



The FINGERSTYLE GUITARIST

Vol 2 No 1

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January, 1998

A publication of the *Georgia Fingerstyle Guitar Association*

In the Beginning...

by
Maxine Cummins

The first meeting of the **Georgia Fingerstyle Guitar Association** was held on Saturday, Oct. 25, 1997, and by all accounts it was a very successful day!

Cowboy's Concert

Hall was the site for the day portion of the event. The musical treats started when **Ed Cummins**, who acted as the master of ceremonies, introduced **James Childers**. James is also one of the organizers of **GFGA**.

A brief workshop discussion on how to read tablature for fingerstyle guitar was conducted by **Taylor Eason, Jr.** The topic was of interest to a number of attendees and may be explored further at future meetings. Taylor also demonstrated his musical skills by performing for the group.

Following a break for lunch, the afternoon musical session got underway! Guest guitarist, **Bob Saxton**, kicked off the segment with some solo numbers. Bob is well known for the depth and breadth of his talent and the audience responded enthusiastically by giving him a standing ovation. Bob also donated tapes and guitar strings for door prizes and was responsible for persuading **Fred Kelly** to provide souvenir thumbpicks which



were imprinted with **GFGA**. We are grateful for such a good **GFGA** friend!

The Chattanooga **Thumb and Fingerstyle Guitar Association** was well represented by **Billy and Gary Denham**...and of course, their little friend, "**Alesis Johnson**". They presented a program of thumbstyle favorites. They made available lists of the fingerstyle guitar tablature that may be ordered through the Chattanooga club. The lists and a sample of the tab are part of this news letter.

Johnny Carlton was next on the agenda. Johnny is an Atlanta professional guitarist whose program was made up of a variety of tunes in the delightful style of **Jerry Reed**. Johnny is also a major contributing writer for the **GFGA** Newsletter.

Contest winner **Greg Butler** was joined by **James Childers** on guitar and **Jerry Braswell** on bass. Together they provided some very pleasant listening in the Atkins/Travis thumbstyle tradition. Congratulations Greg, on winning first place at the Georgia Mountain Fair Fall Festival Guitar Contest.

The "open mic" segment is a portion of the program that is set aside for anyone who wants to take the stage. Each performance is usually limited to 2 or 3 numbers. The segment was started with vocals by **Maxine Cummins** with husband **Ed** and guest **Bob Saxton** on guitar.

Fred Kelly provided souvenir thumb picks imprinted with "GFGA"...

Other artists who played during the "open mic." session were **Taylor Eason, Jr.**, **John Evans**, and **Son Bui**. The session was closed out with a performance by **Carla Ulbrich** from Clemson, SC.

(Continued on page 2)

Spouse Membership Cards

If we have your spouse's name, there will be a membership card/badge for them at the registration desk during the January meeting. If we do not have their name, you may call Ed Cummins at 770-345-1467.

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The evening session was held at the Cherokee County Senior Citizens Center in Canton and was underway shortly after 6:00pm. **Bob Saxton** and **Carla Ulbrich** opened the session with a couple of novelty tunes written by Carla's brother-in-law.

Taylor Eason, Jr., entertained with his "new age" jazz style followed by **John Evans** who played more traditional thumbpicking style.

Bob Saxton was joined by **Charlie Rolader** for some fancy fingerwork. They then accompanied **Maxine Cummins** who sang a couple of special requests.

A special treat was an appearance by **John Huston**. John is from Young Harris and is a classically trained guitarist. He presented a delightful program of music by Brazilian and Mexican composers as well as some traditional classical pieces.

The evening was drawing to a close when **Carla Ulbrich** took the microphone and entertained with vocals and instrumentals. She invited **Bob Saxton** to join her for the last tunes.

The final performance of the evening was given by **Richard Vogh**.

Best of all GFGA gained 21 new members...

The day was a grab bag of styles, tastes, skills and talents but what a delightful day it was! There were 65 people registered at the door during the day session with about 25 at the evening session. Best of all GFGA gained 21 new members.

A big thanks to all who helped make the first meeting a huge success, including all the folks who helped move tables and chairs.

Nashville Number Charts

#2

By Johnny Carlton

The Chromatic Scale

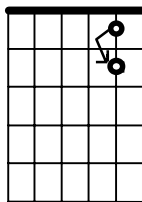
In our first issue we discussed Nashville Number Charts and how they relate to the major scale. In this issue we will discuss the chromatic scale shown below in example 1.

C C# D D# E F F# G G# A A# B C
Db Eb Gb Ab Bb

Example 1.

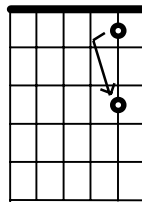
In the chromatic scale some notes have two different names but are actually the same note. These are referred to as enharmonic tones. For example a **C#** and a **Db** are the same note. There are twelve half steps in the chromatic scale, a half step being one fret on the guitar. From **C** to **C#** is a half-step (**Ex. 2**) from **C** to **D** is a whole step (**Ex. 3**.)

