

## Next SVSA meeting

The next meeting of the SVSA will be held

### Wed., Mar. 23

at Third Street Coffeehouse in Roanoke, VA. Doors will open at 7 p.m.; meeting begins promptly at 7:30 and will last until the last song critique is finished, or 10:30 p.m., whichever comes first. Members may submit one song for critique (on cassette or CD) and should provide at least 12 copies of the lyrics. Critiques are limited to members only but non-members and guests are encouraged to sit in on the discussions and exercises.

## How Jamming Can Improve Your Songwriting

*by Mike DeGiorgi*

There was a recent article in Acoustic Guitar magazine that contained 25 tips for improving your participation at jam sessions. The article focused primarily on the behavioral aspects of jamming (playing nice with others, when to jump in/when to hang back, how assertive to be, preparing for a session, respecting players of diverse abilities, etc.). When I was finished reading, I found myself thinking less about etiquette and more about how jamming can and does improve songwriting.

I get together several times a month with a few guys (Larry Sakayama, Mike Dittrich, Chip Conway, and Mark Ernhart). Mark is a real good keyboard player, while the rest of us are guitar players. We trade off on bass and occasionally someone adds percussion. Our skills and musical tastes vary, but there is a nice synergy and vibe when we get together. The rules are pretty simple and mostly unspoken. You bring the chords and lyrics to at least one song and we all learn that song together. I have to confess that part of the fun of this activity for me is finding songs that I know some of my buds will have an initial negative reaction to playing. I've brought "Africa" by Toto, "Green Eyed Lady" and even a song by Bread. So far, no one has ever refused to play a song and we've had a lot of fun figuring out arrangements and learning stuff we might have never considered playing. More importantly, the musical preferences and quirks of your friends eventually find their way into your own repertoire and style. It all adds to your musical kitbag. Recently, we've experimented with learning songs and then changing the tempo or timing to get a different arrangement. Sometimes too, someone will start playing a random chord progression and someone else will start singing lyrics to a song we previously covered that comes close to fitting the progression but takes both the song and the progression in a different direction.

We also bring our own compositions. There's not a lot of explicit critiquing, just sharing what we've been working on and inviting others to jam along or help work out an arrangement. It's this part of the exchange that has impacted my writing.

I've always been kind of a solitary songwriter. I compose for one voice and one guitar. When you start to get comfortable playing with a group of people, though, it starts to affect your thinking while you write. I imagine a lead or bass line that might enrich the song. I can't play it, but I know that one of my friends can. Trusting the synergy in the group also allows me to bring in a fragment of something or an instrumental song, knowing that the group will always add something that will fill it out or eventually complete the piece. Last year, I brought a blues progression that had more of a jazzy bridge. We played it a bunch of times and had tons of fun trading leads. Eventually I added lyrics and the song became "Still Got My Money On You." It was the first time I had ever written anything based solely on a jamming experience.

When I deconstruct the dynamics of our jam sessions, it seems like there are some key factors at play that help me write in advance of a jam:

- There has to be a compelling need for others to join in and add value to the song. When writing with a group in mind, leave room for leads, other instruments and harmonies.

- A song can be complex, but there has to be enough structure and underlying

simplicity so that other players can grab hold of it and get excited about playing it too. Larry's song "Missing You" is a good example of this. It's musically very complex, but when you listen to it a few times, there is an underlying structure to it that makes it easier to add parts to enhance the song.

- We joke a lot when someone brings a cover song that initially may sound ridiculous to someone else (usually Chip). Those jarring differences in taste come back in a good way when you are writing a song and have some perplexing transition points in the song. I find that when I'm perplexed about "connecting the dots," it's often because I'm thinking about the song from my own perspective, skills and musical tastes. There is no rule that says you can't have a jazzy bridge in a blues song, or an edgy lead in a mellow acoustic song (as long as you honor the "prosody gods"). This happens a lot when we play and allows the owner of a song to pick and choose those things that really add to the song.

