



EAST BAY BANJO CLUB

SINCE 1963



FALL 2007

MEMBERSHIP NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 11

Play-out

Schedule

⇒ **Sat, Oct 27**

Carn-o-ween
Costume Gig
Pleasant Hill
11:30 A.M. to 1:00 P.M.

⇒ **Mon, Nov 5**

St. Paul's Towers
Oakland
7:15 P.M. to 8:15 P.M.

⇒ **Sun, Nov 11**

Valley View Lodge
Walnut Creek
1:15 P.M. to 2:15 P.M.

⇒ **Sat, Jan 12, 2008**

Stonebrook Health Care
Concord
2:30 P.M. to 3:30 P.M.

⇒ **Sat, Jan 26, 2008**

Masonic Lodge Crab Freed
Oakland
6:30 P.M. to 8:30 P.M.

⇒ **Sun, Feb 24, 2008**

Banjo-Rama
Carmichael Elks Lodge
Sacramento
Time TBA

For the most current information see

www.eastbaybanjo.org/

Or

Call Bob Nelson
925-372-0553

What's Strummin'?



So, it has been far too long since our last newsletter! Frankly, it's my fault. But honestly, I have been so busy with club activities that I simply had to let the publishing of the newsletter slide. In this newsletter, I hope to catch you up on the significant events that have occurred over the latter part of 2006 and most of 2007. Most notably, a hugely successful "Train to Fun and Fame" trip in February, the creation of our new CD after many years of waiting, and a trip to the National Jazz Banjo Festival in Guthrie, OK to perform and watch the induction of one of our lifetime members, Georgette Twain, into the Four String Banjo Hall of

Fame. I think the two important lessons from these activities are that the club members have a lot of fun when we travel together, and that when we concentrate on improving our performance skills, we dramatically improve the quality of our performances. These two lessons learned are very consistent with what makes the club successful; people must have fun playing the banjo, and performing in front of very receptive audiences only occurs when everyone is on the same page.

I would like to thank each and everyone of you who have participated in these activities. I look forward to more fun and the opportunity to make people smile, sing, and even occasionally get up and dance when we play on stage or at our weekly meetings.

We will have the opportunity to repeat the fun and playing opportunities we had last year on the "Train to Fun and Fame" when we experience the second year of this annual event this coming February. We have over double the number of sign-ups from last year and will occupy two train cars. Members from both the Peninsula Banjo Band and the Sacramento Banjo Band will be joining us. We are honored to have another banjo hall-of-famer, Charlie Tagawa, joining us on the train and in Reno.

Up-Coming Events

⇒ **Tues, Dec 4, 2007**

Annual meeting and Christmas Party
Round Table Pizza—Pleasant Hill
5:30 PM to 9:30PM

⇒ **Feb 5 to Feb 7, 2008**

Annual—"Train to Fun & Fame"
Jammin' on the train between Bay Area and Reno, NV

Strummin' with the gang at Harrah's
Contact Jack Convery entline@msn.com
for more details

⇒ **May 15 to May 17, 2008**

Arizona Banjo Blast
Omi Resort
Tucson, AZ
www.4stringbanjos.com/AZBLAST2008
for more details

Then in May of next year, we will step it up a notch when we attend and appear on stage with some of the top headliners in the banjo community like Tyler Jackson, Johnny Baier, Kurt Abell, Dave Frey, Jack Convery, and Steve Caddick just to name a few at the Arizona Banjo Blast in Tucson. The accommodations are fabulous at the Omni Resort, just right for everyone's enjoyment including spouses and others.

Thanks to the efforts of Bob Nelson, we are booked well into 2008, and continue to have two or three play-outs per month. In fact, we could have more, but we do not want to burn out folks with too many play-outs.

Let's continue to have fun with the banjo! And don't forget to share our music with family and friends by purchasing our new CD for them just in time for the up-coming holidays!

Bud

The second half of 2006 kept EBBC banjoist very busy. It seems like yesterday that we were performing at our annual Carn-o-ween gig in Pleasant Hill, but its almost time for this year's performance! The table below summarizes just how busy we were, and shows we, on average, performed about 2 or 3 times a month.

Date	Name	Location	Started	Ended	Participants
8/25/06	Concord Senior Club	Concord	6:45PM	7:45PM	15
8/31/06	Aegis of Moraga	Moraga	12:00N	1:00PM	13
9/11/06	Valley View Lodge	Walnut Creek	6:15PM	7:15PM	12
9/13/06	Piedmont H.S. Reunion	Walnut Creek	7:00PM	8:00PM	11
9/17/06	Banjo Jubilee	San Jose	12:00N	12:25PM	22
10/14/06	Orchard Nursery	Lafayette	2:00PM	4:00PM	11
10/21/06	California State Club	Walnut Creek	1:00PM	5:00PM	10
10/28/06	Carn-o-ween	Pleasant Hill	11:30AM	1:00PM	10
11/12/06	Benicia Library	Benicia	3:00PM	4:00PM	16
12/31/06	New Years Eve Party	Walnut Creek	5:00PM	6:30PM	12



Sept 11, 2006 Valley View Lodge—Jack solos while Mickey somehow grabs the spotlight!



