SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA SONGWRITERS ASSOCIATION

SVSA MUSIC NEWS

FEBRUARY 2023

WWW.SVSASONGS.COM

FEBRUARY FEATURE ARTICLE

Can you write a real song with Artificial Intelligence (AI)?

by Mike DeGiorgi

Every year I subject myself to an intensive, 2-part, physical exam. Part 1 is a couple hours worth of comprehensive tests. Part 2 is going over the results a couple of weeks later ... another 2 hours.

I like my doctor. He's thorough, empathetic, and also a guitar player. Halfway through last month's review, he put down his notes and asked, "Hey, this has nothing to do with medicine, but have you ever written a song using artificial intelligence?"

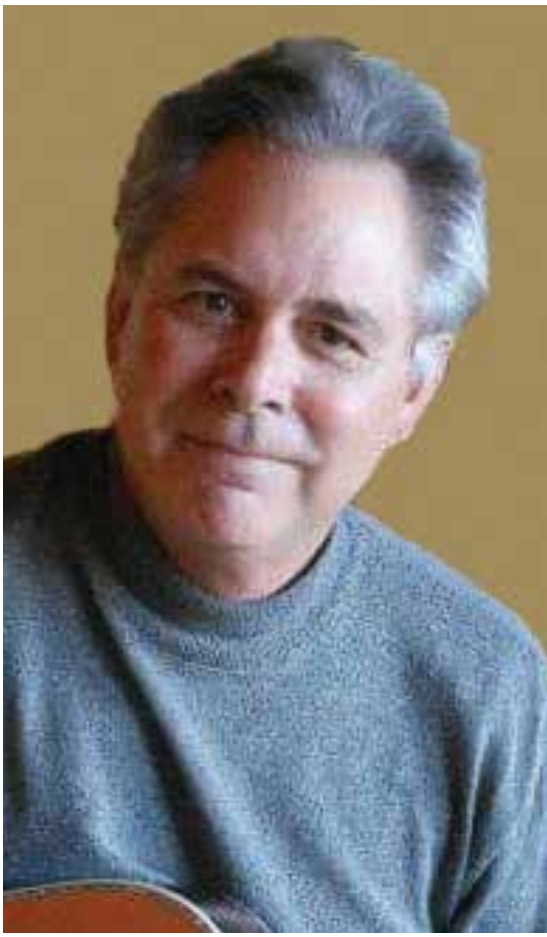
"Seriously?" I replied. "No, that's cheating. I wouldn't go near it."

He then calls up a web page, chatgpt.com. In the box provided, he types, "Write four verses and a chorus about Mike flying to the moon." Twenty seconds later a set of lyrics spits out. Here's the chorus:

Mike's flying to the moon,
reaching for the stars
Nothings gonna stop him,
he's going far
He's got the courage
and the will to succeed
Mike's flying to the moon
on a one-way speed

"Pretty Good, huh?" he asks. Now I'm pissed. "Are you kidding me? A kid in middle school could write better than that!"

See Feature Article, page 2



The next in-person meeting of the SVSA this year will be held **WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 22** in the LL Rice Room at the Jefferson Center in Roanoke VA.

Doors open at 7:00 p.m.; the meeting begins at 7:30 and will last until the last song critique is finished, or 10:00 p.m., whichever comes first.

Members may submit one song for critique (on CD, phone, computer, or you can perform it live) and should provide at least 25 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.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Very calmly he asks me what I don't like about the lyrics. I tell him the rhymes are lame, there's nothing clever or interesting about the verses. He tells me to type all of my criticisms in the box, as well as what changes I'd want. So I did that and got a new set of lyrics. Admittedly, they were much better, but still no where near anything I'd want to claim as my own.

Now his point was that I can keep critiquing and suggesting, multiple times, until I'm satisfied with the outcome. I'm driving the effort. The program is just a tool. (Did I mention that all of this caused a sharp spike in my blood pressure, which seemed ironic.)

Ever read a story about a crook who finally gets caught after five years of successful bank heists? I always ask myself, "Why didn't that guy just get a job where he could use all that daring and creativity ... legally?"

My foray into AI left me with the same feeling. If I'm going to critique and tweak 50 times before I get to a decent product, why not just do it myself, with no help?"

And therein lies the slippery slope. Where is the line between using a tool that saves time ... and manufactured art? Is AI much different from using a calculator in math class, or a rhyming dictionary? Does Elon Musk get co-writing credit on each tune composed with AI?

Personally, I'll always come down on the side of creating art, rather than manufacturing it. There is also the idea that one key element of value is the availability or scarcity of a product. If anyone can write a commercially viable tune using AI, is there any real value in being a songwriter? Is there any real value in a song? Can you truly have an emotional connection to a song written through AI? If you can't connect as the writer, how can your listeners?

Hal, please give me some answers. Hal?

Next meeting is this coming Wed, Feb 22

The next meeting of the SVSA is this **Wednesday, February 22**.

As usual, we will open the doors at 7:00 p.m. and then begin the meeting at 7:30 in the L.L. Rice Room at the Jefferson Center.

