



# SVSA music news

## Next SVSA meeting

The next meeting of the SVSA will be held

### Wed., Feb. 22

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.

February Feature Article

## *How do I get to Carnegie Hall?*

*By Greg Trafidlo*

When I ask the musical question, “Have you written anything lately? Usually, the answer I get is, “No. I haven’t written anything in awhile,” or “Yeah, I’m working on a song,” but I’ve never heard anyone say, “I have (or have not) been **‘practicing’** my songwriting”!

It recently struck me that we “practice” guitar, piano, harmonica, even performance, etc., but rarely do we look upon our main goal as something requiring “practice.” Musical instrument training can be intimidating when trying to improve our abilities. A pencil and blank legal pad or computer screen can seem equally threatening and demanding.

I’ve been fortunate to be friends with a handful of master songwriters. This list includes writers whose works will be around long after we’re all gone. Tom Paxton, Janis Ian, BillyEdd Wheeler, Paul Craft, Don Henry, Steve Gillette, and others demonstrate awareness and skills we can all learn from. All seem to continually observe the world as potential songwriting material. They are not just steeped in music, they are all well-read, clever, savvy about the music business, and, most of all, devoted to improving their craft.

I mention this for this reason: Something separates these “masters” from the average songwriter, not just in their genius, but in their attitudes about their music. Each one of them has an admirable respect and near-reverence for their craft. They’ve each created an environment around

**Something separates these “masters” from the average songwriter, not just in their genius, but in their attitudes about their music. ... They’ve each created an environment around themselves where they are continually engaged in their art.**

themselves where they are continually engaged in their art. What makes them different is their “mastery,” and dedication to “practicing.” They’ve removed self-imposed barriers and continue to develop their innate abilities and the learned, technical aspects of songwriting daily.

Janis Ian said that she has written only three perfect songs! And I know she is writing as much today as she has throughout her lengthy career. The difference between her and us fledgling songwriters is that she knows what a perfect song is and applies that knowledge to her own songs.

We all have abilities, but like a “natural” athlete, coaching, drive, knowledge and experience can take you to the next level. It’s all part of “practice.” Learning how to analyze hit songs (in many genres), study the songs pro-writers write to understand the craft, tracks, lyrics structure and musical structure. We all have access to the same information pro-writers do. If we’re smart, we can draw from our own experiences and surroundings. There really is no shortage of grist for our musical mills.

Major questions we must ask ourselves truthfully are: “How good at songwriting do I want to get?” and “Have I written my best song?”

Bill Stains has a song about a framed needlepoint saying. The chorus reads: “I cannot play, I cannot sing, but I can try like anything.”

Every song we bring to an SVSA meeting is like a homework assignment we give ourselves. (“The dog ate my song” doesn’t work for us anymore.)

Sometimes songs come easily and effortlessly, as if they just appear. That happens because over time you’ve created a space, an idea or intention, incubated by your love of songwriting. Once a structure exists, your energy moves where it is easiest to go; into a good song. It just flows, but you’ve put more time into it than you realize. In his book “Effortless Mastery: Liberating the Master Musician Within,” Kenny Werner states, “You can’t push it. It’s like a sunrise. It unfolds in its own time.”

Like other disciplines, songwriting becomes easier when you realize that you have your whole life to learn how to do it. We all know it’s a challenge. The better we get, the more we can get out of the process. Just continue to listen to live music, perform your songs, read all you can about the craft and business.

We are all lucky to have SVSA as a base. However, I suggest you take it up a notch by attending classes taught by pro-writers (such as classes at The Swannanoa Gathering or music conferences sponsored by the Folk Alliance). Professionalism will rub off on you and your songs by creating an environment where your music is a priority.

But most of all: “Practice, practice, practice.” It’s the only way to get to Carnegie Hall. ●

## Monthly Meeting Report

The SVSA kicked off a new year with a well-attended session held on Wednesday, January 25. A total of 15 SVSA members attended. Along with the regular exchange of salutations and information, David Bowen led an informative workshop on “Performing Locally.” These “mini-workshops” have become a big hit with our members and are generating discussions aplenty. We’re all looking forward to this year’s installments.

