

MEMBERSHIP NEWSLETTER



EAST BAY BANJO CLUB

SINCE 1963



FALL 2005

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 8

Play-out

Schedule

⇒ **Sat, Dec 3**
Orinda Community
Center
Orinda
12:20 to 1:30

⇒ **Sat, Dec 17**
Oakland Vets Bldg
Grand & Harrison
Oakland
7:15 PM

⇒ **Sat, Jan 21, 2006**
Oakland Vets Bldg
40th & Broadway
Oakland
6:30 PM

Special Events

⇒ **Tues, Dec 6**
Christmas Party/ General
Meeting
Round Table Pizza
6:00PM

Please find play-out details at:
www.eastbaybanjo.org
Click on
"Upcoming Events"

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www.eastbaybanjo.org
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"Newsletters"

Fond memories of Dorothy Walker

By Bill Cooper



Dorothy Walker 1917—2005

If my memory is correct, Dorothy Walker joined the East Bay Banjo Club in about 1967. She loved music in a way that few people love music. She taught herself to play classical guitar while she was a nurse at Tidewater Oil. She said there were long stretches where there was nothing to do, so she used music to pass the time. In addition to classical guitar and banjo, she taught herself bass guitar. And, I can remember talking to a mandolin player from Berkeley who told me that one of the people in his mandolin band was also in the EBBC. Yep, it was Dorothy. She passed her love of music to her son, John, who ultimately earned a PhD. in music. Dorothy told me that in addition to all the instruments she had at home, she rented something unusual for her children to play around on each summer. One year it was marimbas, and another

year I know it was a drum set. I can remember how proud she was at one of John's concerts at Los Medanos College.

Dorothy was a woman of strong convictions. That may be why her husband, Bill Walker, was also in the Banjo Club for several years. After I became the Director in 1978, she was not shy about criticizing me to my face, both in the club and privately. Dorothy served our club as President, Vice President, Secretary, and especially, member at large for many years. She was instrumental in our making our first recording. The reason I call the index "Dorothy's List" was because of her complaints about not being able to find the music after I revised our book.

But what I remember most about Dorothy is her devotion to play-outs. She could be counted on to come to any play-out, any day, any time, anywhere. She never grumbled about too many play-outs. Even when it was hard for her to drive, she would take others. She, Marilyn, Pat, Chris and occasionally others didn't get enough playing, so they formed a group called the "Mother Pluckers" to play in places the EBBC couldn't get to. At our play-outs, I always wanted her to sit next to me, and she was invaluable in that spot. She would help me pick tunes, and her rock steady rhythm and spot-on chording helped to keep me on time and in tune.

In every organization, there are a devoted few who keep it on an even keel and can be counted on to do more than their share. Dorothy was one of those people. Dorothy passed away peacefully on September 1, 2005 in Sacramento, Ca.

Trip to the Czech Republic a huge success!

By all accounts, the EBBC trip to the Czech Republic was wonderful, and well beyond what anyone even imagined. Our hosts were warm and did everything possible to insure our stay was comfortable, memorable, and just plain fun. Our audiences reacted favorably to all of our performances, and made entertaining them an absolute joy! We experienced incredible history in castles, cathedrals and other architectures that date back a thousand years. We ate food rich in flavor and high in calories. We walked on cobble stones laid in the Middle Ages. In the words of our own **Mickie MacDonald**, "even more important was learning about ourselves." The members who traveled together for eight days did get to know each other much better than we could have during our weekly meetings. That was a significant bonus to the trip. **Terry Horner** summed it up this way, "As a group, we did well. The lame and halt held up better than all expectations. I was the only one who took a sick day. The plentiful Prague pickpockets met their match. Two wallets stolen, one thief knocked down, and one held for arrest. Still the best part was the music. At every venue they loved us. The music, the banjos and tubs, the singers. A lasting relationship has been born and will bear fruit. And beer. And dumplings. "

Please find more pictures at our web site www.eastbaybanjo.org (click on **Photo Gallery**)

EBBC's stay in Tábor

After landing in Prague around 7PM, we waited about an hour for our instruments to arrive which were delayed in London. Our hosts from Tábor patiently awaited our exit from the Prague Airport, and greeted our arrival with balloons, welcoming signs, and accordion music! Our bus ride took us about two hours south of Prague to Tábor, where a second welcoming party greeted us at the hotel Kapital waving American flags and offering open arms. We were all very touched by their gracious and enthusiastic hospitality!