Twenty-five copies of your lyric sheet and a CD or an mp3 on your phone are all you need — or bring your instrument if you want to perform your song live.

CHARLIE DIVERS

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

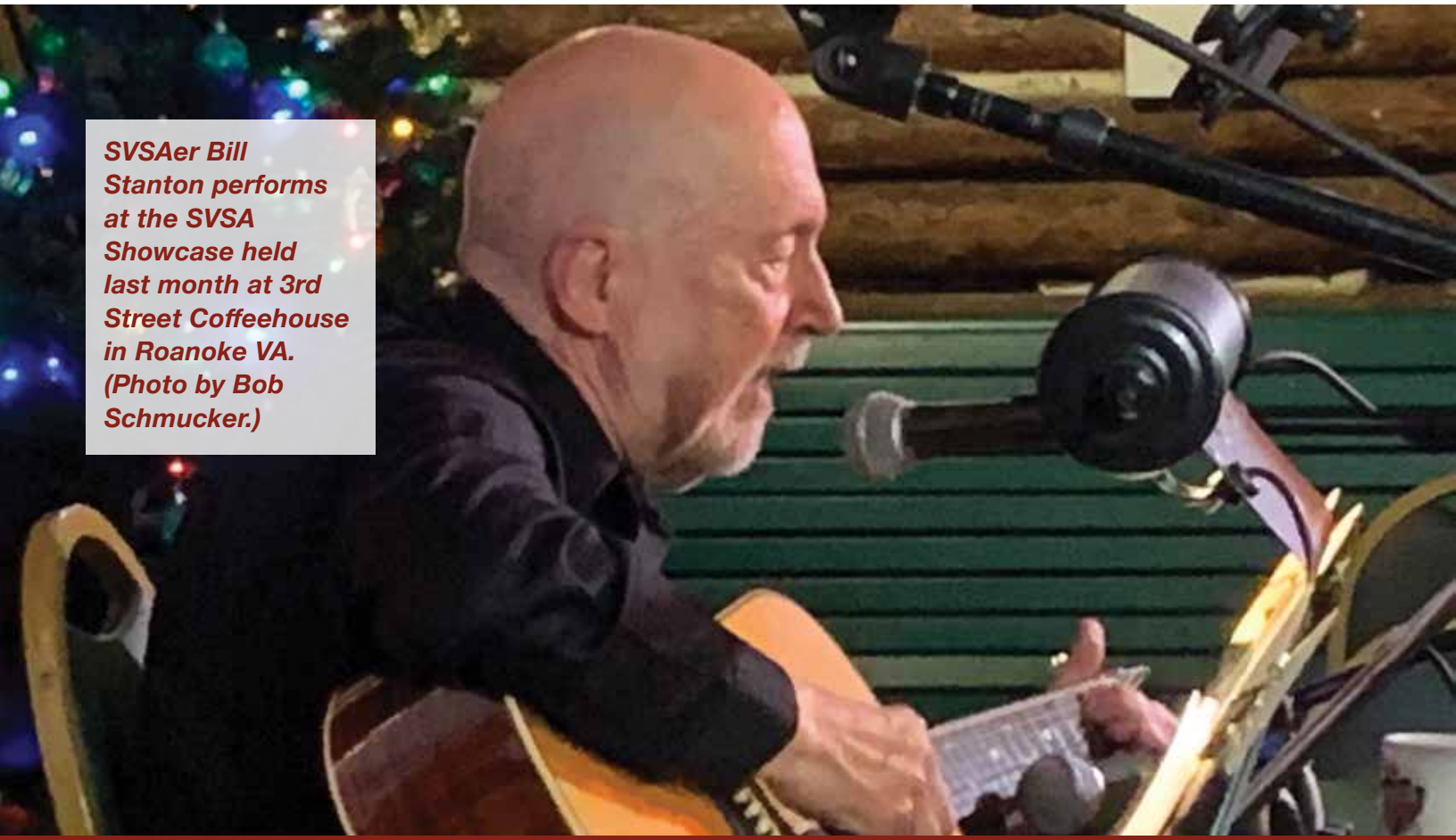
Challenge yourself in the coming year

As we start a new year, it's inevitable to look back at the past year. Did you have any goals for the past year? Did you achieve them? Do you have any new goals for this year? What form will those new goals take? Maybe you'd like to start and/or finish a certain number of songs? A certain number of live performances? Maybe take the plunge and record a full CD? Or maybe release a single through one of the streaming platforms? How about one a quarter? Maybe do a basic lyric video? Maybe learn a new instrument or just strive to be better on your instrument?

I'll be happy to do anything I can this year to help any member. If there are subjects that you want to cover at our monthly meetings please let me know.

If you have any input you'd like to offer about the meeting or anything you'd like to discuss in general, feel free to reach out. I can be reached at (540) 420-7591 or cdivers07@hotmail.com.

I look forward to seeing everyone at the meetings.



SVSAer Bill Stanton performs at the SVSA Showcase held last month at 3rd Street Coffeehouse in Roanoke VA. (Photo by Bob Schmucker.)