Four original songs were given the SVSA “treatment” in our regular critique session – an open discussion of each song with comments, opinions, suggestions, and observations. From simple guitar/vocal demos to professionally produced studio recordings, original songs submitted for critique get a thorough and non-biased listen from our membership. Critiques cover lyrics and music; perhaps the most important observations deal with whether or not the song melds the two elements into a successful whole. It’s a proven fact: A song comes out stronger when it has gone through the “wringer” at an SVSA meeting. A new wrinkle this year will allow members to perform songs live in person rather than submit them via recorded media. Lyric sheets will still be required; the emphasis will remain on the song and not on the presentation. At every SVSA meeting, the pre- and post-critique discussions are lively, and a lot of interesting and helpful information passes around the room. The exchange of information, opinions, and ideas is at the

heart of 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. Guests and visitors are encouraged to stop by and observe a meeting or two before joining. It’s been my experience that most people can tell right off whether the SVSA is for them -- or not. Either way, your two cents is always welcome!

– David Simpkins

### *A note from the president*

SVSA members:

By popular request, starting at the meeting on Feb. 22 you have the option of either presenting a song for critique as a live performance or on a recording (as we’ve usually done). If you plan to do the song live, please make sure that you are fully prepared (instrument tuned, capo on, etc.) so we’re not wasting time while you set up.

Hope you can make it to the meeting.

– Larry Sakayama

## **SVSA members' co-write appears on Top Ten CD by Charlie Sizemore**

Greg Trafidlo and Barbara Martin's co-written song "Crossing Over Into the Valley," appears on bluegrass stalwart Charlie Sizemore's latest CD, "Heartache Looking for a Home." Sizemore's album was ranked in the "Top Ten Albums for 2011" by Bluegrass Today, made Cashbox Magazine's "Top Twenty Bluegrass Chart," and spent numerous months on the Sirius XM Bluegrass Junction show's "Most Played Albums" list.

You can hear Greg's version at [gregtrafidlo.com](http://gregtrafidlo.com) and the Charlie Sizemore version at [www.charliesizemoreband.com/music.htm](http://www.charliesizemoreband.com/music.htm).

## **USA Songwriting Competition now accepting entries**

Entries are currently being accepted for the 17th Annual USA Songwriting Competition. Winning songs will receive airplay on a nationally syndicated radio program, "Acoustic Café," as well as on Sirius XM Satellite Radio. Songs may be entered in 15 different categories including Pop, Rock/Alternative, R&B and Country.

Entries are accepted through May 31. The first 1,000 entries will each receive a USA Songwriting Competition Compilation CD.

Entries may be entered with MP3 files, Youtube videos, Myspace, ReverbNation or Soundcloud files. For more information about the competition, visit [www.songwriting.net](http://www.songwriting.net).

## **Guitarist wanted**

Bedford Presbyterian Church in Bedford, Virginia is seeking an enthusiastic guitarist to accompany an established contemporary worship music group. The position requires availability for required rehearsals and services (mainly the 8:30 a.m. Sunday worship service), along with organizational, communication, and leadership skills. Interested parties should email qualifications and experience to [adminassist@bedfordpresbyva.org](mailto:adminassist@bedfordpresbyva.org).

## **Grace Pettis will offer songwriting workshops**

Songwriter Grace Pettis will be holding basic songwriting workshops on Saturdays in March at the "Plan B" cafe in Broadway, Virginia (north of Harrisonburg). Topics for the four workshops will be Song Structure, Word Choice, Chord Choice, and Storytelling. For more information, check out the listing on Grace's website, [www.gracepettis.com](http://www.gracepettis.com).

## **Songwriting Circle March meeting has new location**

The next meeting of the Songwriting Circle (a community of songwriters offering feedback and support) will be March 13 at 6:30 p.m. at Mockingbird's Roots Music Hall. Songwriters of all levels and genres are welcome. If you want to bring a song for critique, bring 10 copies of the lyric sheet. Songs can be played live or on CD. For more information, contact Valerie McQueen at [val.mcqueen@gmail.com](mailto:val.mcqueen@gmail.com) or Barbara Martin at [barbara@barbaramartinmusic.com](mailto:barbara@barbaramartinmusic.com).

## SVSA Performing Members' Gigs

### Marc Baskind

FRI. AND SAT.,  
MARCH 16 AND 17

Solo. Hotel Roanoke Pine Room, Roanoke, Virginia. 9 p.m. to 1 a.m.

FRI., MARCH 23

With Caravan. Annie Moore's Irish Pub, Roanoke, 7:30-10:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, MARCH 30

Schooner's Bar, Roanoke, VA. With the Marc Baskind Trio.

