.samhinton.org.

Speaking as a harmonica player myself since the 1950s, Sam is perhaps the greatest and most innovative non-first (position) solo diatonic harmonica players of my time. I’ve never understood why more of his harmonica music hasn’t been recorded. Yet of the 200 plus songs Sam has commercially recorded between 1947 and 1992, only two tracks contain any harmonica.

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Various Artists

**Accordion Conjunto Champs**

Thirteen of the 21 tracks on this CD are taken from various Arhoolie CDs, one is from an LP, and the rest from unused takes and singles that saw a local Texas issue only. This collection makes for some fine listening if you’re a norteno accordion fan. Lively polkas, waltzes, and two-steps with a vocal here and there. Some of the names are familiar: Flaco Jimenez, Narcisco Martinez, Santiago Jimenez (Jr. and Sr.), and some lesser known artists like Fred Zermerle and Leandra Guerrero. This CD is a fine introduction to several artists you might want to check into. It’s a fine introduction to all of their high music ethic applied in this double-length C D.

It doesn’t stop there. There’s Roger Friend and Paul Beach on 5-string bass. Tight, interesting, never over-done, stops, dodges, and flows through time and changes in a way that deserves serious attention. And that’s fun.

Schreyer keeps things down on bass. There’s a short list of sit-ins, most notably the keyboard contributions by Dave Beldock. One fine player on his own responsibility, but the thing they do right” on this record is play together, weaving their way through changes that seem more like dialogue. A fantastic guitar-playing team. It doesn’t stop there. There’s Roger Friend and Paul Beach on 5-string bass. Tight, interesting, never over-done, stops, dodges, and flows through time and changes in a way that deserves serious attention.

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Bowen Jennifer Lee/Jamie Crawford/Aaron Acoustic Expressions, 2852 University Flower Hill Mall, Del Mar, 8pm.

Calima Quartet 14 Keb' Mo'/Ledisi City Hall, 5:30pm.

Island, 7:30pm.

Roy Ruiz Clayton/Al Esther/Davida/Sue Palmer Trio 2852 University Ave., 8pm.

Lestat's, 9pm.

I See Hawks in LA Chris Carpenter Steve Winwood Mesa Blvd., 7pm.

Radio Free Earth Hopper Posada Way, Julian, 10am.

Europa, 873 Turquoise St., 7:30pm.

KellerS: Storytelling with Kendra Long/Stephanie Boysen/Trevor Davis.

Gaslight Café Windy Ridge Bluegrass Band. SBCF Live, 7:30pm.

Windy Ridge Bluegrass Band. SBCF Live, 7:30pm.

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**JUNE MUSIC CALENDAR**

**WEDNESDAY • JUNE 1**
- HIP HOP: Open Mic, Reggae, Dance 5pm - 8pm

**THURSDAY • JUNE 2**
- Salsa Band 8pm

**FRIDAY • JUNE 3**
- ROCK & REGGAE, Lights & Sounds, Social Goals, High Tide, 8pm, 5$ cover

**SATURDAY • JUNE 4**
- HIP HOP: Natural Selection, Foreign Eternity, 8pm, $5 cover

**SUNDAY • JUNE 5**
- OPEN MIC SUNDAY, 1 - 8pm

**MONDAY • JUNE 6**
- R&B & Easy Swing Band

**TUESDAY • JUNE 7**
- Salsa Band 8pm

**WEDNESDAY • JUNE 8**
- HIP HOP: Yellow, Higher Mindz, 8pm

**THURSDAY • JUNE 9**
- Rock, Dance, Latin, 8pm

**FRIDAY • JUNE 10**
- Salsa Band 8pm

**SATURDAY • JUNE 11**
- Salsa Band 8pm

**SUNDAY • JUNE 12**
- OPEN MIC SUNDAY, 1 - 8pm

**MONDAY • JUNE 13**
- Salsa Band 8pm

**TUESDAY • JUNE 14**
- Salsa Band 8pm

**WEDNESDAY • JUNE 15**
- HIP HOP NIGHT: Featuring special guests weekly, 8pm

**THURSDAY • JUNE 16**
- Old Town Jazz Band

**FRIDAY • JUNE 17**
- Salsa Band 8pm

**SATURDAY • JUNE 18**
- ACOUSTIC: See Spot Run CD Release

**SUNDAY • JUNE 19**
- OPEN MIC SUNDAY, 1 - 8pm

**MONDAY • JUNE 20**
- Salsa Band 8pm

**TUESDAY • JUNE 21**
- Salsa Band 8pm

**WEDNESDAY • JUNE 22**
- HIP HOP NIGHT: Featuring special guests weekly, 8pm

**THURSDAY • JUNE 23**
- Salsa Band 8pm

**FRIDAY • JUNE 24**
- Salsa Band 8pm

**SATURDAY • JUNE 25**
- Salsa Band 8pm

**SUNDAY • JUNE 26**
- OPEN MIC SUNDAY, 1 - 8pm

**MONDAY • JUNE 27**
- Salsa Band 8pm

**TUESDAY • JUNE 28**
- Salsa Band 8pm

**WEDNESDAY • JUNE 29**
- HIP HOP: Foreign Eternity, Of One Mind, 8pm

**THURSDAY • JUNE 30**
- Salsa Band 8pm

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**THE DOUBLE EAGLE**

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- June 18: Andrew Hull, 8pm

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