Trafidlo's "Follies"at Bridgewater house concert

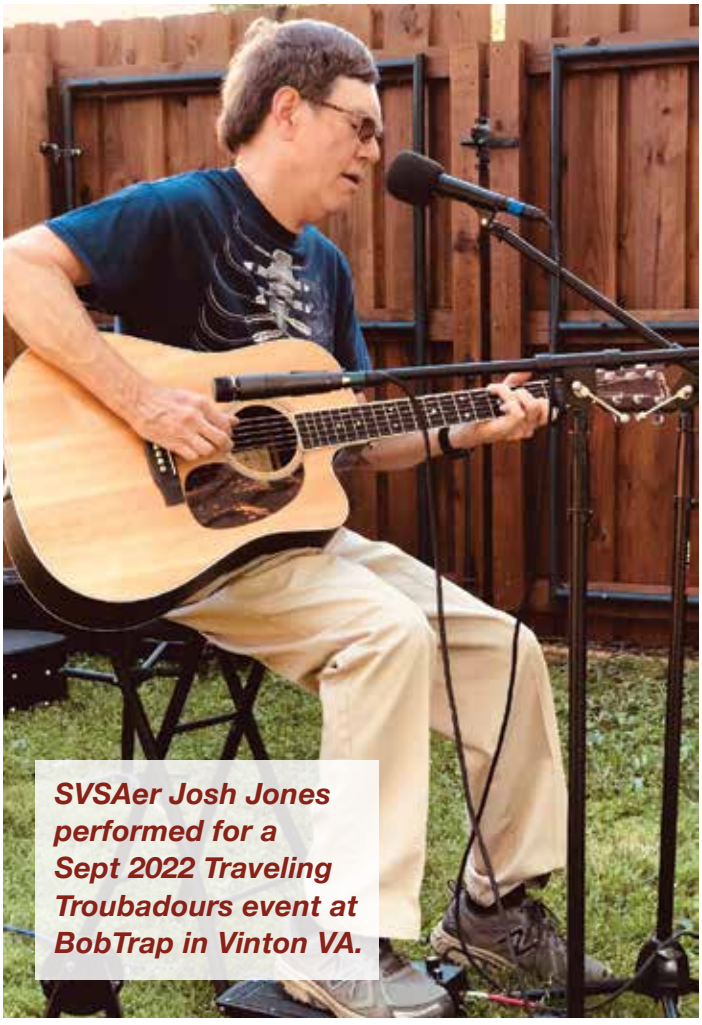
SVSA board member **Greg Trafidlo**'s "Follies" returned Saturday night, February 18 to Bridgewater VA for a packed house concert that had been cancelled the past two years due to the pandemic. This yearly event had featured past and present SVSA members for over six years previously. This year the performers were, facing left to right, Greg, **Kathy Acosta**, **Mike Pearrell**, **Britt Mistele**, **David Simpkins**, and **Marc Baskind**. The show included original songs, covers, and several exceptional sing-a-longs. Performers and attendees alike are already looking forward to next year's bash. (Photo by Judy Larson.)

KINNFOLK

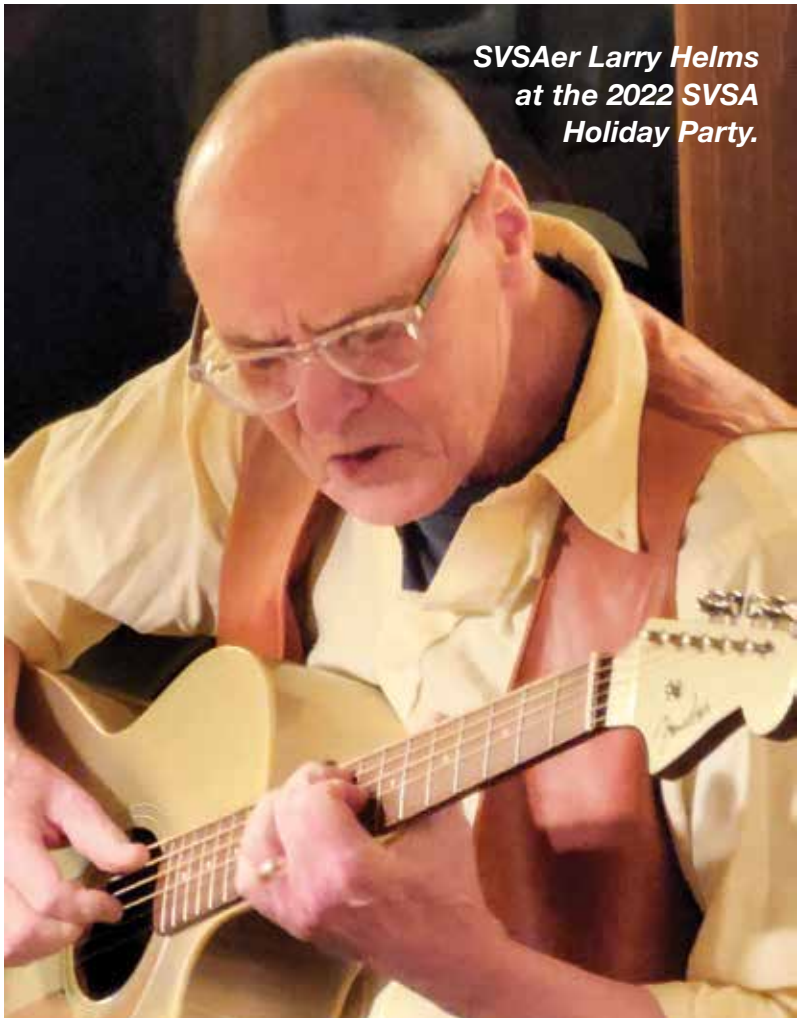
SVSAers Julie and Josh Kinn are a Celtic folk duo from Roanoke VA. They play Irish traditional tunes, Celtic folk songs, and a steadily-growing pile of originals. They're currently penning a collection of songs/tunes about Roanoke, thanks to a grant from Art in Roanoke and the National Endowment for the Arts. They've just released a new CD, they perform locally, and they are branching out a bit — for instance, the weekend of February 18th, they played at the Asheville (NC) Celtic Fest. And the same weekend, they officially passed 5k followers on Facebook. Keep up with this busy couple on their web site @ kinnfolkmusic.com