- It sounds a little hokey, but I really enjoy hanging out with my jammin' buddies. I trust what they have to say, always learn something new and look forward to their reactions to songs. We take little diversions to discuss politics or other non-music related topics. We respect our musical differences and skills, but also challenge each other to play different stuff. That kind of environment is conducive to risk-taking and makes me want to write more. ●

## Upcoming SVSA-sponsored event

### Waymores concert and workshop

On Sunday, May 1, the Southwest Virginia Songwriters Association is bringing back the Waymores to Roanoke for an “In-The-Round” concert and songwriting workshop.

The concert (at 7:30 p.m.) and workshop (at 2 p.m.) will be held at 12 East Campbell Avenue (upstairs) in downtown Roanoke, Virginia. The concert will require a donation of \$15 and the workshop will require a donation of \$20 (\$15 for SVSA members).

The Waymores, an alt-Nashville trio, was formed by acclaimed performing songwriters Tom Kimmel, Don Henry, and Sally Barris. Respected artists in their own rights, they’ve recorded numerous albums and toured widely as solo acts ... and now they’ve banded together as the Waymores.



The Waymores: Tom Kimmel, Sally Barris, Don Henry.

Please RSVP to Greg Traftidlo (kirasongs@aol.com) if you plan to attend either the workshop or the concert or both. ●

### Performers wanted for Franklin County festival

Performers are sought for the second annual Sontag Folkfest on May 7 at the Franklin County Rec Park. Depending on the number of acts, each act will have approx. 30 min. There’s a possibility that a compilation CD of performances will be made. E-mail Aspen Black (bksbari@swva.net) if you want to perform. Also looking for artists, crafters, and anyone with unique or creative talents to share. Booths available at no charge. Event held rain or shine. ●

### Opportunities for SVSA members at Third Street Coffeehouse

**Gigs at Third Street.** Contact Marian McConnell (Marian.McConnell@va.gov) for bookings.

**Board Membership** (volunteer at Third Street). The Board meets every few months and each person takes a turn volunteering on Friday nights – the more volunteers there are, the lighter the burden. Current need is for one or two more people to volunteer. Please contact Marian if interested.

Check out **Third Street Coffeehouse on Facebook** – search for “3rd-Street-Coffeehouse” to find the page. You can comment, upload photos, etcetera. ●

SONGWRITING TIP FROM RANDY WALKER

*Avoid cliches like the plague. They are old hat.*

## Message From The President

Hey Songwriters,

The topic for the March 23 meeting is “the songwriting process.” Mike Dittrich will lead the session. Whether you’re an experienced songwriter or a novice, come to the meeting and tell us what works for you or where you need help.

After the workshop, we’ll have a modified critique session. Instead of bringing a completed song for review, bring a song fragment. Collectively we’ll try to give you ideas to help you finish it. We’re going to do this live, rather than by recording, so bring your instrument and your voice.

– Larry Sakayama

## Monthly Meeting Report

Another healthy turnout characterized the February monthly SVSA meeting at Third Street Coffeehouse in Roanoke, Virginia on February 23. An enthusiastic 15 SVSA members plus three visitors and one former member met for what turned out to be an informative and entertaining session. One of the visitors, David Motley, joined SVSA at the meeting. Welcome, David! We look forward to your future input and insights.

Josh Jones presented a workshop on Song Arrangement Awareness. Josh’s presentation included a handout and several audio examples of just how the arrangement of a song can vary its impact. Judging from the positive reaction from those present, Josh’s interesting and enlightening program opened a few eyes and ears.

Former SVSA Vice President Steve Langston attended the meeting and announced that his song, “Graveyard Of Rock And Roll,” had been played during last year’s Halloween episode of TV’s “The Young And The Restless.” Current member Greg Trafidlo played “Crossing Over Into The Valley” – a song co-written

with SVSA member Barbara Martin – that is included on the latest CD release by renowned bluegrass musician Charlie Sizemore.

