



East Bay Banjo Club

Since 1963



March / April 2017

Members Newsletter

Volume 12 Issue 2

Events Calendar

Sat-Sun, April 22-23

Banjo-Rama
Carmichael Elks Lodge
5631 Cypress Avenue
Carmichael, CA

Tuesday, May 30

Memorial Day Program
Stoneman Village
390 E. Leland Road
Pittsburg CA 2 – 3 p.m.

www.eastbaybanjo.org

To book the East Bay Banjo Club to play at your event, please contact booking agent Bob Ehrhorn via email at bobehrhorn@comcast.net or call (707) 731-0198.

President's Message

By Jack Starr

April showers? Wow, is winter ever going to end? Seems like we cannot go for more than a day or two and we get rain, rain, rain. "I Get The Blues When It Rains" -- what a great name for a song to be played THIS April.

Speaking of April, our regular Sunday practice sessions at the Round Table Pizza in Pleasant Hill have been going really well. Bud Pierce says we are lined up to continue the Sunday events at that location for the month of May. More on that as time goes on.



April 15! No, not Tax Day, but East Bay Banjo Club payout day at Livorna Park in Alamo. Early Saturday morning arrival (by 8 a.m.) and downbeat was at 9 a.m. What a great event. We had almost a full crew, though some of our members were unable to attend. The two-hour event was really fun. The Alamo Rotary Club sponsors an annual Easter Egg Hunt which started at 10 a.m. There must have been 6,500 hidden Easter eggs (some not so well hidden so the youngest "bunnies" could find them) and the youngsters really had a good time with the hunt. Our own Jack Convery was there, not as a banjoist but a balloonist! The Rotary Club and the audience appreciated the lively tunes we played and our Music Director, Karen Hefter, did a superb job of keeping us in time, on tune and smiling. See pages 4 and 5 for photos.

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President's Message, *continued from page 1*

The East Bay Banjo Club has been invited to return next year so we must have done something right. Thanks to Bob Ehrhorn for arranging this great gig.

Ready for Banjorama? We play on Sunday, April 23, at the Carmichael Elks Club. We have two sets, one "off stage" in an adjoining room and one set on the "big stage". I hope you have been practicing for the event as this is a good time for EBBC to show the banjo world what we are made of. See other notes in this newsletter for times of performance for EBBC and directions to the venue. Our uniform is white shirt, black bow tie, gold vest, black shoes and black socks since this is a formal event. Hats (straw boater/skimmer) are optional. For a scenic drive to the event we usually take Route 160 along the Sacramento River. It's a slower drive than the freeway but much less traffic and some really nice views along the river. We usually stop in Isleton for dinner on the way back to the Bay Area. A new place to try is George's Steak House, featuring superb prime rib. If you have ever eaten at the Del Rio Hotel in Isleton, the restaurant there is now closed, but the menu, chef, and all the trimmings have been moved to George's. It's a treat one should not miss if you are a beef lover.

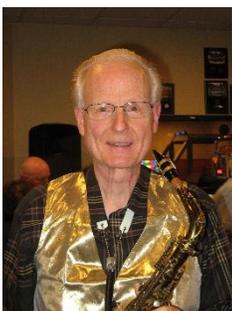
Please be ready to "sign up" for additional playouts as they come up. We have a playout in Pittsburg on Memorial Day weekend, and our gigmaster, Bob Ehrhorn, would really appreciate more players.

As Georgette Twain always said:

"Banjorically yours,"

Jack Starr
President

Membership In EBBC Keeps Growing



Doug Johnson (pictured at left), a saxophone player, is our first reed player, at least since any current club member can remember. His sax provides a softer, gentler sound along with the volume and brightness of the banjos. Doug's wife Mimi also attends EBBC's weekly practices.

Other new members include **Alex and Cathy Dongallo** and **Pat Warnick**, a previous member from awhile back who has rejoined. We hope to run photos of their smiling faces in the next issue.

The club's membership now totals 67. Somehow, even as many observers bemoan the demise of old-time four-string banjo music and the clubs that play it, the East Bay Banjo Club keeps on keepin' on.