Steve and Carolyn Clark recently had some face time with Punxsutawney Phil, the Groundhog. Judging by the weather in these parts lately, it's clear that ol' Phil failed to see his shadow.

Noted performing songwriter Greg Greenway recently gave a workshop for SVSA on Jan 14.



SVSAer Josh Jones performed for a Sept 2022 Traveling Troubadours event at BobTrap in Vinton VA.



SVSAer Larry Helms at the 2022 SVSA Holiday Party.

That dark-haired guy on the right with the mandolin is our own Greg Trafidlo, jamming with the Wildwood Pickers at Bean Blossom '77. The blond 17 year old in the middle with the guitar is Muriel Anderson, who went on to perform with Chet Atkins, Tommy Emmanuel, Earl Klugh, Les Paul, and Doc Watson. She now plays a nylon-string guitar and a 21-string harp guitar. Anderson has released more than a dozen solo albums, instructional CDs, and DVDs.

HOME RECORDING

Dual microphone vocal recording

by Josh Jones

I've been tracking vocals for my upcoming album. I tried something new (to me, anyway) and I thought I'd share it with you.

I can't afford a really good vocal mic like the gold standard, a Neumann U-47 (new FET version, $4400; vintage tube version, $20K+) or a U-87, or even a Peluso 22 47 SE ($2500). No, these days I usually use one of two mics for vocals: a CAD E100 (CAD) large diaphragm condenser (LDC) or a Shure SM-58 dynamic (58), depending on the song and how my voice works with it.

True of most low / midrange priced LDCs, the CAD has a lot of detail and is very quiet, but it's kind of clinical. Unlike fine wine, my voice has gotten grittier as I've aged, and the CAD emphasizes that grit along with spit crackles, etc. The 58, like most dynamic mics, is less detailed but tends to soften grit and crackles.

I often record my acoustic guitar on three tracks (a hole mic, a neck mic and the guitar electronics output), then blend them for the final mix. I decided to try recording my vocals with two mics at the same time, each on a separate track. (I haven't worked in any pro studios, so maybe they do this all the time. But then they have way better mics than I do, so they probably don't need to.)

Anyway, here's how I set it up. Dead simple. The 58's mic diaphragm is in the center of the ball. The CAD diaphragm is in the middle of the housing. I tried to line the two diaphragms up so my voice reaches them as close to the same time as possible. I line them up pointing toward my mouth, stand about a foot away and try not to move side to side.

Blending the two tracks gives me more tonal flexibility: more detail from the CAD, more softening and smoothing from the 58. Panning one track a little left and the other a little right makes my voice sound fuller. I can add plug-in effects (reverb, compression, tone, etc.), and with this setup I can put different effects on each mic if I want to.

If you have a multitrack recording system, give this technique a try and see what you think.

(By the way, always use a windscreen on any LDC when recording vocals. LDC diaphragms are very thin metal-plated films or, in the better ones, all-metal foils. LDCs are more fragile than dynamic mics like a 58. Keep spit and breath moisture from getting to them. They'll work better and last longer.)

NEWS & NOTES FROM

3RD STREET COFFEEHOUSE

New performers, new events off and running

by **Bob Schmucker**

2023 is off to a rousing start! For the past five weeks running, we've had good turn-outs and donations for performers; things are just about at pre-COVID levels. It's great to see the tables full, even when we have openers and feature performers who've never been here before.

We've also been seeing a lot of folks turn out for our Guitars Under the Star At The Discovery Center series and the return of the 3rd Thursday Open Mic series hosted by SVSA member **Aspen Black**. The word is getting out to a lot of new people and our performers are reaping the benefit.

Here's a few highlights of what's going on in March and beyond: On Friday, March 10th, Kerrville Newfolk winner and 3rd Street favorite Sam Robbins returns to our stage. If you haven't seen Sam before, he is one of the hottest songwriters on the national circuit, getting rave reviews all around the country for his skills as a songwriter and performer, and just being one of the friendliest and personable people you ever met. SVSA member **Dan Hildebrand** and Adonna Lemon will open with the great variety show of songs, jokes, skits and stories. Get there early – this one will fill up quick.

