

MAY 2013

Next SVSA meeting

The next meeting of the SVSA will be held **Wednesday, May 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.

May's meeting features a presentation by songwriter Kerry Grombacher

Kerry Grombacher, a songwriter and music educator based in New Orleans, will join the SVSA meeting on Wednesday, May 22 and offer a presentation that's based on a workshop, "Finding the Story in the Picture," that he presents at festivals, museums, libraries and schools around the country. In the presentation, designed to help you find inspiration for a broad range of creative writing and learn to be a better observer and a more expressive writer, he'll stress the use of strong descriptive language, literary and cultural allusions, and the power of story.

Grombacher writes contemporary folk and western songs and tours nationally for concerts. He's performed at venues and events as varied as the Newport Folk Festival, the Arizona Cowboy Poets Gathering, the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival, back-country horse trips in Yellowstone National Park, and the parking lot of the Sands Motel, in Grants New Mexico on Historic Route 66 (where there's a room named for him). His songs have been covered by recording artists including Chris Chandler, Gary Prescott, Trails & Rails, Ed Stabler, Lorrie Keating, Duke Davis, The Texas Trailhands, and Earl Gleason, and he recently landed a track on a Putumayo World Records compilation that was released in the United States and over sixty foreign countries.

Grombacher is also a "first reader" for several published novelists, short story writers and authors of non-fiction, and the Texas Institute of Letters chose him as a judge for its 2008 literary awards. A member of Phi Beta Kappa, the national academic honor society, he did undergraduate and graduate work at the

University of Texas in the interdisciplinary American Studies program where American history and literature, art history, folklore, and ethnomusicology were among his interests.

May Feature Article

from the [Songwriters Connection E-tip, 05/12/13](#)

How To Become a Better Songwriter by NOT Writing Songs!

By Susan Tucker

I remember when I was kid playing softball, our coach would always make us go back and practice the basics if we were on a losing streak or playing poorly. That's a tool that I've kept with me all my life. It's often way too easy to get into lazy or bad habits, particularly in things we do on a regular basis. We tend to get sloppy.

The same thing can happen with songwriting. If you aren't writing anything that has a magic to it or just doesn't feel real – maybe it's time to go back to the basics.

I think the very best step at this point is to **write without writing a song**. Do not write in song form or rhyme words. Do not pick up your guitar or sit down at your keyboard. **Focus strictly on ideas and words.**

Start by flipping through all your hook ideas or sort through all your incomplete songs and grab those hooks. Find the idea that has the most attraction for you and write it down at the top of a blank sheet of paper. The first thing to do now is to explore. In very broad strokes, what COULD this word or phrase be saying? Since you had it saved as a song idea, most likely it will in fact be the hook of your potential song; therefore it will be the summation of all the rest of the lyric. It will be the whole point of the song.

Write down these broad stroke ideas in one or two sentences.

Example: I love her so much, but she broke my heart and that's why "I'm In

"...when or if you find yourself writing weak lyrics, it may be because you are just plugging in words that sound good with the melody or music you are creating and you haven't thoroughly thought through the song idea..."

This Bar Tonight.”

Example: I’ve been in my share of fights and I’ve broken several hearts, but since I met you, “I’m Better Than I Used To Be.”

Go wild with the ideas. Don’t try to be “commercial.” Go down strange roads with the ideas. They never have to see the light of day, but opening up your mind to free flow will bring up ideas that aren’t cliché and used up.

Next, try one or both of these next steps, using your one- or two-sentence summation/hook idea as the focal point (the point at which all elements or aspects converge; the center of activity or attention).

A. Write a letter to a stranger. Give the back story that sets up the focal point. Also tell the back story of any and all characters involved. Use adjectives, action verbs, and imagery extremely freely here. Don’t censor yourself! If an adjective feels corny, but it’s the first word that came to you, use it. Write it down. Free flow.