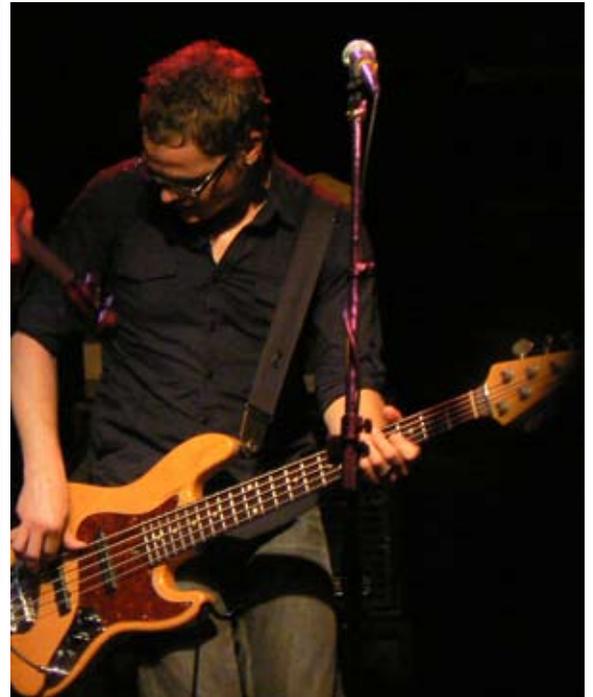
Seven original songs were submitted for critique. As always, the critiques were lively, informative, and filled with good advice and objective observations. Members certainly don’t have to take every opinion to heart and make every change suggested but when there are that many astute observations and informed suggestions freely offered, you can be sure that at least a few of them will apply.

Again, as always, pre- and post-critique discussions were lively, and a lot of interesting and helpful information passed around the room. The exchange of information, opinions, and ideas is what makes the monthly SVSA meetings so worthwhile and interesting. If you haven’t been to a meeting lately, plan to make time and bring in a song for critique ... we’re always ready and willing to let you know what we think! Or just stop by and join in the discussions. Your two cents is always welcome!

- David Simpkins

## On the Musical Scene

Photos by SVSA member and photographer Leigh Littleton.



From the **Enter the Haggis** concert at Kirk Avenue Music Hall in Roanoke, March 6.



From the **Squeeze the Bag** concert Jan. 8, hosted by Shepherdstown Music and Dance in Shepherdstown, WV. Part of the Upper Potomac Piper's Weekend. They have an odd limitation - the bagpipes have to be pressured by squeezing, not blowing into, so traditional Highland pipes are not present. On the left, Maggie Sansone is playing bodhran as accompaniment. On the right is Chris Norman from Cape Breton Island.

## **Current SVSA Membership**

*(paid as of 02/24/2011)*

**Kathy Acosta**

**Marc Baskind**

**Aspen Black**

**David Bowen**

**Steve Clark**

**Bob Coulter**  
(Lifetime Member)

**Sid Crosswhite**  
(Lifetime Member)

**Frank Dieter**

**Mike Dittrich**

**Mike DeGiorgi**

**Paddy Dougherty**

**Linda Fowler**

**Mike Franke**

**Pat Haley**

**Dale Hamilton**

**Josh Jones**

**Leigh Littleton**

**Barbara Martin**

**Robert Matter**

**Britt Mistele**

**David Motley**

**Mickey Nelson**

**Mike Pearrell**

**Phillip Raintree**

**Larry Sakayama**

**Connie Sellers**

**David Simpkins**

**Sharayah Spears**

**Greg Trafidlo**

**Randy Walker**

**Eddie Williams**



***Sparky and Rhonda Rucker** concert at Shepherdstown, WV, on Feb 25 (hosted by Shepherdstown Music and Dance). This was a really great show - lots of history, as well as great music!*



***Notin Fancy** bluegrass concert Sunday, March 13, at Rockbridge County High School in Lexington.*

***Photos by Leigh Littleton.***

## SVSA Classifieds

### GUITAR LESSONS

If you're a beginner on guitar, developing your skill can help you present your songs in a more polished manner. Lessons can help you straighten out problems with rhythm, develop different strumming patterns, find more interesting chords, and add bass runs, suspensions and other elements that add drama to your song. I teach guitar classes at several recreation departments and give private lessons (\$15) in my apartment near Third Street Coffeehouse. Formally trained in music, I have passed the Praxis test required of public school music teachers in Virginia. For more info, contact **Randy Walker** at [randolphwalker@cox.net](mailto:randolphwalker@cox.net) or 588-5826, or check out my instructional videos at [www.randolphwalker.com](http://www.randolphwalker.com).

