

East Bay Banjo Club

Since 1963

September / October 2019

Volume 14, Issue 5

Events Calendar

Tuesday, Nov. 12

Community Presbyterian Church
222 West El Pintado
Danville 10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Date To Be Determined

EBBC Holiday Party

(members and their guests only)
Round Table Pizza
1938 Oak Park Blvd., Pleasant Hill
More information coming soon

www.eastbaybanjo.org

To book the East Bay Banjo Club to play at your event, please contact our booking agent, Don Granberg, at grany@astound.net.

President's Message

By Bob Malucelli

I hope everyone enjoyed their summer. The EBBC Board has been working on attracting new banjo players. Vice President Paul Mack helped by putting an ad in the Pleasant Hill Parks and Recreation Department newsletter to have a class to teach young people to play the four-string banjo.

We had a teacher from Lamorinda all set up to teach banjo but unfortunately no one signed up for the class. Sheila Welt also helped with advertisements in the local newspapers to invite people who would like to come and listen to us or try playing banjo with us.



Please ask your friends and their children if they want to play banjo with the club. Our membership has been going down and we need new banjo players to keep the club going.

In happier news, our next big club event is our Christmas party and we are working on a ballot for electing next year's officers.

We will let everyone know the party plans as soon as we have nailed down all the details. In the meantime, I hope everyone has a pleasant autumn. Keep on strumming.

Inside:

EBBC Entertains at Reutlinger Senior Living – pages 2-3

How Tenor Banjo Found The Editor – page 4

EBBC Plays Return Engagement At The Reutlinger

By John Greitzer

Photos by Bob Nelson

Your East Bay Banjo Club entertained an enthusiastic audience at the Reutlinger Senior Community in Danville on Wednesday, October 16. Reutlinger is one of our favorite places to play, and this playout may have been the most fun of all, with residents, relatives, and Reutlinger staff clapping, singing and even dancing to our music.

Fourteen EBBC members participated, including Kit Nelson, Chris Lardge, Deb Hodson, Paul Mack, Bud Pearce, Don Granberg, Doug Johnson, Jan and Slavka Ruzicka, Bob and Diane Malucelli, Bob Ehrhorn, John Greitzer, and Betty David. Singing duties were handled by Kit, Chris, Bud, Don, Slavka (in English and Czech!) and Bob Ehrhorn.

Bud did a great job as music director for the session, and Paul did his usual entertaining job of introducing each song with a bit of historical perspective on the times when each song was written, and in some cases identifying the singers who originally recorded the songs.

In addition to all the banjo players, Doug Johnson played clarinet, Don Granberg played keyboard on some numbers, John Greitzer played bass, Jan Ruzicka played guitar and Slavka Ruzicka played autoharp.

The Reutlinger staff and several residents told us how much they enjoyed our set, and said they hope to have us back again. The feeling is mutual!



Bob Ehrhorn and Doug Johnson, singing and clarinetin'.....



Kit Nelson wows the crowd....



and Paul Mack (front) and Chris Lardge play away.

More Photos Of The Reutlinger Playout....



Slavka and Jan Ruzicka get ready to play.



The backline, with Jan, Slavka, and Diane and Bob Malucelli.



Deb Hodson strums along, with Betty David to her left and Doug Johnson, Tom Brunetti (partly hidden) and John Greitzer in the back.



Bud Pearce sings one for the crowd.



The front line strums away, with (from front) Betty David, Deb Hodson, Doug Johnson and Bob Ehrhorn.

How The Tenor Banjo Found Me

By John Greitzer

As I near the end of my time as newsletter editor, I have been reflecting on how the tenor banjo came my way. It all started with a very common occurrence among Philadelphians that didn't directly involve me.

My great-uncle Ben and his wife Hattie decided to give up the cold winters of Philadelphia and move to Florida, like thousands of other Northeastern folks did every year. Their daughter had grown up and moved out. Ben and Hattie were looking for a quiet place in a gentler climate.

They got rid of all the things they didn't want to take to Florida. One of them was an old four-string tenor banjo in pretty bad shape. Uncle Ben said he had played it once in a while but never got serious about it. Knowing that I played guitar, he asked if I wanted the banjo.

I said sure, I'll take it. I was about twenty at the time. All I knew of four-string banjos is what I heard every New Year's Day in a freezing cold annual spectacle known as the Mummers' Parade. Drunken string bands march through Philly in outlandish costumes, playing the most grating, annoying, horribly loud music. I hated the music and thought the Mummers were nuts, but I figured I could play other music with the banjo.

Learning to play

Soon after, I went to the Swarthmore Music Store, near my home, and found a book on how to play the tenor banjo. I bought the book and worked up a few chords and simple folk-song melodies. Knowing how to play guitar helped a lot. When the summer ended I returned to college and put the banjo away, because playing banjo didn't help you get girls. Playing guitar did. The banjo stayed in its case for the next forty years. Perhaps once a year, I took it out, strummed it for a few minutes and put it away again.

At age sixty, newly retired, I decided to relearn how to play the thing. Now living in the East Bay, I searched online and found the website of the East Bay Banjo Club. I emailed them and heard back from the club's then-president, Larry Risner, who invited me to attend their next weekly practice. He urged me to bring my banjo.