Sept 13, 2006 Piedmont Reunion—Gig ended with playing of the HS fight song. Loved it!



Sept 17, 2006 Banjo Jubilee—Showcasing our young talent, Jeff, Jon, and Randy



Oct 28, 2006 Carn-o-ween—Bill & Pat don their costumes for a fun filled gig!



Dec 5, 2006 Christmas Party—Jack and his wife enjoy the festivities. Ho! Ho! Ho!



Dec 31, 2006 New Years Eve Party—Audience inspired to dance the "Charleston".

It began when we decided to set a goal to have a new CD to promote the club on our visit to the National Jazz Banjo Festival in Guthrie, OK. Incredibly, we gave ourselves only 7 months (Nov 06 to May 07) to design, create, and produce a sellable copy for the Jazz Banjo Festival. **Bill Cooper** made the selection of music early in November, and we began practicing those selections over and over at our weekly meetings. By January, we really began to sound well rehearsed, and began to get a good understanding of the effort needed to produce a CD that represents the best of the EBBC. Our "final rehearsal" occurred on January 21st at the Benicia Library, where we actually recorded the CD. The rehearsal lasted about 5 hours, and was the longest we had ever practiced as a group in most everyone's memory. Finally, on February 11th, we recorded the CD using a professional sound man, Bruce Dix. It is fair to say almost no one knew how hard it is to professionally record a CD! All songs were recorded at least twice, and we all learned how sensitive the recording microphones can be. Remaining absolutely silent for several seconds after the song has been recorded proved to be a huge challenge. The Board and many of our members reviewed and approved the artwork and case layout that was created during the months of March to April. At last, the artwork and the edited sound tracks were sent to a production company in San Francisco on the 1st of May to produce 500, shrink-wrapped copies to be sold internally to members and to the public. A free copy was distributed to all participating members as a reward for all their hard work.



Jan 21, 2007 Final Rehearsal— We played each song over and over again!



Jan 21, 2007 Final Rehearsal—Kit, Mickey, and Bill try a out a variation of one the vocals among the 18 tunes rehearsed.



Jan 21, 2007 Final Rehearsal—Andy & Jeff work hard to get it just right.



February 11, 2007 Recording Session— The whole gang poses just before the recording begins.



February 11, 2007 Recording Session—Some shed their vests to get down to the serious task of recording.



February 11, 2007 Recording Session—Chris concentrates on sounding her best!

Jack Convery approached the Board early in 2006 with a great idea. Jack proposed, "Let's reserve a train car on the Reno Snow Train for our banjo club, and jam during the ride to and from Reno". People began to sign up, and we had enough people committed by September to fill one passenger car. No one dreamed how successful the trip would be.

On February 6th, we all boarded the train with abundant snacks, beverages, and a strong desire to play the banjo. It wasn't long before we were jamming in the isles of the train. We were joined by members of the Peninsula Banjo Band and later by the members of the Sacramento Banjo Band when the train stopped in Davis. Other folks on the train made their way back to our car just to listen or pass by on their way to the smoking car. Word of our party quickly spread. Since we found it easiest to jam in the isles, opposed to our seats, often the traffic through our car was completely backed up. Absolutely no one complained. They would listen, wait for the break between songs, and then smile as they passed by saying things like, "You guys are having way too much fun!". The train was late arriving in Reno, but no one seem to care as they observed the snow scenery as we passed through the Sierras.

The next day, Jack conducted a workshop that was helpful to players at all skill levels. Sometimes, it's the simple suggestions that help improve our playing skills the most. Jack's workshop exemplified this idea. People were very satisfied with what they had learned, and the good news was the workshop was only an elevator ride away from their rooms at the hotel. That evening, we had a big jam session that was attended by a number of the passengers from the train. Bob Nelson said he set up 100 chairs for the audience in attendance, and they could have used more! It was amazing since it was all via word of mouth. The jam session continued until our allotted time for the hotel ballroom expired. Then some took advantage of all that Reno has to offer, and some returned to their rooms to relax. Just prior to the jam session, the EBBC had a no-host dinner at the buffet for an opportunity to mingle, to recognize our special guest, **Georgette Twain**, and to thank **Jack Convery** for all his hard work in organizing the event.