We've scheduled another Musicians Swap Meet for Saturday, March 11th from 11:00 a.m. till 1:30 p.m. at the coffeehouse. Musicians are invited to rent a table to sell or trade their underused instruments, equipment, or music related wares (including CDs and records). Suggested donations for reserving tables are as follows:

- 6 ft tables $15 in advance and $20 the day of the swap meet.
- 4 ft tables $10 in advance and $15 the day of the swap meet.

For advance registration, please contact Bob at manager.thirdstreet@gmail.com.

Later in March or April (date TBD), we'll be having a special "**Josh Jones** Appreciation Night" to celebrate Josh's huge contributions as our Booking Agent for the last six years. As Josh moves on to new projects, we want to give him a proper send-off and we hope you'll join us! More details to come.

On Sunday April 30th, Fleming Artists' singer-songwriter Scott Cook and partner Pamela May return for a special afternoon show. Scott and Pamela Mae

See 3rd Street, page 10

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

first appeared on our stage in February of 2022 after we snagged them on their way from the Mucky Duck in Houston to WV's Mountain Stage as part of a half year long U.S. tour and they did not disappoint, putting on one of the best shows of last year. Scott is currently touring the other side of the globe in New Guinee, New Zealand and other places about as far from Roanoke as you can get. Later this year, he'll be heading to the Kerrville Folk festival where he'll be one of the featured performers.

On Sunday, September 10th, we'll be hosting another special Sunday afternoon show featuring the return of Nashville based singer-songwriter Grace Pettis. We totally love Grace – her writing is stellar and she has one of the best voices we've heard. Opening for Grace will be newcomer Ella Folk, who completely blew us away a few weeks ago. She's only 18 years old and already writes and performs like a Nashville pro. Imagine if you'd had a chance to see Dolly Parton or Winona when they were 18 … that the kind of talent she brings.

We still have two current volunteer opportunities on our staff. The first position is "Audio-Video Wizard" to augment our audio-video team for expanded broadcasts, like Season 3 of Tuesday Tunes for Feeding Southwest Virginia. You can see the complete job description at https://www.facebook.com/jobs/job-opening/3218919171756790/?source=job_ats. The other position that we are trying to fill is "Social Media and Promotions Wizard." The complete job description can be found at https://www.facebook.com/jobs/job-opening/400056591981789/?source=job_ats.

Here's the 3rd Street Coffeehouse schedule for March 2023:

Date	Feature	Opening
Mar 03	Davey O.	**Mike Franke**
Mar 10	Sam Robbins	The **Dan** & Adonna Show
Mar 17	KT Vandyke	Sonny Campbell
Mar 24	Keith Goggins	TBD
Mar 31	**Barb Martin**	TBD

An audience view of last month's SVSA Showcase held at 3rd Street Coffeehouse in Roanoke VA. Left to right, Greg Trafidlo, Larry Helms, Celie Holmes, and Bill Stanton. (Photo by Bob Schmucker.)

SVSA For Sale

SVSA member **Britt Mistele** is selling an **Emerald X30** carbon fiber six-string guitar. Candy-stripe Paduk top. It has an LR Baggs Anthem pick-up system and plays like a dream. No worries with heat or humidity. Comes with a Hiscox hard-shell case. Mint condition. **$2600.00.** Contact Britt at **276-728-6529.**

3rd Street Coffeehouse is selling a brand-new-in-box (never opened) Insignia™ 55" Class F50 Series QLED 4K UHD Smart Fire TV. Comes with Amazon Fire. It sells at Best Buy for $339.99 plus tax but you can get it for **$300 obo**. Call SVSA board member **Bob Schmucker** at **540-521-4507**.

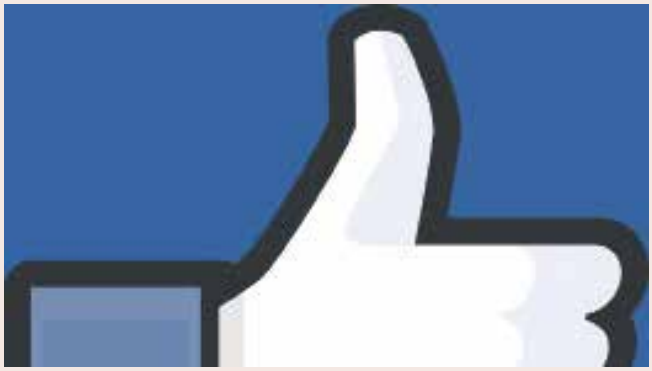
The SVSA Music News functions for members in many ways. One of the most overlooked is the **FREE** classifieds section.

There are two restrictions: One is that all classifieds must be music-related; the other is that classified ads may be submitted by paid members only. And that's it!

Remember: An ad is much more successful when accompanied by a clear photo and a complete and detailed description. The ad must contain a working e-mail or cell number. The SVSA Music News will not forward ad enquiries.