Music Director's Message

By Karen Hefter

Dear EBBC Members,

I want to congratulate all of you on your willingness to embrace change. We are undergoing a lot of changes right now and I think that all of these changes are starting to result in a stronger, more vibrant club for all of us to enjoy. Changes so far this year include a new music director, the addition of our first wind instrument, having people other than the music director announce at playouts, seating changes at practice, teaching generic song intros to everyone so that every member who is interested can participate in starting songs, and the addition of more than five new members already this year. These changes build on the major changes over the past few years, which included encouraging club members to sing, the expansion of membership to fretted instruments like ukuleles, acoustic guitars, and an autoharp, and the willingness to test and adopt new songs suggested by members. While many banjo clubs around the country are shrinking due to aging of the players and audience members and lack of interest in the banjo, our club has been steadily growing. Our new members, whether they play the banjo or something else, bring much to the club. For example, at a playout in February, we had 20 players, including eight singers, five people doing intros, an announcer, a bass and a gut bucket, a saxophone, a sound crew, and a strong contingent of rhythm players. It was truly a team effort. We will have a strong showing at Banjo-Rama this year as we are bringing 25 players.



For many, many years, we were fortunate to have a music director who started and played lead on all of the songs, sang most of them, did the announcing, and even handled all of the equipment logistics. I know I can't do all of that and I don't see us having a single person with all of those capabilities coming down the pipeline as music director again in the immediate future. Therefore, it will be up to everyone in the club to step up and take a small leadership role in the areas where their talents and interests lie. Some may be singers, some may be announcers, some may start songs, some will be board members or appointed chairs, and some may contribute useful suggestions and ideas. I will be going back to school full time this fall and I am unsure if my schedule will allow me to remain as music director at that point. So, my goal between now and then is to get the club to a place where it is not completely dependent on the music director for leading all aspects of playouts and practices. We already have several lead players. If we also have a couple of people that are comfortable announcing, a variety of singers, five or six (or more) people who can each start a number of songs, and a couple of people who can handle the equipment, not only will the club successfully continue but each member can feel proud that they are making a significant contribution to a thriving whole.

I challenge each and every member, regardless of your playing level, to continue to embrace change as we try new things. I challenge you to step out of your comfort zone a bit, whether by starting songs in practice or at a playout, learning to play a song by memory (rhythm or melody), learning a new right hand rhythm, announcing at a playout, becoming a board member or chairperson, or something else. If you have ideas and suggestions for ways to improve the club, please let me know. Not every new idea that is tried will pan out, but we won't know until we try it. Unlike many other banjo bands which restrict membership based on playing ability, we are a banjo playing club that encourages players of all levels, including those who are just starting to play the banjo, to come together and play happy banjo music. We all have something to contribute and we can all learn from one another. Plus, we have a lot of fun!

EBBC Entertains At Orinda Masonic Lodge Event

By Sheila Welt

The East Bay Banjo Club played for an enthusiastic audience at the Orinda Masonic Lodge Crab Feed on February 24. A 20-strong group of musicians and singers represented the club. Club musicians included Guy Black (bass), Tom Brunetti, Rich Combs, Betty David, Bob Ehrhorn, Don Granberg (banjo and washboard), Karen Hefter, Red Higgins, Terry Horner (gutbucket and washboard), Ardie Jarrett, Doug Johnson (saxophone), Garry Kerr, Bob Malucelli, Bud Pearce, Larry Risner, Jan Ruzicka, Slavka Ruzicka, Diana Starr, and Sheila Welt. Doug Johnson's wife Mimi attended as a guest.

EBBC started off with Master of Ceremonies Bud Pearce giving introductions and information to introduce each song. Some in the audience sang along on songs they enjoyed, and several got up to dance. The club played a good mix of songs including instrumentals and vocals.

The club's traditional closing number, "When the Saints Go Marching In," included a parade line led by Sheila Welt followed by audience members and Terry Horner with his washboard. The club thanks the audience as they made it a wonderful experience for those of us who performed. A great time was had by all.

Alamo Kids Hunt Easter Eggs As EBBC Plays On

By Karen Hefter

Photos courtesy of **Skip Kuebel, Cyber Island Graphics / skiptown@comcast.net**

Music Director Karen Hefter extends a big "thank you" to everyone who attended the payout at the Alamo Rotary Club's Easter Egg Hunt at Livorna Park on April 15. Karen says it "was a really fun event and we got really favorable comments both from the client and from audience members. It's neat that they want us back next year!"