Early the next morning, we boarded the train for the trip home. The train station is a very short walk from the hotel, which lessened the "early to rise" issue somewhat. Of course, there was plenty of "jam time" on the way home. However, the Snow Train provides lots to see and do. From the beautiful scenery to the dance floor with a live DJ, there's virtually never a dull moment! A roaming magician dazzled everyone with his slight of hand tricks. **Jack Starr**, our real railroad enthusiast, even got a chance to ride in the engine cab! Do you suppose they let him blow the train whistle?

Clearly, this event has the potential to grow and to provide a means of having fun while promoting jazz banjo music. The Snow Train also attracts people who appreciate the music genre from the '20s and '30s, especially the mid-week train. Jack envision this event on a much larger scale, with well known banjo headliners, and having an attraction similar to the sea cruises so popular today. Hopefully, we can help him make his dream come true!



Train arrives in Martinez for boarding.



Jack conducts his workshop.



Georgette flanked by her former students, **Betty** and **Jack**



The gang poses after their lesson with Jack.



The big jam session the second night of the trip.



Large crowd fills the ballroom to listen to the jam session

Our trip to Guthrie, Oklahoma raised a great deal of excitement on four counts. First, our lifetime member, Georgette Twain, was being inducted into the Four String Banjo Hall of Fame. Second, we were going to be able to visit the Four String Banjo Hall of Fame Museum with its rich collection of banjos and banjo history. Third, we were going to have a chance to hear some of the top banjo talent in the nation. Forth, we were going to have a chance to perform at the National Jazz Banjo Festival, sponsored by the Fours String Banjo Hall of Fame. For the most part, we were not disappointed.

The first event was the induction on Thursday night at the Pollard Theater. **Georgette** was honored by a slide show that highlighted here extraordinary life history. **Georgette** and her daughter, Cecelia Yale, performed to the audience's delight. The induction ceremony was followed by a nice reception for all the new inductees at the Granny Had One restaurant .

Our first play out venue was a disappointment. Our performance was great! Unfortunately, the audience consisted of the banjo band that followed us (maybe 6 people). We expected larger crowds, but, frankly, virtually all the venues were small and lightly attended. The good news is that each of our subsequent performances got better in terms of both the audience size and the audience response. Our final performance received a standing ovation. The locals seem to like us. It seemed that few audience members came to the Jazz Banjo Festival from outside of Guthrie.

The headliners like Johnny Baier, Buddy Wachter, and our own Jack Convery put on exceptional performances. Perhaps the best was the main show performed at the Pollard Theater featuring Mickey Finn and Cathy Reilly on the piano and banjo respectively. What energy! What showmanship!

The Banjo Hall of Fame Museum is a must for any banjo enthusiast. Hundreds of banjos, worth millions of dollars are on display. Excellent kiosks describing the history of the various banjo manufacturers made us all appreciate the rich heritage of our instruments. Thanks to **Bob "The Finagler" Nelson**, our new CD is on display prominently in the display case as you enter the museum. **Bill Cooper** and **Bud Pearce** were brave enough to participate in a workshop conducted by some of the top players in the nation. Needless to say, it was a humbling experience, but a very enlightening one.

The impromptu jam sessions that occurred both in our hotel and other venues in town were definitely fun. Everyone was very laid back but willing to participate. Whether it was the music or the adult beverages that contributed most to the amusement we'll never know. But who cares? The one planned "jam session", billed as the "World's Largest Banjo Band", would have been much more fun if more people had gathered at the town square to watch or participate.

One of the events that has become somewhat of a tradition when the EBBC travels is a club dinner. Our trip to Guthrie was no exception. After a "little miscommunication" with the seating hostess, we finally gathered at several tables to enjoy "Oklahoma's Best Barbeque". The food was good and our waitress was very good natured about the request for separate checks.

To summarize, it was a fun trip, but it will definitely not be a yearly event.



The group poses in front of the Guthrie City Hall.



Tim sings at our 2nd gig in the American Legion Hall



Part of the banjo collection at the museum.



The "largest banjo band in the world"? Note quite.



Singing "Clementine" for our final gig at the Granny Had One restaurant .They loved it!



Bud takes copious notes at the workshop.

The number of play out opportunities increased in 2007 along with the number of participants at each gig. The EBBC averaged better than two gigs per month with about 15 participants, on average, performing on stage. Virtually every gig provided fun for both the audience and the EBBC members on stage. We even won a 1st Place Ribbon for the "Best Musical Group" in the Orinda 4th of July parade, a first for the club. **Bob Nelson** has done a outstanding job booking these gigs, and he has been help by all the participants whose excellent performances have caused the phone to ring for more bookings. Let's keep up the good work! It makes a lot of people happy!

