

## *October Feature Article*

# The Element of Honesty ...

*By Jerry Gilmore*

A great songwriter once said “All you need to write a country song is three chords and the truth.” Truth being defined as “an actual account of facts, events, (or) the body of real things.”

Sometimes, we bend or shape the truth to make it fit, make it rhyme, or, to finish a line. So, honesty sometimes brings anguish and torment that leads to countless re-writes and, perhaps, bringing your song to SVSA. For me, honesty in all forms is essential for a song to resonate.

Country songs like “I’m So Lonesome I Could Cry,” “Friends in Low Places,” and “Workin’ Man Blues” paint a picture, complete with memorable melodies, good hooks, and an overall feeling of a truthful story. Whether you are a country music fan or not, these lyrics speak to the core of honesty and ‘telling it like it is.’ The honesty factor gives credence to the writing process; however, that being said, we all know that not everyone hears with the same ears.

Therein lies the dilemma and the value of re-writes. We know creativity comes from a variety of places. The need to write something, express a feeling, frustration, a ‘get it off your chest’ moment, could be the start. For others, it could be a chord progression, a life celebration, a melody ‘stuck in your head’ or a verbal refrain. Believe me, not all songs stay in line with honesty, but the good ones have that element ... somewhere. As writers, we know a bridge gives release, takes us back to the chorus, we know structure, variations, chords and prosody. Honesty is not just poignant lyrics, it’s a melody that fits, chords that enhance the mood or theme, and a rhythm that connects.

As a young lad listening to many musical styles, I was always drawn to the honest, down to earth, lyrical content of country music. Back then, the subject matter was a bit heavy, but its honesty appealed to me. Hank Williams was one of a kind; his ability to display the vulnerable side of the human condition resonated. In the 60’s, Merle Haggard’s songs further advanced that

vulnerability, with depth and honesty. Their songs struck a chord - simple, direct and honest.

In the final analysis, it's up to YOU (the writer) to determine 'where' you want to go, and you want to 'paint the picture.' The feedback from fellow writers is essential, even though not ALL suggestions can be incorporated into one song. You have to make the decision on the ones you want to use.

The goal is to take this ingredient into "the mix" when we bring a song to SVSA. The musical and professional support has made me a better writer. What I discover with each session, is a group of skilled writers who usually see what I'm going for - that element of truth. Their feedback is very helpful, champions growth, and keeps me honest.

As I approach my first-year anniversary with the SVSA, I deeply appreciate all the advice, support, fellowship, re-writes and gigs. Thank you, one and all.

---

## ***Oct 2012 President's Message***

Hey folks,

As a follow-up to the workshop on Chord Construction, at the October meeting I'll be doing a workshop on Enhancing the V Chord. In the key of C, the V chord is a G, and is most often used as a G or G7 but there are other ways to add some color to this chord. Come to the meeting and check out some of my tricks and share some tricks of your own. Bring your guitar so you can try them out.

If you have an idea for a workshop (30-45 min) that you'd like to see or present, let me know ([larrysak3@yahoo.com](mailto:larrysak3@yahoo.com)). You don't have to be a subject matter expert to lead a workshop. Mike Dittrich, a novice songwriter, led "The Songwriting Process" by posing a series of questions that led to a great discussion that revealed numerous processes that songwriters use.

Mike Franke is organizing a Songwriter Showcase for the Third Street Coffee House (date in 2013 TBD). If you're interested in performing, contact Mike at [frankemichaelm@gmail.com](mailto:frankemichaelm@gmail.com).

At the meeting next month (November) we'll select the slate of SVSA officers for the coming year. If you'd like to throw your name into the hat or nominate someone, send your nominations to [svsa.songwriters@gmail.com](mailto:svsa.songwriters@gmail.com).

Keep writing.

**Larry Sakayama**

---

## **SVSA Christmas/Holiday Party**

Mark your calendars now for the annual SVSA Christmas/Holiday Party, to be held this year on **Friday, December 14**, from 7 to 11 p.m. at Corned Beef and Company, 107 S. Jefferson Street, Roanoke. Cost is \$12.50 per person. A buffet dinner will start at 7:30, followed by a song circle (guitar players, bring your guitar!). Guests are welcome. Please call Mike DeGiorgi at 540-719-0686 to RSVP.