**randolph  
walker  
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Guitar Lessons  
Audio Recording  
Music Videos

[randolphwalker@cox.net](mailto:randolphwalker@cox.net)  
[www.randolphwalker.com](http://www.randolphwalker.com)  
(540) 588-5826

### FOR SALE

New Ibanez A200 Acoustic Guitar. Maple top, sides and back. Cut-away with built-in Fishman Aero electronic pick-up and with tuner. Sounds and plays great! \$450. Contact **Greg** at (540) 384-7770.

### FOR SALE

1932 Gibson L50 acoustic archtop guitar with bridge pickup installed. In great condition with a gorgeous sound. Perfect for anyone who plays old blues, jazz or old time music. **Barbara Martin**, (540) 886-2966, [barbara@barbaramartinmusic.com](mailto:barbara@barbaramartinmusic.com).

### DEMO RECORDING AND PRODUCTION

The Shop in Fincastle, Virginia. Clean, high-quality multitrack recording and mixdown with an all-digital recording system. I can make MP3s and CDs from the mix. I'm a capable sessions player and can add guitars, keyboards, bass and percussion, as well as arranging and sweetening. \$25/hour for SVSA members. Contact **Josh Jones**, [thejonesgroup@rbnet.com](mailto:thejonesgroup@rbnet.com), (540) 473-3598 for more information.

### FOR SALE - PRICE REDUCED!

#### 2007 Alvarez Yairi DY84

**6-string guitar.** Spruce and Rosewood. Perfect condition. Plays great and is beautiful to look at. Comes with a green velour hard-shell case. Was \$850, now **\$700**. Call **Britt Mistele** at (540) 745-6771. If you are not familiar with these great guitars, go on You Tube, type in Yairi Factory Tour, and see how these guitars are meticulously hand-made in Gifu, Japan. Worth watching, even if you think you don't like Yairis.

### FOR SALE

#### Two Peavey Impulse 500 PA Speakers with Stands.

56 pounds each. Each speaker has two full-range inputs, two bi-amp inputs. Maximum power 1400 watts peak, 700 watts RMS (program); 350 watts RMS (53 volts RMS). Impedance 8 ohms, crossover 1500 Hz. **\$350 for both.** Contact **David** at [amosflame@aol.com](mailto:amosflame@aol.com).

SVSA Music News free classifieds may be submitted by paid members only. All classifieds must be music-related.

## SVSA Performing Members' Gigs

### Mike Pearrell

April 10: Private House Concert Smith Mountain Lake

April 23: House Concert - Opening for Trifolkal

June 24: Third Street Coffeehouse

### Aspen Black

March 27: With SMC, Abingdon, VA

April 15: Sontag Coffee House

April 30: Scharlie Dillon benefit, Chatham, VA

May 7: Sontag Folkfest

### Barbara Martin

Tuesday, April 19, 6-7:45 pm, Barbara Martin Trio with Bob Bowen on bass and Michael Elswick on saxophone, Roanoke Library, 706 South Jefferson Street, Roanoke, VA 24016-5191 (540) 853-2473 [www.roanokeva.gov/WebMgmt/ywbase61b.nsf/DocName/\\$library](http://www.roanokeva.gov/WebMgmt/ywbase61b.nsf/DocName/$library). Free admission.

### Greg Traidlo

April 23: House Concert with Trifolkal, Salem, VA

May 7: With Trifolkal, concert for Tidewater Friends of Folk, Virginia Beach, VA

### Marc Baskind

Every Tuesday Evening: With the Blu Spruce Band, J&J Social Hall, 777 Jubal Early Hwy, Wirtz (Burnt Chimney), Va. 7-10 PM. \$5 at door, eat free, \$1 for drinks, smoke- and alcohol-free environment, bring your instrument or voice, sit in a couple.