Half Step



Example 2.

Whole Step



Example 3.

The **chromatic scale** can begin on any note. For example, the sixth string open starts with an **E** note and progresses up twelve frets where it becomes an **E** note again. The second **E** note is said to be an octave higher than the first **E** note. The fifth string open starts with an **A** note and progresses up twelve frets to become an **A** note again etc. Therefore we can start with any note and progress up **twelve frets** or half-steps and we will arrive at the same note an octave higher than the note we started with.

The chart below is taken from a song recorded by Chet Atkins called "Going Down That Road Feeling Bad". The chord progression is in the Key of **E**. The **E** major scale is as follows in example 4.

E F# G# A B C# D# E
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 1

Example 4.

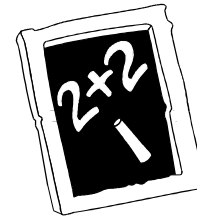
In example 5, each number symbol received four counts or beats and four beats equals one bar. The sixteen bar verse below is repeated several times to complete the song.

||: 1 1 4 1 4 1 5 1
1 1 4 1 4 1 5 1 :||

Example 5.

Try this tune in several different keys using the Nashville Number System.

Until next time.....**STAY TUNED!**



January Meeting

Don't miss the **January 24, 1998** Meeting of **GFGA** from **9:00am - 9:00pm**. We have a new meeting place and another great guest artist.

The meeting will be held at the **Kennesaw, GA Recreation Center** in the lower level of the Kennesaw City Hall.

To get to the meeting, take Exit 116 from I-75 and go West to Highway 41. Go North on Highway 41 to the fourth stoplight at Watts Drive. Take a right on Watts Drive and go approximately .2 of a mile to a fork in the road. Take the right fork and turn into the Recreation Center Parking Lot.

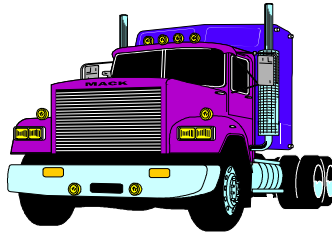
The CHET ATKINS PARKWAY by James Childers

October 30, 1997 was a beautiful, clear and sun drenched day befitting the dedication of the **CHET ATKINS PARKWAY**. The parkway is a section of Georgia Interstate Highway I-185 going through two west Georgia counties north of Columbus, Ga.

The honored recipient, **Chet Atkins**, was in good spirits and appeared to thoroughly enjoy the beehive of activity surrounding him. Inside the **Mountain Hill Schoolhouse**, Chet was met by many friends and fans, all of whom were relieved to see him looking so well and happy despite his long trip down earlier that day from Nashville, Tn. to **Hamilton, Ga**. He signed the registration book in the hallway, as everyone else did. He was then met by his stepmother, **Tommie Swigart**.

A delegation of friends from Mountain Hill School and fans from all directions were there. On stage, **Mary L. Jones**, Chairlady of Mountain Hill Schoolhouse Foundation, introduced the invited dignitaries. The invocation was given by **Roy Moultrie**, Mountain Hill Alumnus. Speakers were **Ted Walders**, member of The Chet Atkins Appreciation Society; **James Childers**, representing The Chet Atkins Appreciation Society in the absence of President **Mark Pritcher**; **Carl Epps**, Georgia Representative; **Ronald Caldwell**, Chairman Harris County Commissioners; **Dudley Gunter**, Chairman Troup County Commissioners; **Sam Wellborn**, Vice Chairman Georgia Transportation Board and **Steve Parks**, Deputy Commissioner Georgia D.O.T. Georgia Representative **Vance Smith** presented Chet with a framed copy of the Georgia House Resolution #245.

Mr. Atkins expressed his appreciation and spoke of his childhood de-



parture from Luttrell, Tennessee and his arrival at rural Hamilton, Georgia. He shared many other gems from his colorful past.

He was then presented with a beautiful new "**CHET ATKINS**" model guitar by **Mike Voltz** who was representing **Gibson Guitar Company**. The guitar was signed by Chet who thanked Mr. Voltz saying he would like to play it a while then donate it to a favorite charity.

After Chet finished his remarks and the program ended, the finale was for Chet Atkins Appreciation Society member, **Robert Henry**, to drive Chet in his Kenworth tractor to break the banner proclaiming the opening of the **CHET ATKINS PARKWAY**. This allowed Chet to be the first person to ride the parkway named in his honor.

Thumbology by Johnny Carlton

Sylvester Weaver was born one hundred years ago in Louisville, Kentucky, and was the first country blues guitarist ever to be recorded. On October 24, 1923 in New York City, Weaver recorded "*I've Got To Go and Leave My Baby Behind*" with vocalist **Sara Martin** for **Okeh Records**. Martin had previously recorded with **W.C. Handy** and **Fats Waller**. On November 7 of that same year Weaver recorded the first blues guitar instrumental using a low **D** tuning. That session produced the songs "*Guitar Blues*" and "*Guitar Rag*." In 1927 he

recorded "*Guitar Rag*" again. **Bob Wills'** "*Steel Guitar Rag*" ,recorded in 1936, is a direct play on Weaver's same melody in "*Guitar Rag*".