Karen noted that the club overcame numerous obstacles to make it work. "We pulled off a great performance even though over half of our singers cancelled within 24 hours of the gig due to illness, plus we were unable to use the monitors, mixer and my banjo mike because the mixer wouldn't turn on. In addition, we ended up charging the mics before (and even during) the show because they were not charged when we got to the gig. I appreciate the flexibility of the singers who did extra duty and of everyone else who just went with the flow. A big thank-you goes to Garry Kerr for hauling the equipment. I'm also very proud of Ardie Jarrett and Tom Brunetti who did a great job starting songs for the first time at a public performance. It was a great team effort."

EBBC also thanks photographer Skip Kuebel of Cyber Island Graphics for permission to use his images.



Livorna Park in Alamo (EBBC in gazebo)



The East Bay Banjo Club prepares to play

More photos from the Livorna Park Easter Playout

All Photos Courtesy of Skip Kuebel, Cyber Island Graphics



Jack Starr tunes up



Front: Karen Hefter, Betty David, Jack Starr, Garry Kerr
Back: Diana Starr, Barbara Findlay (mostly hidden), Tom Brunetti



Bob Ehrhorn sings one for the crowd



Barbara Findlay strums away (Don Granberg, foreground; Pat Warnick, background)

2017 EBBC Playout Participation

Playouts to date: 2 (through April 16, 2017)

Guy Black	1
Tom Brunetti	2
Richard Combs	1
Betty David	2
Bob Ehrhorn	2
Barbara Findlay	1
Don Granberg	2
Karen Hefter	2
Red Higgins	1
Terry Horner	2
Ardie Jarrett	2
Doug Johnson	1
Garry Kerr	2
Bob Malucelli	1
Phil Myers	1
Linda Myers	1
Bud Pearce	2
Larry Risner	1
Jan Ruzicka	2
Slavka Ruzicka	2
Diana Starr	2
Jack Starr	2
Sheila Welt	2
Pat Warnick	1



EBBC To Play Two Sets At Banjo-Rama 2017

The East Bay Banjo Club will play two sets at Banjo-Rama on Sunday, April 23. We appreciate the opportunity to show our stuff to the crowd.

We have been asked to play in both the morning and afternoon sessions, which is a great privilege.

Our two sets will include geographic titles such as “California Here I Come,” “Georgia On My Mind,” and “Carolina In The Morning”, and “Alabamy Bound,” and a wide variety of other songs including the “Battle Hymn Of The Republic,” This Land Is Your Land,” “Beer Barrell Polka”, “Heart Of My Heart”, “Take Me Out To The Ballgame,” and the “youngster” of all the songs in our set list, the 1960s hit “In The Summertime” by Mungo Jerry.

A good time will undoubtedly be had by all

Board members and appointed officers for 2017

Board Members

President: Jack Starrjohn.starr@att.net
Vice President: John Greitzerjohngreitzer@outlook.com
Secretary: Diana Starr.....john.starr@att.net
Treasurer: Rich Combs.....combsrichard@sbcglobal.net
Music Director: Karen Hefterkarenhefter@gmail.com
Past President: Larry Risnerrhythmbanjo@sbcglobal.net
Booking Agent: Bob Ehrhorn bobehrhorn@comcast.net

Non-Board Officers

Digital Librarian: Karen Hefter..... karenhefter@gmail.com
Hard-Copy Librarian: Jim Blankenship jpblankenship@att.net
Membership: Chris Lardge.....chrislardge@aol.com
Newsletter Editor/Publisher: John Greitzer johngreitzer@outlook.com
Uniforms (Gold Vest & Polos): Ardie Jarrett..... jarjohn@msn.com
Webmaster: Bud Pearce bud.pearce@pearcechris.com
Hospitality: Vacant
Telephone Tree: Vacant

About our newsletter

The *East Bay Banjo Club Newsletter* is published six times per year, in February, April, June, August, October, and December. The newsletter also is posted on the EBBC website at www.eastbaybanjo.org (click on “Newsletters”). All articles are written by the newsletter editor unless otherwise noted.

Upcoming birthdays



Happy birthday to all!