### Barbara Martin

SAT., MARCH 24

Barbara Martin & Liz Barnes, 6:30 gourmet food buffet, 7:30 show, Cabaret at the Earl Hamner Theater, Rockfish Valley Community Center, 190 Rockfish School Lane, Afton, VA. Tickets are \$20, or 2 for \$35; includes food (reservations required). 434-361-1999 [www.thehamnertheater.com/event](http://www.thehamnertheater.com/event).

WED., MARCH 28

7-8:30 p.m., Barbara in concert with jazz pianist Hod O'Brien, Road Scholar Chautauqua, Natural Bridge Resort, Natural Bridge, VA. Barbara will also present a jazz history program: "From Broadway to the Jazz Club: The Evolution of American Broadway Tunes to Jazz Standards" in the afternoon. To register for the Chautauqua: [www.roadscholar.org/programs/](http://www.roadscholar.org/programs/).

FRIDAY, MARCH 30

8 p.m., Fredericksburg Songwriters Showcase, Barbara solo in a round robin with Laurie McClain, Rob Lytle, and Putnam Smith. Picker's Supply Concert Hall, 902 Caroline St., Fredericksburg, VA. Admission \$10. Call (540) 898-0611 for information.

### Randolph Walker

SAT., FEB. 25

Main Street Cafe, 1039 East Main Street, Radford, VA. 6:30 p.m. For directions, see [www.mainstreetcaferadford.com](http://www.mainstreetcaferadford.com).

## Upcoming at Third Street Coffeehouse

Feb 24 Sherwood (Robyn & Marian)

Mar 2 Joshua Sherman

Mar 9 Chris Shepard

Mar 16 The McKenzies

Mar 23 Blue O'Connell

Mar 30 Randolph Walker & Marian McConnell

April 6 Ragtop

April 13 25th Anniversary Celebration Special show (no Open Mic) – watch for details!

April 20 Wyatt Law

*Third Street Coffeehouse is a non-profit coffeehouse established in 1987. We are open every Friday. Sign up for open mic 7-7:30; open mic performances 7:30-8:15; featured performer from 8:30-10. Third Street is a smoke-free, alcohol-free, no-cover-charge venue! We "pass the hat" for donations to the featured performers. For more information please contact Marian McConnell at 540-309-4707; or email [marian.mcconnell@gmail.com](mailto:marian.mcconnell@gmail.com). Check us out online at: [www.YouTube.com/user/3rdStreetCoffeehouse](http://www.YouTube.com/user/3rdStreetCoffeehouse) and on Facebook.*

## SVSA Members' Recordings



eyes on the horizon



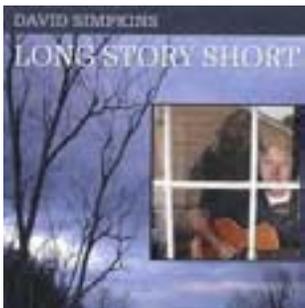
kaleidoscope



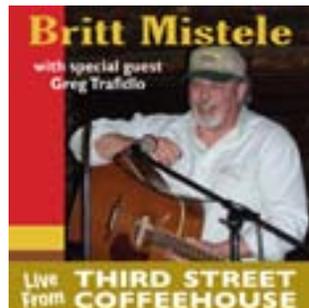
crossing over time



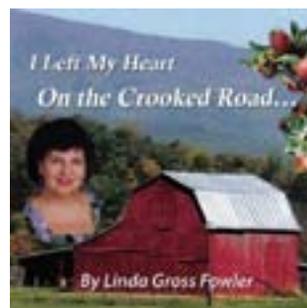
marc with a "c"



long story short



live from third street  
coffeehouse



i left my heart on the  
crooked road



horsegirl poet

### Barbara Martin

**EYES ON THE HORIZON** — Jazz and all originals with 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 Matt Finley on flugelhorn.

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

### David Bowen (Acoustic Reset)

**CROSSING OVER TIME** — Featuring folk-pop tunes. Eight originals and eight covers accented by solid guitar licks and accompanying instruments. Available at [acousticreset.com](http://acousticreset.com).

### Marc Baskind

**MARC WITH A "C"** — Sampler CD of covers and original songs offers a taste of the varied styles of this accomplished guitarist/singer.

### David Simpkins

**LONG STORY SHORT** — Offers 12 original Americana tunes blending rock, folk, blues, and country.

### Linda Fowler

**I LEFT MY HEART ON THE CROOKED ROAD** — Features 12 original compositions.

### Britt Mistele

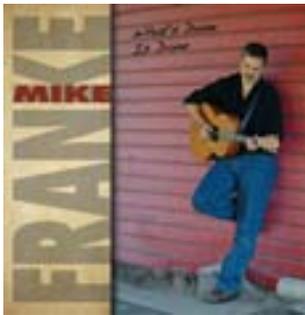
**LIVE FROM THIRD STREET COFFEEHOUSE** — Four original songs and 11 covers, recorded live at Roanoke's Third Street Coffeehouse. With special guest Greg Trafidlo.