2007 Performances to Date

Date	Name	Location	Started	Ended	Participants
1/13/07	Walnut Creek Presbyterian	Walnut Creek	7:15PM	8:15PM	12
1/20/07	Masonic Crab Feed	Oakland	6:30PM	8:30PM	9
2/6/07	Train trip to "Fun and Fame"	Reno, NV	Feb 6 thru	Feb 8	25
2/25/07	Banjo-Rama	Sacramento	1:00PM	1:30PM	24
3/3/07	Concord Senior Club	Concord	6:45PM	7:45PM	11
3/24/07	Valley View Lodge	Walnut Creek	6:15PM	7:15PM	14
4/14/07	Chateau III	Pleasant Hill	6:00PM	7:00PM	11
4/25/07	Diablo Lodge	Danville	6:15PM	7:15PM	11
5/5/07	50th Wedding Anniversary	Clayton	3:00PM	6:00PM	17
5/12/07	Stonebrook Health Center	Concord	2:30PM	3:30PM	13
5/24/07	Banjo Festival	Guthrie, OK	May 24 thru	May 27	15
6/16/07	Chateau II	Pleasant Hill	1:00PM	2:00PM	11
6/22/07	Lake Park Retirement	Oakland	7:00PM	8:00PM	8
7/4/04	Orinda 4th of July Parade	Orinda	11:00AM	12:00N	17
7/21/07	Valley View Lodge	Walnut Creek	6:15PM	7:15PM	16
8/10/07	Aegis of Concord	Concord	7:00PM	9:00PM	19
8/25/07	EBBC Summer Picnic	Landers Landing	10:30AM	4:00PM	31
9/9/07	Banjo Jubilee	San Jose	12:45PM	1:15PM	20
9/16/07	Lafayette/Orinda Presbyterian Church	Walnut Creek	7:00PM	8:00PM	16
9/19/07	Chateau at Poets Corner	Pleasant Hill	5:30PM	7:00PM	12
10/6/07	Orchard Nursery	Lafayette	11:00AM	1:00PM	14
10/10/07	Avalon Kensington Place	Walnut Creek	6:30PM	7:30PM	15
10/20/07	California State Club Annual Brunch	Walnut Creek	1:00PM	2:00PM	13



Jan 13, 2007 Walnut Creek Presbyterian Church—Jack led or first gig of the New Year. Our host was the "Voyagers" group that often visits us during our Tuesday night meetings



Jan 20, 2007 Masonic Crab Feed—The small , but very talented group of performers enjoyed both the performance and the fantastic crab dinner, compliments of the Masons.



Feb 25, 2007 Banjo-Rama—This performance went very smoothly because of all the practicing for our new CD.



April 14, 2007 Chateau III—Our washboard trio made great merriment for a full audience of seniors.



April 25, 2007 Diablo Lodge—Bill led the group at this new appearance location in Danville. The large group of on-lookers loved us! We'll be back!



May 5, 2007 50th Wedding Anniversary—The happy couple enjoys dinner while we perform for a large number of guests. Our complimentary dinner was fantastic!



June 16, 2007 Chateau II—Betty made this gig a great successes leading the group. Our first "Blue Polo" gig in 2007.



June 22, 2007 Lake Park Retirement—The performers take a rest after a well received performance.



July 4, 2007 Orinda Parade—Gang ready to board the float just before "Plan B" (Bill's pick up truck). Hey! Great recovery ! A First Place ribbon to boot!



Aug 10, 2007 Aegis of Concord—Karen sings "Darkness on the Delta" at this pleasant, outdoor venue.



Aug 25, 2007 Summer Picnic—We all jam on the deck at Lander’s Landing on the Delta. Great food! Great fun!



Aug 25, 2007 Summer Picnic—Jim & Bob, our “Head Chef” and “Sous Chef” respectively. Great job on the grill!



Sept 9, 2007 Banjo Jubilee—Bill led 20 performers in one of our best years at this annual event.



Sept 16, 2007 Lafayette/Orinda Presbyterian Church—A tiny stage made us perform in close quarters.

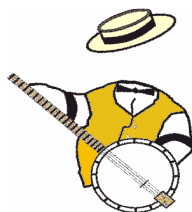


Oct 10, 2007 Avalon/Kensington Place—Babeite Blicher in our audience once sang “In Your Easter Bonnet” with Judy Garland. Our rendition brought back those memories



Oct 20, 2007 California Club Annual Brunch—Great audience response to our “California” play list. The gig has become a annual event enjoyed by all.

EBBC Board	
President	Bud Pearce
Vice President	Jim Blankenship
Secretary	Tim Perry
Treasurer	Pat Wheaton
Music Director	Bill Cooper
Member at Large	Kit Nelson
Booking Agent	Bob Nelson



Assistant Music Directors	Betty David, Larry Risner
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