Take advantage of this free service now. Classifieds will run monthly until pulled by the person who submits the ad.

Members, e-mail your classifieds to svsa.songwriters@gmail.com or amosflame@aol.com.



WOULD YOU "LIKE" TO HELP THE SVSA GET MORE FOLLOWERS ON FACEBOOK?

That's all we need you to do. Just go to our Facebook page and "like" us. That's it. Your "like" will cause Facebook's algorithms to start considering the SVSA's page for shares, postings, and a greater all-around presence.

Of course, we'd also appreciate your input. You can share things to our page, comment on posts, memes, and images, and generally help make our page become more active and seen by more Facebook users.

As we said, it doesn't take much. Just pop the following URL into your Google (or whatever) search box, go to the Facebook SVSA page, and "like" us. We'd really "like" it if you'd help us out! Thanks!

https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=southwest%20virginia%20songwriters%20association

Help SVSA sustain Jefferson Center Music Lab

by Mollye Otis

SVSA is a sponsor of The Music Lab, a progressive music and production program at the Jefferson Center in Roanoke VA. We are making an annual contribution of $300 to the tuition fund that is distributed to worthy students from the greater Roanoke area who show talent and promise.

The Music Lab presents an extraordinary opportunity to about 30 students each year, offering state-of-the-art production studios, music lessons, and learning alongside professional guest artists.

Mickey Nelson, a longtime SVSA member, astute songwriter, and frequent performer saw the value in supporting the next generation of writers and co-founded The Music Lab. The SVSA created The Mickey Nelson Songwriter of the Year Award in his honor as an incentive to the Music Lab students, a way of "earning" our investment.

Jordan Harman, the Education and Outreach Coordinator for the program will guide and advise the students who will create and submit their work to an SVSA committee for adjudication at the end of the Spring Semester.

A plaque featuring Mickey Nelson is now prominently displayed in the Music Lab Production Room. Another plaque that will displayed will show the names of the winner of The Mickey Nelson Songwriter of the Year Award each year. Then, also yearly, a public presentation will recognize the winner and SVSA's part in this program.

Please consider donating $5 on behalf of the Mickey Nelson Award to help support our commitment.

There are two ways to pay, either by clicking the tab on the pull-down menu within the dues-paying page of the SVSA website or by sending a PayPal payment to **SVSAFunds@gmail.com**. You may also mail a check to PO Box 2901, Roanoke VA 24011.

We value songwriting as we value our organization and its members — and we hope you might make a small donation to help sustain this important outreach.

SVSAer Aspen Black is set up and ready to finish up a full week of shows in Wyoming earlier this year.

LOCAL, REGIONAL OPEN MICS

Coming back soon

Many local and regional open mics shut down due to coronavirus concerns. The good news is that many of those same venues (and new ones as well) are finally re-opening. Keep an eye out for the return of our comprehensive Local & Regional Open Mic listings. It'll be sooner than later!

SVSA **DUES ARE DUE**

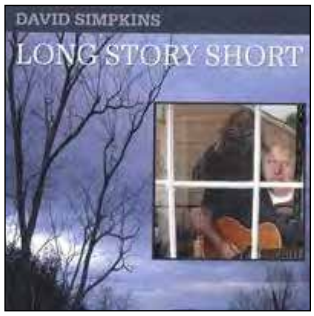
Pay $35 on-line on our web site or mail a check / money order to PO Box 2901, Roanoke VA 24011

www.svsasongs.com

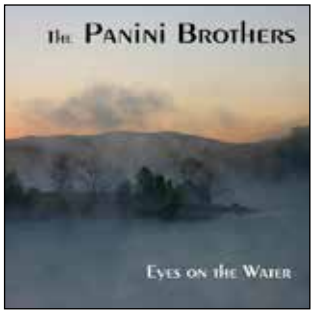
SVSA Members' Recordings

what's done is done

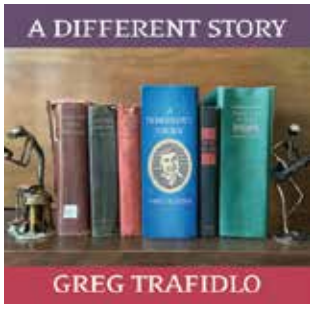
marc with a "c"



long story short

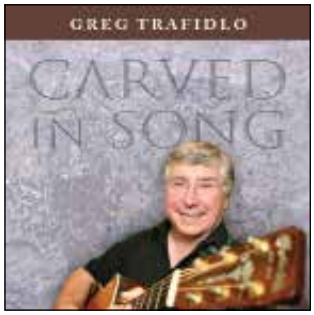


eyes on the water



a different story

the crawlspace tapes



carved in song

folk singular

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.

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.

The Panini Brothers

EYES ON THE WATER — Debut CD from a group comprised of SVSA members Larry Sakayama and Mike DeGiorgi as well as Chip Conway, Mark Earnhardt, and Scott Thomas. Jazzy, bluesey, eclectic, original tunes.