There’s a good chance you won’t use any of the back story in your final lyric, but it will help you get more familiar with your characters. Tell the whole story, taking the person you are writing this letter to, right up to the focal point/song hook.

B. Another approach that works well for some writers is to write a screenplay. Using this tool, you’ll be painting pictures of what the audience will see or hear on the stage or screen.

Example: The setting is outside. It’s dark and there is no moon. Crickets are chirping softly in the background. A young man in worn-out jeans and a young woman in a pink cotton dress are lying in the back of a pickup truck staring up at the millions of stars in the sky. He suddenly sits up and says ...

The important thing in either approach is to let your mind run wild then slowly rein it back in. This will help you find fresher ideas and stories, new perspectives and better hooks.

Some other points to keep in mind as you try the letter or movie approach:

In the margins or on a separate page, write down any adjectives or descriptive phrases that pop into your head.

Don’t spend time trying to find just the right word. It’s more important at this point to just let ideas flow.

Experiment with tense, attitudes, or point of view (who is singing these words)

Complex emotions are very hard to describe. Rather than just stating it (I

love you), try focusing on finding imagery to express it. These lines from *The Good Stuff* (written by Craig Wiseman, Jim Collins) speak volumes!

“And it’s the way that she looks with the rice in her hair.

Eating burnt suppers the whole first year

And askin’ for seconds to keep her from tearin’ up

Yeah, man, that’s the good stuff.”

So when or if you find yourself writing weak lyrics, it may be because you are just plugging in words that sound good with the melody or music you are creating and you haven’t thoroughly thought through the song idea. Or sometimes you might have a point you want to drive home and forget to add color, description and story to the lyric. Don’t forget to entertain.

Using the letter or movie approach allows you to focus just on fleshing out a great, unique idea. And after you do, you’ll find your lyric jumping right off the page at you - ready for a melody, some groovy music and just waiting for a chance to get on the radio.

*Susan Tucker is author of *The Soul of a Writer* and *The Secrets of Songwriting*.*

SVSA President’s Message, April 2013

The buzz is still out there regarding Darrell Brown’s workshop. It inspired people to write, collaborate, and pay attention to how all the elements of a song work together. It also generated a continuing discussion on how song critiques should be done. Everyone has an opinion on this so bring yours to the meeting.

At our meeting this month, Kerry Grombacher, a songwriter and music educator based in New Orleans, will offer a presentation that’s based on a workshop, “Finding the Story in the Picture,” that he presents at festivals, museums, libraries, and schools around the country.

Next month Mike DeGiorgi and Mike Franke will lead the workshop: “Am I Done Yet?”

We’ll be updating our website soon. We want it to be a good resource for members and represent of all the things we do. If you have something that you’d like to see on our site, email me at larrysak3@yahoo.com.

Bring that unfinished song you’ve been working on for months to the meeting. We can help you finish it.

- Larry Sakayama

Monthly Meeting Report: April

At last month's regular SVSA meeting, a total of 13 SVSA members attended along with one guest. Our workshops and our monthly meetings are of great value to songwriters at any level. And for new and long-term members, a steady influx of new membership keeps our meetings interesting, lively, and progressive.

At the April meeting, SVSA president Larry Sakayama initiated an open discussion about the previous month's workshop with Darrell Brown. The workshop discussion generated a number of related topics and it was clear that those who attended the workshop came away with lots of interesting insights and personal epiphanies. Another interesting aspect of the discussion was Larry's walk-through of the events that led to the SVSA's being part of a lobbying effort to strengthen songwriters' rights. Larry also announced that May's meeting would bring in another "outside" person of note to conduct a workshop. Our workshops – whether member generated or "outside" generated – always stir up a lot of enthusiasm and a sharing of information, tools we can use to better ourselves as songwriters and performers.

The April meeting also saw seven original songs brought in, including a first-ever collaboration between SVSA members Paul Douglas and Dee Bowlin. All songs are given the SVSA "treatment" in our regular critique session, which features 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 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 live on the Third Street Coffeehouse stage.