Weaver's thumb and finger style expertise is evident in his recording of "*Smoke Town Strut*." Syncopated bass with a distinct melody on the treble strings and bluegrass type banjo rolls thrown in made this an early finger style classic.

Smoke Town was the ghetto district of Louisville where Weaver lived and performed in local juke joints.

In the early spring of 1924 Sylvester reunited with Sara Martin to record in Atlanta, and in about April of that same year recorded some tunes in New York City again. Sometime in 1925 Weaver recorded "*Steel String Blues*" in St. Louis. In April 1927 Weaver recorded his first vocals. After a few more sessions he quit recording and returned to Louisville and worked as a Chauffeur for his remaining years.



On April 4, 1960 Sylvester Weaver passed away and was buried in Louisville where he was born.

Sylvester Weaver influenced both black and white guitar players in Kentucky and elsewhere. Other blues guitarists of the time were developing similar styles, but Weaver was recording and his style was heard by more people making him more influential.

More Thumbology next issue...**STAY TUNED!**

January Guest

Our special guest artist for the January meeting will be **Comer "Moon" Mullins**. Moon is associated with the Ozark Folk Center in **Mountain View, Arkansas**. (See the following article).

Moon has been a first place winner at the *Home of the Legends* thumb picking contest in Central City, Kentucky. He also was the first place winner at the ninth *Home of the Legends* contest when they featured a contest between previous winners.

Moon plays a lot of **Merle Travis** material but is mostly interested in older Rag Time tunes. He has a rock solid thumb style and will have us tapping our feet as he plays.

We have asked Moon to bring some of his tapes to sell at the meeting. They are great fun to have in the car. You will forget about the traffic as you listen.

He will steal any lick of yours he likes

Moon is just "good folks" and will be happy to sit and play with anyone. He is glad to share his licks with you, but be careful, he will steal any lick of yours he likes.

We are looking forward to seeing and hearing Moon at our next meeting.

Ozark Folk Center

The Ozark Folk Center is known as America's only facility that works at preserving the heritage and way of life of the Ozark Mountain People.

However, to finger style guitarists, it's more than that. It is the home of The annual "**Tribute to Merle Travis**

National Guitar Thumb Picking Contest." The 20th annual event will be held on **May 22 - 23, 1998**. It is a weekend of seminars, contests, and concerts. A musical experience enhanced by the charm of the little town of **Mountain View, Arkansas**.

Accoustic instrumentalists are drawn to Mountain View like bees to honey. Just stroll around the Court House square, and you will discover music of varying tastes and styles played on a wide variety of accoustic instruments. Notice the emphasis on "accoustic" instruments. Electrified instruments are not used at Mt. View. The music starts early in the day and continues until late in the

It's like a community jam session...

evening. It's like a community jam session. Just find a group that is playing your kind of music, pull up a chair and join in. The people are friendly and the music is a treat to hear. You can also spend time browsing in the small shops that surround the Court House square.

There are many things to do in this part of the Ozarks. Go fishing or hiking. Explore the awesome beauty of nearby **Blanchard Springs Cavern**. Visit the Ozark Folk Center and gain an insight into yesterday's Ozark way of life. But if you want to come, plan early! Contact:

The Ozark Folk Center State Park
P.O. Box 500
Mountain View, AR 72560
Phone (501) 269-3851

If you are an RVer, there are many RV campgrounds available. One of the "Picker Friendly" parks is the **Whitewater Travel Park**. They have even built a covered stage for the pickers. They claim that when an RV drives into the park the first thing the

driver does is get out his guitar and start picking even before he sets up his camp site. Owners **Art and Ruth Hylan** can be reached at:
(501)269-8047.

Chattanooga Thumbpickers Meeting Schedule

Jan. 10, 1998
March 21, 1998

Meetings will be held at the Martin-Boyd Christian Home, 6845 Standifer Gap Road, Chattanooga, TN. PH. 892-1020

Member News

Member **Carla Ulbrich** completed in the Accoustic Contest at Eddie's Attic in Decatur, GA in November. While Carla did not win first place, she placed quite high in the competition. Congratulations Carla!

Members **James Childers** and **Gary Cochran** performed at the Floyd County Hospital party for Cancer Survivors held in December. What a great use of their talents. Thanks guys. We would like to hear about more of this good work.

Members **Ed and Maxine Cummins** with able assistance from **James Childers** performed several times for the Cherokee County Senior Services noon day program. The attendees enjoyed a program of singing, thumb style guitar playing and Christmas music.

We know a lot of you **GFGA** members are out there performing. We would appreciate hearing about it and would like to include that information in the newsletter. Give Ed Cummins a call at **(770)-345-1467** and let him know what you are doing.

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