Greg Trafidlo

A DIFFERENT STORY — An eclectic combination of originals and covers featuring old friends and new, competently and professionally recorded and performed. And, as always, straight from the heart.

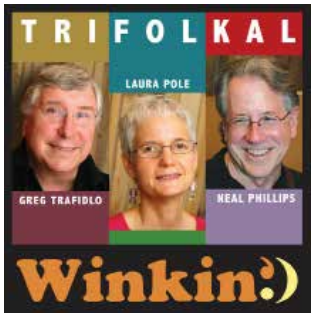
THE CRAWLSPACE TAPES — Greg's most joyful CD is a compilation of all his funny and goofy stuff. Tom Paxton says, "Loosen up, sourpusses. Greg is on the loose again!"

CARVED IN SONG— Most songs co-written with some of Greg's favorite songwriters. Listen to audio clips at 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.

SVSA Members' Recordings

silver



winkin'

pacing the moon

cup of contradictions

dimestore detective

dog joggin'

songwriter sessions

tales from the fire pit

Trifolkal

SILVER — The trio celebrates 25 years together with a "fan favorite" collection of covers from the Beach Boys to Tom Paxton.

WINKIN' — This top-notch release from that "trio fiercely dedicated to fun" tempers the fun with poignancy and heart.

Josh Jones

PACING THE MOON — Thirteen of the strongest songs Josh has written. For lyrics, short audio clips and additional information, please visit www.jonesgroupmusic.com.

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.

Steve Clark

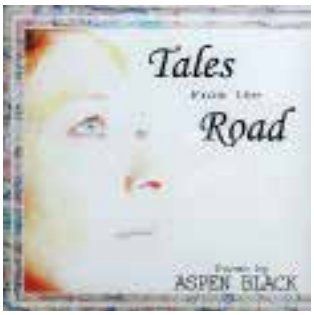
DOG JOGGIN' — Eleven sweet and true amusing tunes comprise this quirky singer/songwriter CD. Available at cdbaby.com.

The Entwined

SONGWRITER SESSIONS — The CD was released at Francis Ford Coppola's Turtle Inn Resort in Belize in 2018. It's a mix of 13 songs written by Dan Hildebrand ranging from real-life ballads to feel-good ditties. Recorded at Blackwater Studios. Percussion and harmony by Adonna Lemon.

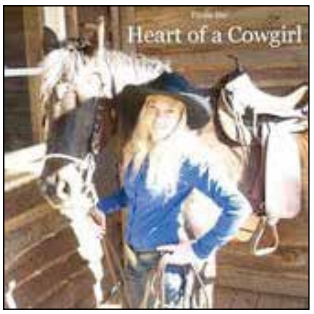
TALES FROM THE FIRE PIT — The most popular CD in Placenia, Belize for one week in 2018, the latest from the Entwined was recorded at Bad Monkey's music studio, located at the couple's home in VA, and features 10 original works.

SVSA Members' Recordings



tales from the road

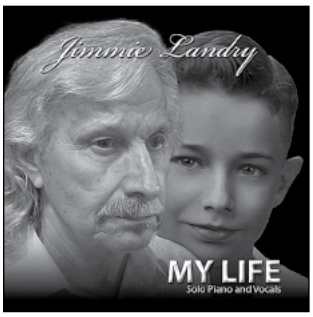
eastern western cowgirl



from the heart of a cowgirl

horsegirl poet

lovin' the west



my life

gumbo

style

Aspen Black

TALES FROM THE ROAD — 15 original poems with musical backup. Every poem has a tie to a road, although the road is never the subject. Either the road runs through it, shows up in a fleeting moment, or the whole story was inspired by, or witnessed "on the road."

EASTERN WESTERN COWGIRL — Eight original Contemporary Western songs. Available at CDBaby.com/aspenblack7.

FROM THE HEART OF A COWGIRL — Original spoken word poems adhering to the Western Music Association guidelines for the cowboy poetry genre. Available at CDBaby.

HORSEGIRL POET — Songs and poems about horses, cowboys, and rural life. Available at CDBaby.

LOVIN' THE WEST — This is the latest CD released by Western Music Association singer/songwriter – and SVSA member – Aspen Black. It features 10 original selections, seven of which are road-tested favorites.

Jimmie Landry

MY LIFE — Jimmie sings stories about his friends, family, and life on the road. A jazzy-blues New Orleans-style piano and vocals paint a picture of 60 years in music.

GUMBO — Hot and spicy down-home jazz, funk, and soul that goes down easy. Ten originals and three covers.

STYLE — A blend of standards and one original in a variety of grooves like straight-ahead swing, samba, jazz, waltz, and funky second-line blues.

"It's easy to mistake 'I'm good at this' with 'Others are bad at this' in a way that makes you overestimate how valuable your skills are."