March 24: Gainsboro Library, Roanoke, Jazz Trio, 6-7:30 PM

March 31: Warm Hearth Retirement Village, Blacksburg, Solo, 7-8 PM

April 13: Eastwood Asst. Living, Solo, Birthday Celebration, 12-1 PM

April 23: Elm Park Birthday Celebration (Isabelle), Solo, 1:30-2:30 PM

April 26: Elm Park Luncheon Entertainment, Solo 11:30 AM-12:30 PM

## UPCOMING AT THIRD STREET COFFEEHOUSE

Schedule as of March 16, 2011

Mar 25 **Ron Bergeron**

April 1

**Dan & Marian McConnell**

April 8 **Dollar & Walker**

April 15 **Josh Sizemore**

April 22 **Big Lick Pickers**

April 29

**Simple Gifts of the Blue Ridge**

May 6 **TBA**

May 13 **John Pence**

May 20 **Clinton Collins and the Creek Boys**

May 27 **Sherwood (Robyn & Marian)**

June 3 **TBA**

June 10 **Chuck Schaeffer**

June 17 **TBA**

June 24 **Mike Pearrell**

Third Street Coffeehouse is a non-profit coffeehouse, established in 1987, open every Friday. Sign up for open mike 7-7:30; open mike performances 7:30-8:15; featured performer from 8:30-10 p.m. Third Street is a smoke-free, alcohol-free, no-cover-charge venue.

Check out Third Street Coffeehouse online at [www.youtube.com/user/3rdstreetcoffeehouse](http://www.youtube.com/user/3rdstreetcoffeehouse) for videos, an updated schedule, and more information.

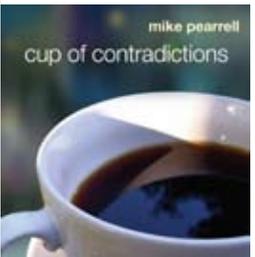
# SVSA Members' Recordings



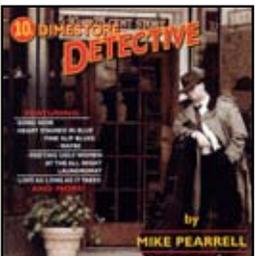
eyes on the horizon



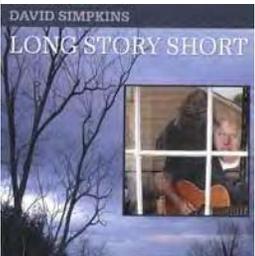
kaleidoscope



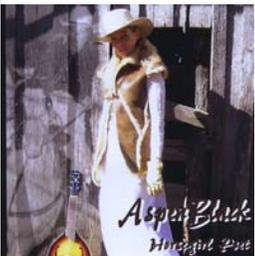
cup of contradictions



dimestore detective



long story short



horsegirl poet

## Barbara Martin

**EYES ON THE HORIZON** — Jazz and all originals with Washington, D.C. jazz greats Robert Redd on piano, Chuck Redd on drums and vibes, Steve Wolf on bass, Mac Walter on guitar, Bruce Swaim on saxophone, John Jensen on trombone, and New York flugelhorn player Matt Finley..

**KALEIDOSCOPE** — Barbara's jazziest CD. All original songs, with co-writes with Joel Evans, Mac Walter, and Greg Traidlo.

**TOUCH THE SKY** — Swinging jazz and acoustic blues. With Mac Walter.

**A DIFFERENT VIEW** — Classic blues of the 1920s, early jazz and "slice-of-life" songs.

## Mike Pearrell

**CUP OF CONTRADICTIONS** — 13 original songs. Lots of SVSA musicians.

**DIMESTORE DETECTIVE** — Features 14 original compositions. Produced by Greg Traidlo; with several guest SVSA musicians.

## David Simpkins

**LONG STORY SHORT** — Offers 12 original Americana tunes blending rock, folk, blues, and country. "Long Story Short" has won critical praise.

## Aspen Black

**HORSEGIRL POET** — Songs and poems about horses, cowboys, and rural life.

**A HUNDRED YEARS TOO LATE** — All original music for horse lovers and those who yearn to preserve the spirit and lands of the last American frontier.

## Mike Franke

**WHAT'S DONE IS DONE** — A debut release of 14 original folk and blues tunes about everyday life and interesting people (or vice-versa), featuring Mike's fingerstyle and slide guitar.

## Frank Dieter

**RED TEARS ON A VELVET SKY** — A new collection of home studio demos. All songs except one are new.

**ROUGH CUTS FROM THE BLUE ROOM** — Demos from the blues, jazz, folk, adult contemporary, New Age, and instrumental genres.

## Greg Traidlo

**CARVED IN SONG** — Most songs co-written with some of Greg's favorite songwriters. Listen to audio clips and see the lyrics at [gregtraidlo.com](http://gregtraidlo.com).