And, as always, the 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 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 Showcase seeks performers

SVSA will be presenting another Songwriters In The Round show at Third Street Coffeehouse on Friday, August 2. Several people have already signed up to play but there are still slots available. If you're interested, get in touch with David Bowen at acousticreset@gmail.com and he'll get it set up.

Volunteers needed at Third Street Coffeehouse

Interested in doing a little more to support the venue that hosts SVSA meetings and so much great music? Third Street Coffeehouse can always use volunteers. If you want to sign up to volunteer, email Marian McConnell at marian.mcconnell@gmail.com.

SVSA-ers compete in songwriting contest

SVSA members Paul Douglas, Dee Bowlin, Mark Laperle and Randy Walker submitted songs to the Richard Leigh Songwriting Contest and attended the Richard Leigh music festival at Virginia Highlands Community College in Abingdon on May 18. Paul, Dee, Mark and Randy were among 24 entrants who were asked to perform their song live for the judges. Paul and Dee performed a song they co-wrote. Winners of the contest have not been announced yet.

SVSA PERFORMING MEMBERS' UPCOMING GIGS

Barbara Martin:

Saturday, June 8:

6:30-buffet, 7-11 p.m. performance, Barbara Martin & Vince Lewis, 110 Marshall - That Bluesy Artspace, 110 Marshall Ave. Beckley, WV 25801-4911 near intersection of Johnstown Rd. and Eisenhower Dr. For reservations call: (304) 222-2536 www.facebook.com/pages/110-Marshall \$15 per person, \$25 per couple.

Thursday, June 13:

12-1 p.m., Barbara Martin and Vince Lewis, Summer Lunch Concert Series, James Center, 901 E Cary St, Richmond, VA 23219, (804) 344-3222 www.thejamescenter.com. Free admission.

Friday, June 21:

7-9 p.m., Barbara Martin & Liz Barnes Quartet, Fridays on the Square Summer Concert Series, Court Square, Downtown Harrisonburg, VA www.fridaysonthesquare.com

www.fridaysonthesquare.com
www.facebook.com/pages/Fridays-on-the-Square. (540) 432-8922. Free.

Greg Traftlo:

Monday, May 27: "The Mall," Washington D.C. Performing "Carved in Stone" and other songs at the National Women's Vietnam Memorial.

Dan Hildebrand:

Saturday, June 15: Fincastle Winery, 6-9 p.m.

SVSA-ers on Capitol Hill

As reported last month, a group of SVSA songwriters spent some time in Washington, D.C. in April performing an original song and attending briefings and meetings on the topic of copyrights. Part of the group is shown here. From left to right: Linda Mensch (entertainment attorney), Chris Israel (Grammy representative), Justin Roberts (recording artist and performer), Judy Larson, Greg Traftlo, Sally Sakayama, Barbara Martin.



SVSA PERFORMING MEMBERS' UPCOMING GIGS

Marc Baskind:

Friday, May 24: Annie Moore's Irish Pub, Roanoke VA w/Caravan (jazz standards/rock/blues)

Saturday, May 25: Leogrande Winery, Goode VA, Solo 2-6 p.m.

Saturday, May 25: With **Jane Powell**, Bernard's Landing, Moneta, Virginia, 7:30-10:30 p.m.

Friday, June 14: Three Little Pigs BBQ, Daleville, Virginia, Solo, 6:30-9:30 p.m., on the patio (weather permitting)

Saturday, June 15: Leogrande Winery, Goode VA, Solo, 2-6 p.m.

Friday, June 21: India Garden Restaurant, Blacksburg VA, Solo, 6-8:30 p.m.

Sunday, Jun 30: Three Little Pigs BBQ, Daleville, VA, Solo, 6:30-9:30 p.m., on the patio (weather permitting).