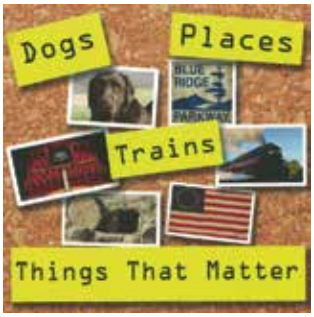
~ Morgan Housel

SVSA Members' Recordings

electric bill

acoustic bill

songs for veterans & patriots



dogs, places, trains, and things that matter

eyes on the horizon

kaleidoscope

touch the sky

Bill Stanton

ELECTRIC BILL — Ten original songs of Bill's lyrics and melodies accompanied by former bandmates on electric instruments and vocal harmonies originally recorded in the 1980s.

ACOUSTIC BILL — Ten original songs with lyrics and melodies by Bill accompanied by former bandmates on acoustic instruments and vocal harmonies recorded from the early 1970s through 2000.

Jerry Gilmore

SONGS FOR VETERANS & PATRIOTS — covers topics concerning Vietnam veterans, POW/MIA warriors, the US flag, military holidays, and the Medal Of Honor. The original compositions are performed in country, bluegrass, and southern rock styles. Available from CDBaby.

DOGS, PLACES, TRAINS, AND THINGS THAT MATTER — A "Baker's Dozen" of original tunes on a wide range of subjects in the traditional country format. Available at CD Baby and all the major platforms for download.

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.

TOUCH THE SKY — Swinging acoustic blues and jazz from Barb Martin and Mac Walter.

www.svsasongs.com

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 **amosflame@aol.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. Email articles and information to the Editor, David Simpkins, at amosflame@aol.com

SVSA is a non-profit organization.

2023 SVSA Board Members:

Charlie Divers – President

Mike Franke – Vice President and Webmaster

Celie Holmes – Treasurer

Mollye Otis – Secretary

David Simpkins – At-Large Board Member and Newsletter Editor

Larry Helms – At-Large Board Member

Bob Schmucker – At-Large Board Member, 3rd Street Coffeehouse Liason

Dan Hildebrand – At-Large Board Member

Greg Trafidlo – At-Large Board Member

Southwest Virginia Songwriters Association
101 Church Ave SW
PO Box 2901
Roanoke VA 24011

www.svsasongs.com

THE SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA SONGWRITERS ASSOCIATION

WHO WE ARE

The Southwest Virginia Songwriters Association (SVSA), founded in 1981, comprises approximately 40 songwriters from diverse musical backgrounds who share the love of songwriting and interest in developing our craft. Our core mission is to meet monthly, listen to fellow writers' songs, and share feedback with one another in a supportive, encouraging, and engaging process.

The SVSA also offers workshops, social events, and performance opportunities for its members, along with a newsletter, web site, and a Facebook page that focus on members' creative engagement and outreach to Roanoke and the region.

If you are interested in becoming a part of this vibrant songwriting community, we invite you to audit two of our monthly meetings and then decide if you'd like to join the association. Once you've paid yearly dues, you can submit songs and contribute to the feedback sessions, plus participate in all our activities.

The greatest joy we have as a group is seeing writers growing and reaching their potential because of the work we do together. If you would like be a part of this songwriting community, please contact us at **info@svsasongs.com**

A BIT ABOUT OUR ASSOCIATION

We have among us people who range from seasoned professional and semi-professional performers to those have never been in front of an audience. Some of our members have many albums to their credit, while some have never set foot in a studio or on a stage.

Several members have sold songs to famous artists or have film and TV placements. Some play multiple instruments, and most play guitar or piano/keyboard but there are also non-instrumentalist lyricists in the mix. Some are singers, some non-singers, some with extensive music education, many with credits in the school of life experience who play by ear. There are writers who focus more on melody and harmony, and others who focus more on lyrics. Some writers are skilled producers/arrangers with a depth of technical know-how.

Our membership includes people of all ages representing a broad range of musical influences including folk, Americana, blues, gospel, rock, jazz, zydeco, pop, contemporary, country, bluegrass, Celtic, and theatre/cabaret. With this mix of diverse styles, interests, and skills, we share a rich knowledge base and learn through the exchange of expertise from multiple perspectives.

OUR METHOD

Unless otherwise indicated, The SVSA meets in the L.L. Rice Room at the Jefferson Center in Roanoke VA every fourth Wednesday of the month (with holiday exceptions). The doors open at 7:00 p.m. for meet, greet, and catch-up time. At 7:30, we may have business to discuss, then perhaps a brief period of activities such as writing exercises, mini-workshop presentations, videos, or other creative activities. Songs are then presented for listening and feedback sessions. On any given night, we discuss the songs in a robust, healthy exchange of comments and ideas. The meeting ends when all the songs have been presented or we close at 10:00 p.m.

Members and guests are required to submit their Covid vaccine record at check in, or, alternatively, email a photo of your card to: **mollyeotis@gmail.com**

Members may receive written feedback from other members in addition to the verbal feedback at live or virtual sessions.

Members are coached to be honest, thoughtful, and supportive of one another and respectful of the work. Our experience has been that our songs invariably improve after going through the feedback process.

If you would like to hang out with this welcoming group of songwriters, we would love to meet you! You are invited to audit two monthly meetings and then, should you decide to join, pay yearly dues of $35. Once a member, you may submit songs for consideration in our feedback sessions and will be eligible to participate in events and benefits of membership.