The EBBC weekly practices were a great way to relearn how to play. Everyone was welcoming and supportive. For a modest annual membership fee of \$20, I joined the club and got helpful tips on how to play from such experts as Larry himself and another long-time club member, the late great Harry Higgins, who was one of the stars of the 1960s-1970s banjo/pizza parlor craze that returned the instrument to prominence. With their help, and others', I relearned chords and strumming patterns while playing minstrel songs, folk songs and the early Tin Pan Alley standards that provide the repertoire for EBBC and many other banjo clubs.

What I've done with it since

I am now one of the bass players for EBBC (due to the recent retirement of our former bass player, Guy Black), but I still play tenor banjo on my own, working up jazz standards such as Thelonius Monk's "*Round Midnight*" and a few classical pieces like Erik Satie's "*Gymnopédie No. 1*". Bass and guitar keep me busier, but banjo still provides a fun, challenging outlet for me.

It's all due to my great-uncle Ben and great-aunt Hattie and their move to Florida.

Board members and appointed officers for 2019

Board Members

President: Bob Malucelli.....dmalucelli@att.net
Vice President: Paul Mack.....Anthony.Mack55@gmail.com
Secretary: Sheila Weltweltbear@sbcglobal.net
Treasurer: Rich Combs.....combsrichard@sbcglobal.net
Past President: John Greitzerjohngreitzer@outlook.com
Booking Agent: Don Granberg.....grany@astound.net

Non-Board Officers

Assistant Music Director: Jack Convery.....entline@msn.com
Assistant Music Director: Betty David.....(925) 938-0126
Assistant Music Director: Larry Risner.....rhythmbanjo@sbcglobal.net
Assistant Music Director and Webmaster: Bud Pearce.....bud.pearce@pearcechris.com
Digital Librarian: Karen Hefter.....karenhefter@gmail.com
Hard-Copy Librarian: Don Granberg..... grany@astound.net
Hospitality: Sheila Welt.....weltbear@sbcglobal.net
Membership: Chris Lardge.....chrislardge@gmail.com
Newsletter Editor/Publisher: John Greitzer johngreitzer@outlook.com
Telephone Tree: Diane Malucelli.....dmalucelli@att.net
Uniforms (Blue Polos): Ardie Jarrett..... jarjohn@msn.com

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 is available on the EBBC website at www.eastbaybanjo.org (click on "Newsletters"). All articles are written by the editor unless otherwise noted.

Upcoming birthdays



Happy birthday to all!

Deb Hodson – Nov. 4	Jack Starr – Dec. 6
Eric Callica – Nov. 13	Jesse DeTorres – Dec. 16
Tom Brunetti – Nov. 14	Karen Hefter – Dec. 19
Chuck Cook – Nov. 19	Diane Malucelli – Dec. 24
Jim Brunetti – Nov. 20	Danielle Torres – Dec. 27
Kit Nelson – Nov. 20	Michael Stein – Dec. 28
Diana Starr – Nov. 27	

**EAST BAY BANJO CLUB
MINUTES OF JULY 9, 2019
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
ROUND TABLE PIZZA, PLEASANT HILL, CA**

CALL TO ORDER: President Bob Malucelli called the meeting to order at 5:48pm.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

President, Bob Malucelli
Vice President, Paul Mack
Secretary, Sheila Welt
Treasurer, Rich Combs
Booking Agent, Don Granberg
Past President, John Greitzer
(number needed for a quorum (3))

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Editor, John Greitzer
Equipment, Bob Malucelli
Hospitality, Sheila Welt
Print Librarian, Don Granberg
Telephone Treem, Diane Malucelli
Uniforms, Ardie Jarrett

VISITORS:

Cathie Wright

OFFICERS REPORTS:

MINUTES:

Paul Mack, Acting Secretary
The Minutes of May 19, 2019 were approved as sent.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Treasurer, Rich Combs
Income **\$575.00**
Expenses \$400.00
Balancer. \$10,287.22
The Report was filed for Audit.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

EDITOR: John Greitzer
No volunteers yet.

HOSPITALITY:

Sheila Welt
Guy Black is in Stonebrook.

UNIFORMS:

Ardie Jarrett

Gold Vests Update - Unable to get hold of the person that was making our vests for us, all patterns and fabric is also unavailable.

Paul Mack brought in a sample of Gold Vests that can be purchased on line.

The Board of Directors voted that the Gold Vests needed to be retired. The new winter uniform will be Blue Polos with black dress pants. Yes 5 / No 1

NEW BUSINESS:

Bob Maluelli, Point of Interest - Central, Ill Banjo Club gave 50 Ukulele's to 20 schools and organizations.

Rich Combs, Suggested that use run an AD in local newspaper inviting people to join us on Tuesday evenings, ask about learning to play 4 string banjo and ask about Ukulele lessons for children. The board voted 6 Yes - 0 No to take this action

Sheila Welt will put ad add in the newspaper.

Introduce New Songs, Sheila Welt gave Don Granberg a copy of Summertime (from Porgy and Bess). Terry Horner has worked out an intro for this song.

ADJOURNMENT: 6:27pm

There being no further action pending before this meeting we are adjourned until the September 2019 meeting.

ACTION ITEMS:

Sheila Welt - Take care of AD for newspaper.

Respectfully Submitted,
Sheila Welt, Recording Secretary

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

The East Bay Banjo Club

Meets on Tuesdays from 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Round Table Pizza

1938 Oak Park Boulevard, Pleasant Hill

www.eastbaybanjoclub.org