Friday morning we gathered in the Žižka Square, at the center of Tábor, for a historical walking tour of the birthplace of Protestant Christianity. The tour also included a visit to the underground catacombs below the city of Tábor. Midday we broke into small groups to go off and have private lunches with many of our hosts. In the afternoon, we had a tour of the Opera/Theater, then gathered our instruments that had finally arrived in Tábor. Friday night, most attended the opening ceremonies in Žižka Square that consisted of speeches, opera, Medieval music, a torchlight parade, and fireworks. The Square was packed with thousands of people and was filled with booths selling food, drink and crafts. Our first appearance in CZ is described by Terry Horner as "At 11 PM we started our first gig, in the Tábor Theater/Opera house. We were hosted by the theater manager for the benefit of all his friends, with a keg of beer on stage. He played accordion with a musical comedy trio. A song from them, a song from us, and on and on until the audience started drifting away in the early morning hours." WOW! Do these folks know how to party!

Saturday, Sept 10, we performed on stage in Žižka Square twice, and then had a private party in the evening where we ate homemade strudel! Our two performances are best described by Garry Kerr. "Our first public banjo concert took place on the main stage in the square. An excellent sound system was provided. The crowd of a hundred or so, was enthusiastic. Jack Convery did his arrangement of the William Tell Overture which was well received, and demonstrated his virtuosity throughout our performance. The afternoon show was a huge success, with a wildly enthusiastic crowd of 4-5000, helped along by the free flowing beer available. Jack Convery again wowed them, this time with a bluegrass medley. We were all on cloud 9. Overall, I think we blew them away!"



Enthusiastic welcome greeting from our hosts in Tábor



The whole gang on the tour of Tábor



On stage in Žižka Square, Sat, Sept 10, 2005



Torchlight parade Friday night



Our Czech hosts share stage in Tábor Opera House



Jack Convery entertains large crowd in Žižka Square

EBBC in Český Krumlov

Sunday, we packed up our bags, said thank you and goodbye to our wonderful hosts in Tábor, and headed south by bus to Český Krumlov. The bus ride took us through miles of rolling hill farmlands. We stopped for a drink in České Budejovice, formerly known as Budiwoyz and Budweis, at the Budweiser Budvar Brewery. This Budweiser is not to be confused with the "King of Beers" we know so well in the U.S. This brewery dates back to the 13th century. The Budweiser beer they serve is delicious and tastes nothing like what we drink here. We only had time to down a single beverage, as we were shooed out by a group of French musicians who had reservations. They too were on their way from the festival in Tábor. Out done by the French! C'est la guerre! Bob Nelson may never get over this!

We arrived in Český Krumlov just after noon, and hiked down to the town square where we found a stage set up just for our performance. Český Krumlov is a true jewel among the towns and cities of the Czech Republic. It was everything and more of what our travel agent, Bibi Heftman, had described based on the fact she lived there for part of her life. Our performance was well received by the group of tourists and passer-bys that stopped to hear us. Bud Pearce made the performance memorable (and comical) by falling flat on his derriere while retuning to his chair after his vocal. After the performance, our hosts had arranged a private tour of the Castle and the Castle Theater. Both were magnificent! Although it was a long and sometimes tiring day, no one will forget the many spectacular vistas and incredible décor within the Castle and Theater. After the tour, many enjoyed a quiet meal at some of the many quaint and fine restaurants in town and along the river. We heard one tourist describe Český Krumlov as "one of the most romantic places in all of Europe".



View of Český Krumlov from the Castle



Castle of Český Krumlov



On stage at the Český Krumlov town square



Crowd of on-lookers at Český Krumlov town square



Host and hostess Charlie and Radka join Bobbie Landers

EBBC visit to Prague

We rose early the morning following our performance in Český Krumlov, and rode the bus north to the beautiful Hluboká Castle. A long, up hill hike gave us picturesque views of the Castle and a private tour of its elaborately decorated rooms. After lunch in Hluboká, we boarded the bus and arrived in Prague around 3:00PM. The next day we had a private tour guide show us many of the sites in Prague via bus and on foot. We visited the famous Prague Castle and Old Town Square. During our tour near the Old Town Square, we witness a pickpocket attempt that our esteemed President, **Bob Nelson**, foiled by apprehending one of the perpetrators. The tour ended at the Charles Bridge, where some ventured to stroll with the throng of tourists on the bridge. The day after our guided tour, everyone ventured on their own. Again, one of our members thwarted a pickpocket attempt. **Tim Perry** physically fought off a thug who attempted to lift his wallet. Don't mess with Tim! Most everyone visited sites from the previous tour to get a closer look. Shopping was a very popular activity that day as well. Our last full day in Prague ended with a banquet celebrating our trip and acknowledging our wonderful experiences. We presented our gut-buckets to our friends in the Czech Republic, and, together, rode the tram back to our hotel, arriving at about 1:00AM. Then, at 5:00AM we were all on the bus to the Prague Airport for the trip home.