---

## **Fall festival features SVSA member on vocals**

SVSA member **Linda Fowler** was the featured singer at the Friends of New London Fall Festival, held October 6 at the old historic Meade Tavern in the Village of New London. Local band “Country After Dark” performed with her.

---

## **Quotable quote**

*“I believe that if you are able to paint pictures with your lyrics, you will make people want to listen (or cut your songs). If you keep it simple, yet still find those lyrics that everyone WISHES they had thought of first – then you are heading into “Hit-writer-ville.”*

- Susan Tucker (from Kim Copeland’s songwriting newsletter)

---

## **Monthly Meeting Notes**

At the regular SVSA meeting in September, a total of 15 SVSA members were in attendance and we welcomed two guests. This continues the trend of strong participation of members throughout the summer months on into the cooler weather. Attendance estimates are gradually changing from the seasonal to the year-round.

At the September meeting, Greg Trafidlo continued our “mini-workshop” series with an informative talk on “Avoiding Writer’s Block” and offered up a number of interesting facts and insights from his experience and expertise. Greg’s presentation generated a lively discussion and contained helpful, compelling, and inspiring information of use to everyone. Greg explained that there are numerous ways of getting around “writer’s block” and that songwriters can experiment with various methods to find the one (or ones) that work best.

Mike Franke read a John Prine quote and it generated quite a back-and-

forth discussion on how sometimes the traditional “rules” of songwriting can be modified and shaped in lots of creative ways. Plans for this year’s Holiday Party were discussed as well. Members should have received an email notice about the Holiday Party by the time you read this newsletter. Members should also note that officers for the coming year will be nominated and elected at the next meeting in November.

The September meeting also saw a healthy number of songs submitted for critique. Seven original songs and one lyric reading were given the SVSA “treatment” in our regular critique session — an open discussion of each song with comments, opinions, suggestions, and observations aplenty. 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 popular new option gives members an opportunity to perform their submissions live and in person. Members have been taking advantage of this opportunity and several of the songs were performed from the Third Street Coffeehouse stage.

And, as always, the pre- and postcritique discussions were lively, and a lot of interesting and helpful information passed 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. Your two cents is always welcome!

Non-members are encouraged to attend as well. You can sit through a meeting or two and see for yourself whether or not you think the SVSA would be beneficial to your songwriting efforts. The pay-off might not be immediate -- but the long-run benefits are many and valuable. You’ll find SVSA members with nearly every level of experience who are willing to share their knowledge and enthusiasm with you on your songwriting journey. So plan to attend next month’s meeting and check us out!

**- David Simpkins**



*SVSA members Mike DeGiorgi and Larry Sakayama perform at Beyond the Green in Moneta, Virginia. Photos by Jack Lee Dean.*

---

## ***Songwriting competition extends deadline to November 1***

The International Songwriting Competition, called “the songwriting competition to take note of” by the New York Times, is giving away more than \$150,000 in cash and prizes, including a Grand Prize of \$25,000 cash and over \$40,000 in prizes. Judges for this year include Tom Waits, Jeff Beck, Nas, Martina McBride, Bernie Taupin, Derek Trucks & Susan Tedeschi, and Bruce Hornsby.

The deadline for entries has been extended until **November 1**. The competition is open to amateur and professional songwriters, and entries are accepted online and through U.S. Mail. Entry information can be found at <http://www.songwritingcompetition.com>.

Categories for songs include Adult Album Alternative (AAA), Adult Contemporary (AC), Americana, Blues, Children’s Music, Comedy/Novelty, Country, Dance/Electronica, Folk/Singer-Songwriter, Gospel/Christian, Instrumental, Jazz, Latin Music, Lyrics Only, Music Video, Pop/Top 40, Performance, R&B/Hip-Hop, Rock, Teen, Unsigned Only, and World Music.

## SVSA PERFORMING MEMBERS' UPCOMING GIGS

### **Greg Trafidlo:**

Oct. 26: Blue Mountain Festival with Tom Paxton and Robin Bullock, Blue Ridge Community College, Weyers Cave, VA

Nov. 11: Unity Church, Roanoke, VA. Special Music during two services.