**FOLK SINGULAR** — Reflects the diversity of Greg's songwriting and production skills. With several SVSA members.

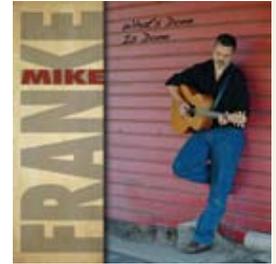
**CO-WRITERS IN DISGUISE** — Contemporary folk/country with an emphasis on well-crafted lyrics and humor.

**OLD DOG - NEW TRACKS** — Songs that range from silly to sublime, drawing you in with warmth, wit, and humor.

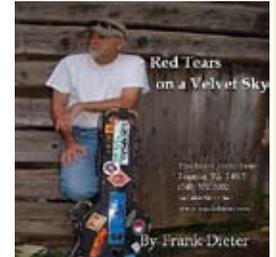
## Trifolkal

**WINKIN'** — Newest release from that "trio fiercely dedicated to fun" tempers the fun with poignancy and heart.

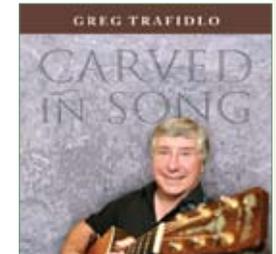
**TAO FROM THE MOUNTAIN** — Tight harmonies, warmth, and witty songwriting from Laura Pole, Neal Phillips, and Greg Traidlo.



what's done is done



red tears on a velvet sky



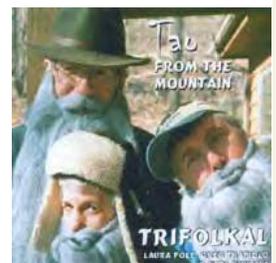
carved in song



folksingular



winkin'



tao from the mountain

### **About Classifieds:**

SVSA Music News free classifieds may be submitted by paid members only. All classifieds must be music-related.

Members, e-mail your classifieds to [svsa.songwriters@gmail.com](mailto:svsa.songwriters@gmail.com) by the second Tuesday of the month.

### **About articles and other written contributions:**

SVSA members write feature articles for the SVSA Music News throughout the year. Members can submit other articles and features at any time. Non-members may also submit articles and other written contributions but their inclusion will be subject to time and space constraints. All articles may be edited for space considerations and will be edited, as time allows, for spelling and grammar. Remember -- it'll have YOUR name on it, so do it up right before you submit it for publication. E-mail submissions by the second Tuesday of the month to [svsa.songwriters@gmail.com](mailto:svsa.songwriters@gmail.com).

### **About Announcements:**

SVSA members may list music-related announcements in the SVSA Music News. E-mail them to [svsa.songwriters@gmail.com](mailto:svsa.songwriters@gmail.com) by the second Tuesday of the month. Announcements from members will be e-mailed to members as soon as they are received and, if still timely, published in an upcoming issue of the SVSA Music News. Announcements from non-members will be held for publication in an upcoming issue of the SVSA Music News.

### **About Members' Gig Listings:**

SVSA members may submit their upcoming performance schedules for publication in the SVSA Music News. The submissions will be printed as submitted; the more information you provide, the more likely the response. Please follow this format:

Date of Gig  
Member's Name  
Name of Venue, Time  
Additional Information

E-mail gig listings by the second Tuesday of the month to [svsa.songwriters@gmail.com](mailto:svsa.songwriters@gmail.com).

### **SVSA DISCLAIMER**

*The ideas and opinions contained in this newsletter are intended to be helpful to songwriters. The companies and organizations mentioned are believed to be legitimate; however, SVSA does not endorse any products or services and offers no guaranteed success based on the content. We are always looking for articles about SVSA members and articles of interest to the songwriting community. Send articles and information to the Editor, Kathy Acosta, or [svsa.songwriters@gmail.com](mailto:svsa.songwriters@gmail.com). SVSA is a non-profit organization.*

### **SVSA Board Members:**

Larry Sakayama – President  
Britt Mistele - Vice President  
David Simpkins – Secretary  
Greg Trafidlo – Treasurer  
Kathy Acosta - Newsletter Editor



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