### Aspen Black

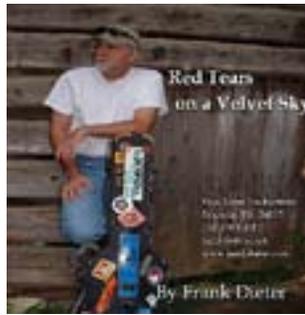
**HORSEGIRL POET** — Songs and poems about horses, cowboys, and rural life.

**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.

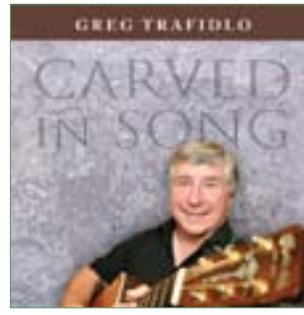
## SVSA Members' Recordings



what's done is done



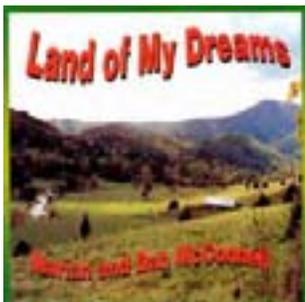
red tears on a velvet sky



carved in song



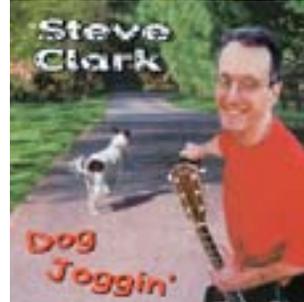
folk singular



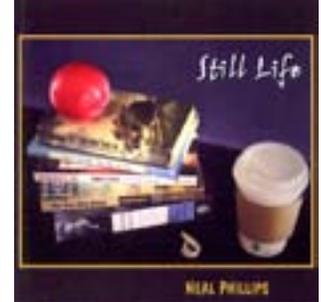
land of my dreams



winds of change



dog joggin'



still life

### Mike Franke

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

### Frank Dieter

**RED TEARS ON A VELVET SKY** — A collection of home studio demos, all new except one.

### Marian and Dan McConnell

**LAND OF MY DREAMS** — A musical excursion in the Blue Ridge Mountains in Virginia through 14 original folk songs with celtic and country/rock underpinnings. Available online at [cdbaby.com](http://cdbaby.com).

### Neal Phillips

**STILL LIFE** — Strong songwriting, excellent multi-instrumental musicianship, and eclectic insight (and a clever swipe at TBTP).

### Paddy Dougherty

**WINDS OF CHANGE** — Paddy's newest release is available at [www.paddyd.com](http://www.paddyd.com).

### Steve Clark

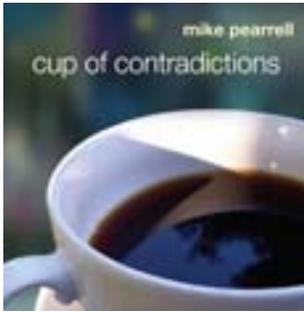
**DOG JOGGIN'** — Eleven sweet and true amusing tunes comprise this quirky singer/songwriter CD. Available at [cdbaby.com](http://cdbaby.com).

### Greg Trafidlo

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

**FOLK SINGULAR** — Greg's third solo CD reflects the diversity of his songwriting and production skills. With SVSA'ers on background vocals, and Marc Baskind on guitar and vocals.

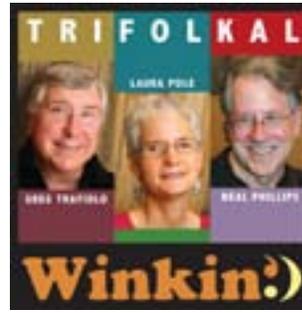
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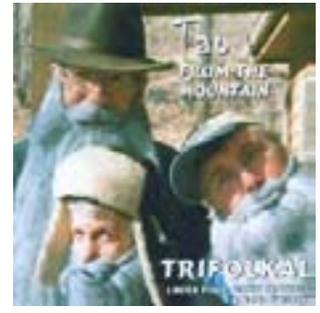
cup of contradictions



dimestore detective



winkin'



tao from the mountain

### Mike Pearrell

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

**DIMESTORE DETECTIVE** — Mike's first solo CD features 14 original compositions. Produced by Greg Traftidlo; with a number of guest SVSA musicians. Available at Mike's shows.