Nov. 14: Epicure Cafe' Fairfax, VA. "Songwriter Cultural Exchange" with Laura Pole, Marc Baskind, David Simpkins, Tom Dews, Britt Mistele, Kathy Acosta, Mary Gordon Hall, Nina Acosta, and Ron Goad on percussion.

### **Aspen Black:**

October 27- Locklear Family Farm and Mill- Rocky Mount, VA

November 14-18 - Western Music Assoc. Showcase and Awards Show, Albuquerque, NM

December 2- Rocky Mount Christmas Parade, Rocky Mount, VA

December 7- Come Home to a Franklin County Christmas 7-9 PM - Farmers Mkt.- Rocky Mount, VA

### **Barbara Martin:**

Saturday, October 27, 2-4 pm, Barbara solo, Notaviva Vineyards, 13274 Sagle Road, Purcellville, VA 20132, 540-668-6756 www.NotavivaVineyards.com

### **Blue O'Connell**

Friday, Dec. 14 - Featured performer at Third Street Coffeehouse, Roanoke

### **Mike Franke**

October 26, November 9, and December 14 at Mill Mountain Coffee and Tea in Salem.

### **Marc Baskind:**

Fri Oct 26 Annie Moore's Irish Pub w/ Caravan 7:30-10:30 PM

Fri Nov 16 Annie Moore's Irish Pub w/ Caravan 7:30-10:30 PM

Sat Nov 17 309 Winery, Bedford Va, Solo 7-10 PM

Fri Nov 23 Hotel Roanoke Pine Room Solo 9 PM-1AM

### **David Simpkins:**

Epicure Café Variety Showcase, Wed., Nov. 14, 8 p.m. 8 p.m. With Kathy Acosta, Greg Trafidlo, Britt Mistele, Laura Pole, Marc Baskind, Nina Acosta, Mary Gordon Hall, Tom Dews, Paula Monks, and Ron Goad

Side Door Sessions Series -- Radford VA -- Jan 2013 (date and time TBD)(with Kathy Acosta, Greg Trafidlo, and Britt Mistele)

## UPCOMING AT THIRD STREET COFFEEHOUSE

- Oct 26 Flint Blade (Ft. Pierce, FL)  
Nov 2 Robbie Dummitt (Roanoke, VA)  
Nov 9 Karl Hepler (Glen Allen, VA)  
Nov 16 Bob Schmucker & Jim Page (Vinton, VA)  
Nov 23 Closed for Thanksgiving  
Nov 30 Contemporary Christian Music hosted  
by Langstons  
Dec 7 Ragtop (Roanoke, VA)  
Dec 14 Blue O'Connell (Charlottesville, VA)  
Dec 21 Closed for Holidays  
Dec 28 Closed for Holidays  
Jan 4 Chris Shepard (Roanoke, VA)  
Jan 11 The Hunts (Roanoke, VA)  
Jan 18 Joy Truskowski (Roanoke, VA)  
Jan 25 Randolph Walker & Marian McConnell  
(Roanoke, VA)  
Feb 1 SVSA Writers in the Round  
Feb 8 The Panini Brothers (Sakyama,  
DeGeorgi, Conway)  
Feb 15 Lee Palmer (Roanoke, VA)  
Feb 22 Lee Robertson & Daniel McBroom  
(Moneta, VA)  
March 1 Immersed (Roanoke, VA)  
March 8 John Powell (Fincastle, VA)

*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 MEMBERSHIP

as of October 2012

Kathy Acosta  
Marc Baskind  
Aspen Black  
Clay Blevins  
David Bowen  
Dee Bowlin  
Steve Clark  
Chip Conway  
Bob Coulter (Lifetime Member)  
Sid Crosswhite (Lifetime Member)  
Mike DeGeorgi  
Mike Dittrich  
Linda Fowler  
Mike Franke  
Jerry Gilmore  
Dale Hamilton  
George Harris  
Larry Helms  
Dan Hildebrand  
Josh Jones  
Steve Langston  
Mark Laperle  
Leigh Littleton  
Barbara Martin  
Elliot Martin  
Britt Mistele  
David Motley  
Mickey Nelson  
Blue O'Connell  
Mike Pearrell  
Larry Sakayama  
Connie Sellers  
David Simpkins  
Greg Trafidlo  
Randy Walker  
Eddie Williams