Larry Risner – May 9
Betty David – May 27
Robin Reeves – June 3
Berniece Witte – June 6

Alex Dongallo – June 8
Linda Myers – June 17
John Greitzer – June 18

East Bay Banjo Club Board Meeting

Date: Sunday, March 12, 2017

Place: Round Table Pizza Parlor

Board Members Present: Jack Starr, President; Diana Starr, Secretary; Rich Combs, Treasurer; Karen Hefter, Music Director; Larry Risner, Past President; John Greitzer, Vice President; Bob Ehrhorn, Booking Agent

Committee Members Present: Sheila Welt, Hospitality; John Greitzer, Editor

Committee Members Absent: Chris Lardge, Membership; Jim Blankenship, Librarian; Bud Pierce, Web Master; Diane Malucelli, Telephone Tree;

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER: 5:30 PM

The minutes had been read and the motion to accept the minutes was made by Bob E. and seconded by John G. The minutes were approved.

The treasurers report was given by Rich C. and accepted by the Board. Jack S. asked how the coordination between Diane M and Chris L. was progressing. Jack will send an email regarding this question. Bob M. reported that most members have paid.

Vice President, John G. had no report.

Music Director, Karen H. reported on Banjorama. She is working on fun songs to show our club spirit and variety. Diana S. suggested we have mainly melody banjo players in the front row at a performance. Karen agreed. It was suggested that the singers will still stand for their song. It was stated that at the recent crab feed show the singers led the group and the audience sang along.

Booking Agent, Bob E. reported on the upcoming Easter Egg show. Karen put out a list of children's songs. Karen is working on There is a Tavern in the Town and It's a Small World. Our next show is Saturday, April 17th in Alamo 9:00 am to 11:00 am. The payment is \$400.00. Jack S. asked for the address and Bob E. says it is on the website. Karen H. asked if we would be in the shade and Bob E. responded that we would be in a gazebo. Bob E. said that last year this event had 400+ people. The next show will be May 30th at Stoneman Village in Pittsburg from 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm. A one hour military/patriotic theme. Polo shirts will be the attire for this gig.

Past President, Larry R. had no report.

Committee reports:

Hospitality, Sheila W. reported that Kit Nelson is holding her own but very tired.

Membership, Librarian, Web Master, Telephone Tree members were absent.

Editor, John G. reported that the printer is working well. Next issue is one month from now. No issues at the moment.

Minutes from March 12, 2017, continued

Old Business:

Banjorama:

Sheila W. reported that 23 people have signed up to attend Banjorama. Twenty have paid and 3 still owe their entrance fee. We will be wearing formal gold vest. Rich C. asked if Sheila and John Green, the point person for Banjorama were working together. Green may come to make sure we are coordinated with him. It was reported that member Don has also been talking to John Green.

Banjo inventory:

Jack S. reported that we have five banjos in his possession. One five string, one Tenor and three Plectrum. Bob M. said Connor has one and one might be missing. There is a \$350.00 deposit when a banjo is rented. Ardie J. brought a paper with a list of present banjos to make sure of what we now have.

New Business:

Music Books:

One paper book has been sold and requests for the electronic book. Bob M. has two paper books if anyone needs one.

Uniforms/vests:

Ardie J. reported that \$300.00 is needed to purchase more fabric for the gold vests. The fabric needs to be purchased by the bolt in order for all vests to match. The lady who makes the vests charges the club \$37.00 per vest and the club charges a member \$45.00 for the vest. The question was raised as to whether we want to continue using the gold vests. Bob M. said that three years ago there was a vote to continue with the gold vests. Rich C. asked if we have ever looked for a label shirt. Larry R. said that many professional bands have one outfit. It serves as their signature. Polo shirts are mainly used. Jack S. questioned that if we are going to use the gold vests, we need to know the cost per bolt and how many yards in a bolt. This discussion was tabled until our next board meeting. Research will be done on this matter and then we will go to the membership to see if they want to continue with the gold vests.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 6:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Diana Starr, Secretary

East Bay Banjo Club
www.eastbaybanjo.org
P.O. Box 5414
Concord, CA 94524

East Bay Banjo Club

Meets every week to play happy music

Sundays from 7 to 9 p.m.