David Simpkins:

Saturday, June 8: Radford Farmers Market, Radford, Virginia, 10 a.m.-noon

Friday, June 14: Appalachian Spirit Art Gallery. Marion, Virginia, 6-8 p.m. (with the KGB)

Saturday, June 15: Floyd Farmers Market. Floyd, Virginia, 10:00 a.m.-noon

Saturday, July 13: Radford Farmers Market, Radford, Virginia, 10 a.m.-noon

Saturday, July 20: Floyd Farmers Market, Floyd, Virginia, 10 a.m.-noon

Saturday, August 17: Floyd Farmers Market, Floyd, Virginia, 10 a.m.-noon

Saturday, August 24: Radford Farmers Market, Radford, Virginia, 10 a.m.-noon

Saturday, September 14: Radford Farmers Market, Radford, Virginia, 10 a.m.-noon

Saturday, September 21: Floyd Farmers Market, Floyd, Virginia, 10 a.m.-noon

Saturday, October 5: Radford Farmers Market, Radford, Virginia, 10 a.m.-noon

Saturday, October 19: Floyd Farmers Market, Floyd, Virginia, 10 a.m.-noon

Mike Franke:

June 7: Mill Mountain Coffee and Tea, Starkey Road, Roanoke, 7-9 p.m.

June 21: Mill Mountain Coffee and Tea, Salem, 7-9 p.m.

July 5: Mill Mountain Coffee and Tea, Starkey Road, Roanoke, 7-9 p.m.

July 19: Mill Mountain Coffee and Tea, Salem, 7-9 p.m.

August 2: Mill Mountain Coffee and Tea, Starkey Road, Roanoke, 7-9 p.m.

August 16: Mill Mountain Coffee and Tea, Salem, 7-9 p.m.

SVSA Classifieds

FOR SALE

2012 Ibanez AS-73 semi-hollow guitar with Ibanez hard shell case. Like new. \$260. See ad and pictures at <http://roanoke.craigslist.org/msg/3812129921.html>. Contact **Leo Cullen** at 297-3661.

FOR SALE

2003 Taylor 355 12-string guitar. Made on July 25th, 2003, this guitar is absolutely perfect! A 10 out of 10. It has a Spruce top and Sapele Mahogany back and sides. Comes with the original Taylor HSC. It has a pro set up and plays like a dream. \$900. Call **Britt**, 540-745-6771.

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Guitar Lessons
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Music Videos

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

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.

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

2 Carvin LM12 Molded 12" 2-Way Main/Monitor. \$200 for both. **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.

STUDIO GUITARIST FOR HIRE

10 years playing experience. Can play rock, bluegrass, blues, and some country. Can read sheet music, compose, and improvise. Rates negotiable. Contact **Elliott Martin** at 540-344-1854 or email metalstar316@cox.net.

GUITAR LESSONS

2 years teaching experience. All ages and skill levels, beginner to advanced. Proficient in many genres, can teach how to read music as well as write it. Rates are \$15/ hour. Contact **Elliott Martin** at 540-344-1854 or email metalstar316@cox.net.

UPCOMING AT THIRD STREET COFFEEHOUSE

May 24	Dave Hogan
May 31	Kerry Grombacher
June 7	Bob Grubel and Cliff Dumais, aka "Second Sight"
June 14	Josh Gilbert
June 21	The Flying Davenports
Jun 28	"Western Highways" Multi-Media with Randolph Walker & Marian McConnell
Jul 5	Jared Minnix
Jul 12	Sharayah Spears
Jul 19	Roy Schneider Duo
Jul 26	Bill and Elia Perras
Aug 2	SVSA Writers in the Round
Aug 9	Tommy Edwards & Randolph Walker
Aug 16	Flint Blade
Aug 23	Joy Truskowski
Aug 30	Lee Robertson and Daniel McBroom
Sept 6	Stephen Babcock
Sept 13	Clinton Collins
Sept 20	Steve Langston
Sept 27	The McKenzies
Oct 4	Denise Jordan Finley and Dan Pagdon

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. Check us out online at: www.YouTube.com/user/3rdStreetCoffeehouse and on Facebook.