# SVSA Members' Recordings



eyes on the horizon



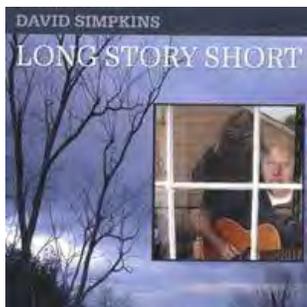
kaleidoscope



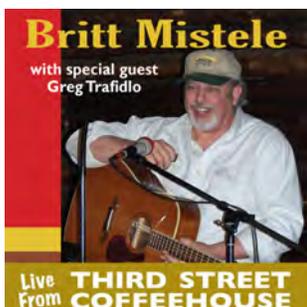
crossing over time



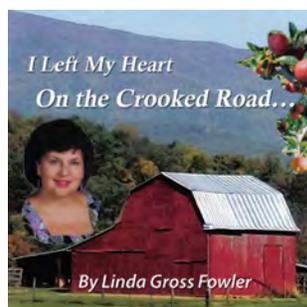
marc with a "c"



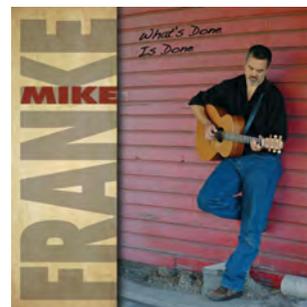
long story short



live from third street  
coffeehouse



i left my heart on the  
crooked road



what's done is done

## 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.

## 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.

## 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..

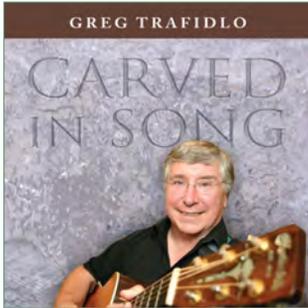
## Linda Fowler

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

## 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.

# SVSA Members' Recordings



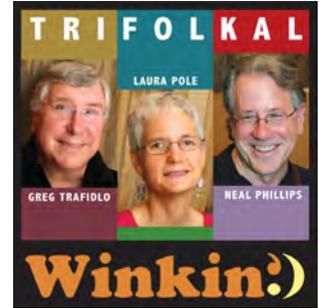
carved in song



folksingular



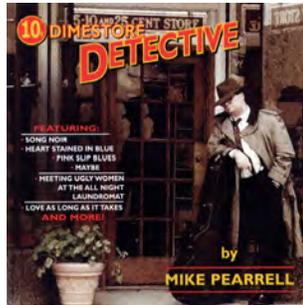
dog joggin'



winkin'



cup of contradictions



dimestore detective



horsegirl poet



from the heart of a cowgirl

## 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).

**FOLKSINGULAR** — 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.

## Steve Clark

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

## Trifolkal

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

## 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 songs. Produced by Greg Trafidlo; with a number of guest SVSA musicians. Available at Mike's shows.

## Aspen Black

**FROM THE HEART OF A COWGIRL** — S28 original spoken word poems adhering to the Western Music Association guidelines for the cowboy poetry genre.

**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 Classifieds

### FOR SALE

1990 Alvarez Yairi DY53-N acoustic guitar. This is a European Jumbo size guitar which has a wonderful sound and is very easy to play. This rare piece was only made for two years in the Spruce top, Pecan back and sides combination. In excellent condition, and comes with a hard shell case. Pictures available upon request. \$800 with L.R. Baggs M-1 pickup, or \$650 without. Contact **Britt Mistele** at 540-745-6771, or [britzsongz@aol.com](mailto:britzsongz@aol.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 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](mailto:thejonesgroup@rbnet.com), (540) 473-3598 for more information.

### 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).

### 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](mailto:scrosswhite@verizon.net).

**randolph  
walker  
music**

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

**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](mailto: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](mailto:barbara@barbaramartinmusic.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](mailto: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.

### ***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. E-mail submissions to 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 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.

### ***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. 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



**SVSA**  
**P.O. Box 698**  
**Salem, VA 24153**  
**[www.svsasongs.com](http://www.svsasongs.com)**