Group on tour in Prague



A final toast to our trip during the banquet

“Carnoween” a scary funfest

East Bay Banjo club members dressed up in some great costumes to entertain for the annual Carnoween Halloween festival sponsored by the Pleasant Hill Elementary School Parent Association on October 29. Plenty of fun, food and great music made this year's event perhaps the best so far. Banjo players included **Rich Boss, Bill Cooper, Betty David, Karen Dietz, Bill Dowling, Chris Horner, Kit Nelson, Bud Pearce, Ed Rossman, Diana Starr, Jack Starr, Pat Wheaton, and Marilyn Young.** **Chuck Cook** accompanied on the tuba, while **Terry Horner** played the gutbucket and **Dina Melamed** was on the washboard.



Betty David with the little known dwarf “Sleazy”



Rich “Cowboy” Boss & Bill Dowling clowning

Jazz heard in the Orchard Supply fall garden store

Garden shoppers were mesmerized by the traditional jazz music that filled the air during the annual “October Festival” sponsored by Orchard Supply Hardware. Many stopped by to listen while shopping for their Fall landscaping needs. Jack Convery led eight banjo players while accompanied by **Chuck Cook** on the tuba, **Guy Black** on the electric bass, **Terry Horner** on the gutbucket, and **Dina Melamed** on the washboard. Entertaining on the banjo were **Jack Convery, Betty David, Lynne Deutscher, Garry Kerr, Kit Nelson, Bud Pearce, Tim Perry, Ed Rossman, and Pat Wheaton.**



EBBC entertains in OSH garden

Strummers bring joy to Aegis retirement community

Jack Convery led a group of EBBC strummers who brought joy and good times to the senior citizens of the Aegis Retirement Center. Plenty of sing-along and toe tapping made the afternoon of September 30 an uplifting experience for the crowd. On the banjo we had **Jack Convery, Bill Dowling, Ophelia Hicks, Garry Kerr, Kit Nelson, Bud Pearce, Jack and Diana Starr, and Pat Wheaton.** **Terry Horner** provided fun while playing the washboard and sporting short pants with our “dress” gold vests and black ties. **Kit** knocked them out with her outstanding vocals.



Terry Horner “forgets” his pants at performance

Tradition continues at the Banjo Jubilee

EBBC performers appeared at the Banjo Jubilee on Sept 18, just three days after landing home from the Czech Republic. Many of the participants had barely readjusted to California time while entertaining a large crowd at the new San Jose venue. The good news was that we were able to use the same tunes we had practiced and performed overseas, and were also able to add special stories to the tunes we played. Banjo players included **Jack Burrous, Bill Cooper, Betty David, Barbara Findlay, Kit Nelson, Bud Pearce, Tim Perry, Ed Rossman, and Pat Wheaton**. Accompanying the banjoist were **Dina Melamed, Terry Horner, and Chuck Cook** on the washboard, gutbucket and tuba respectively.



Bill Cooper leads group at Jubilee 2005



Terry Horner keeps time on the gutbucket

Small group of East Bay strummers perform poolside

On September 24, a group of eight performed outside by the swimming pool at the Mobile Home Park in Fremont. Banjo players included **Rich Boss, Bill Cooper, Chris Horner, Kit Nelson, Bud Pearce, Jack Starr**. Helping out on the gutbucket and washboard, **Terry Horner** provided rhythm and a well received solo during "Coney Island Washboard". **Guy Black** kept everyone together on the bass, while the group played an extra half hour by request of the audience who sat on the far side of the pool. When we packed up our instruments to leave it was dark, and it was very difficult to see our music on the last two songs. Nonetheless, the crowd was very enthusiastic and we received many very positive comments from our hosts. Its always appreciated when the host provides free adult beverages to encourage our merriment!

EBBC Board Members	
President	Bob Nelson
Vice President	Ed Rossman
Secretary	Ruth-Anne Bray
Treasurer	Pat Wheaton
Music Director	Bill Cooper
Member at Large	Kit Nelson
Booking Agent	Jack Starr



Assistant Music Directors	Betty David, Ed Rossman, Larry Risner
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