SVSA MEMBERSHIP

Paid as of May 2013

Kathy Acosta
Marc Baskind
Aspen Black
Alice Black
Clay Blevins
David Bowen
Dee Bowlin
Steve Clark
Bob Coulter (Lifetime Member)
Sid Crosswhite (Lifetime Member)
Leo Cullen
Mike DeGiorgi
Mike Dittrich
Paul Douglas
Linda Fowler
Mike Franke
Jerry Gilmore
Mary Gordon Hall
Dale Hamilton
Larry Helms
Dan Hildebrand
Josh Jones
Mark Laperle
Leigh Littleton
Bob Lowell
Barbara Martin
Marian McConnell
Britt Misteale
David Motley
Mickey Nelson
Mike Pearrell
Neal Phillips
Larry Sakayama
Marlon Scott
David Simpkins
Greg Traftlo
Randolph Walker
Melissa Webb
Eddie Williams

SVSA Members' Recordings



eyes on the horizon



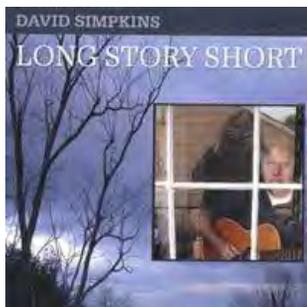
kaleidoscope



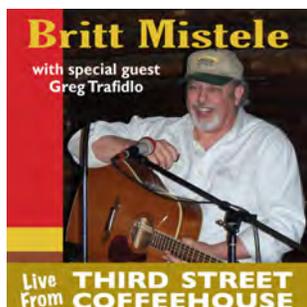
crossing over time



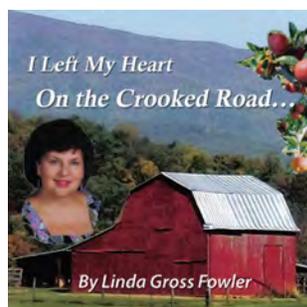
marc with a "c"



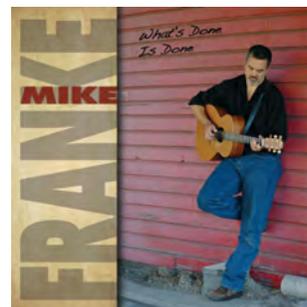
long story short



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..

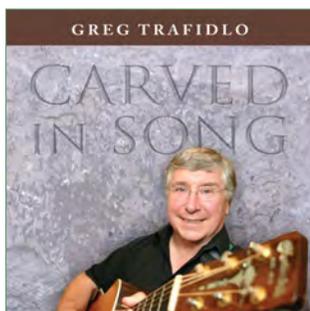
Linda Fowler

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



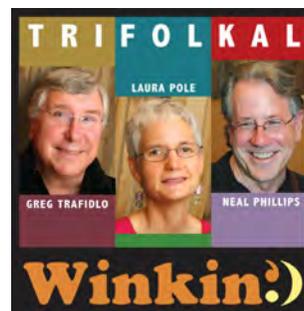
carved in song



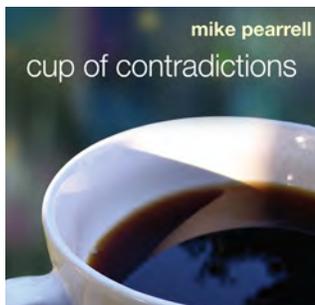
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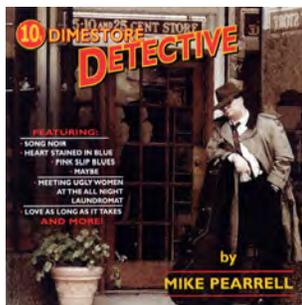
dog joggin'



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.

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.

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.

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:

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SVSA
P.O. Box 698
Salem, VA 24153
www.svsasongs.com