### 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, Greg Traftidlo & Neal Phillips. Features classics such as "Shenandoah" as well as original tunes including "Appalachian Rap" and "The Starbucks of County Down."

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## SVSA Member List

Eddie Williams • Randy Walker • Greg Traftidlo • Sharayah Spears  
David Simpkins • Marlon Scott • Connie Sellers • Larry Sakayama  
Phillip Raintree • Neal Phillips • Mike Pearrell • Mickey Nelson • David Motley  
Britt Mistele • Robby McFarland • Marian McConnell • Robert Matter  
Barbara Martin • Leigh Littleton • Mike Lewis • Mark Laperle • Steve Langston  
Josh Jones • Dan Hildebrand • Dale Hamilton • Pat Haley • Jerry Gilmore  
Mike Franke • Linda Fowler • Paddy Dougherty • Mike DeGiorgi • Mike Dittrich  
Frank Dieter • Charlie Divers • Sid Crosswhite (Lifetime Member)  
Bob Coulter (Lifetime Member) • Chip Conway • Steve Clark • Ray Cassidy  
Kimberly Brinkley • David Bowen • Aspen Black • Marc Baskind • Kathy Acosta

## *Seen on the Music Scene*

*Photos by SVSA member and photographer Leigh Littleton*



*Will Hoge and his band in concert at Kirk Avenue Music Hall in Roanoke, Virginia, on January 21.*



*Grace Pettis and Pierce Pettis performing at The Mockingbird in Staunton, Virginia, on Feb. 4.*



## SVSA Classifieds

### 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 session 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, (540) 473-3598 for more information.

### GUITAR LESSONS

Private lessons \$15 per session. I have passed the Praxis test required of public school music teachers in Virginia. For more info, contact **Randy Walker** at randolphwalker@cox.net or 588-5826, or check out my instructional videos at www.randolphwalker.com.

randolph  
walker  
music

Guitar Lessons  
Audio Recording  
Music Videos

randolphwalker@cox.net  
www.randolphwalker.com  
(540) 588-5826

### FOR SALE

2007 Guild D50 Bluegrass Special 6-string guitar. Solid Red Spruce top and Solid Indian Rosewood back and sides. Tortoise shell binding, Pear Guild logo and Chesterfield logo. D-Tar electronics. Guild HSC. \$1200. Call Britt at 540-745-6771.

### 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.

### FOR SALE

**Carvin MX842 Stereo Powered Mixer.** \$200. Built-in spring reverb and effects input/outputs for outboard effects unit. 2 band EQ, effects, gain and pan for each channel. **Barbara Martin**, (540) 886-2966, barbara@barbaramartinmusic.com.

### FOR SALE

**2 Carvin LM12 Molded 12" 2-Way Main/Monitor.** \$200 for both. **Barbara Martin**, (540) 886-2966, barbara@barbaramartinmusic.com.

### WANTED

**12- or 16-channel mixer, powered or unpowered.** Prefer Peavey, Yamaha, or Mackie. Built-ins a plus (i.e. effects, EQ, etc.) (Would love to find a Peavey XR1200 in good shape). Everything must work. **Audio Snake - 12 X 4 X 50 or 16 X 4 X 50** (or near that). 1/4" returns and box on stage end important. Reply to **Sid Crosswhite:** scrosswhite@verizon.net.

### DEMO RECORDING AND PRODUCTION

Need a pro demo or independent record really well-produced? Contact Inside Edge Studios in Nashville - your SVSA Nashville studio connection. Owner and producer is SVSA member **Mike T. Lewis**. Great gear, great results, great Nashville musicians, reasonable rates. 64-bit digital recording, Neve, Calrec, Neumann, and other top-notch equipment. Clients include Ben Thomas of Olivia Newton John's record label, Kerrville finalists, the Twangtown Paramours, and SVSA's own Greg Trafidlo. If need be, your project can be mailed to us and produced in Nashville. For more info, see www.insideedgestudios.com, call Mike at (615) 730-7665, or email info@insideedgemusic.com.

### 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.

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

### **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  
Mike DeGiorgi - Vice President  
David Simpkins – Secretary  
Greg Trafidlo – Treasurer  
Mike Franke - Board Member  
Jerry Gilmore - Board Member  
Kathy Acosta - Newsletter Editor



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**P.O. Box 698**  
**Salem, VA 24153**  
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