



The FINGERSTYLE GUITARIST

A publication of the Georgia Fingerstyle Guitar Association

Lift-Off for GFGA by Charlie Rolader

The day is almost here for our first get-together. All is progressing well but a lot of effort has gone into making this possible. Thanks to the help and cooperation of several individuals, especially Ed and Maxine Cummins, James Childers, Taylor Eason, Ron and Kathy Reynolds, and, yes, me, we are up and running, hopefully not like a herd of turtles.



We are fully operational with our own bank account, Post Office box, Internet Web Site and Home Page, a comprehensive data base, laminating machine, and above all, about 30 new (and founding) members to date. Each day's mail brings in more envelopes.

We are all looking forward with excitement and anticipation to our first event. As you know by now, we are holding our first get-together at Cowboy's Concert Hall in Kennesaw, Georgia, just off Highway 41. While this facility may not be perfect for what we need, Mr. Steve Abeck, the owner, and Mr. Bob Johnson, the manager, have been very supportive of GFGA's efforts to get started. If you get the opportunity, I hope you will let them know how much we appreciate their help. For those of you interested in country style dancing and who live in the Atlanta area, Cowboy's is the finest facility available anywhere locally.

This is definitely a fun and friendly atmosphere to dance and make new friends. Also, on Sunday, there is an alcohol-free teen evening. I've checked it out and it is great. Keep this in mind if you have teens who want to learn to dance.

We are all excited about the opportunities GFGA offers, and look forward to making many new friends and learning more and more about the music we love. Tell your friends about GFGA and

let's get our membership up to 100 by the end of the year.

The guitar first appeared in Spain in the twelfth century. Music written for guitar didn't show up until the mid sixteenth century.

CAAS Convention '97 by Johnny Carlton

The *Chet Atkins Appreciation Society* Convention 97' was held July 9-12 at the Sheraton Music City in Nashville, Tennessee, and showcased some of the world's very best fingerstyle guitarists. There was **Nato Lima** from South America, **Tommy Emmanuel** from Australia, **Valerie Duchateau** from France, **The Smith Brothers** and **Gary Potter** from England just to name a few.

There was so much to absorb it was impossible to participate in every event. There were continuous concerts from nine in the morning until ten or eleven each night. There were workshops and mini concerts on an ongoing basis in two smaller meeting rooms opposite the main show room.

The Kentucky and Tennessee thumbpickers clubs shared a meeting room, and hosted special guests and jam sessions until the wee hours daily.

"It was like watching Chet Atkins and Jerry Reed play..."

Thursday afternoon **Jerry Reed** came by and held a chat session with CAAS members. He gave full credit for his success to **Chet Atkins** and told some humorous stories.

Thursday night at seven **Nokie Edwards** of **Ventures** fame performed.

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Oct. 1997

At eight o'clock a special tribute was given for **Marcel Dadi**, who died tragically in the TWA Flight 800 crash in 1996. Marcel was a gifted Atkins Travis stylist from France and a member of CAAS. Some of the performers during the tribute were **John Knowles**, **Mark Pritcher**, **Valerie Duchateau** and many others.

Awesome displays of talent and technique were everywhere. In the meeting room shared by Gibson and Sands Guitars I witnessed an impromptu jam session by Paul Yandel and Richard Smith.

It was simply too good to describe with words. "You had to be there." It was like watching Chet Atkins and Jerry Reed play. It was incredible!

On Saturday night **Merle Travis'** son, **Thom Bresh**, entertained a full house in the main show room. Bresh played a variety of tunes and captivated the audience with his funny stories and quick wit. Thom was joined by **Buster B. Jones** at the end of his show for a couple of tunes. **John Knowles** came on stage and announced that The Board of *Country Music Foundation* had recently elected Thom Bresh to the *Walkway of Stars* at the *Country Music Hall of Fame*. Congratulations, Thom! Merle would be very proud. Thom and Buster B. finished the set with a rousing version of *Cannonball Rag*.

"Thanks, I'm glad I came..."

Later that evening A special concert for Chet was given in the Main Showroom. The show opened with **Mark Pritcher** acknowledging special guests such as relatives of Marcel Dadi, Louis Bonfa, the Randy Hauser family and many others.

J.D. Roberts from the *Association of Fingerstyle Guitarists* in California presented Chet with a Solid gold thumbpick. *Vintage Guitar Magazine* readers elected Chet into their Hall of Fame for his efforts at furthering the appreciation of the guitar.

Jim McCullough of Pembroke, Ontario was the proud winner of the Gibson guitar door prize. Jims acceptance speech was short and sweet when he simply said, "Thanks, I'm glad I came."

Chet spoke briefly and said he had been practicing about an hour a day, and hoped to be performing back at *Cafe Milano* soon.

Chet presented Mark Pritcher with an autograph of **Django Reinhardt**. Chet said he acquired the signature in Chicago in 1946. It read, *D. Reinhardt*. What a great and thoughtful gift from Chet to Mark. **Congratulations, Mark!**

Paul Yandel opened the concert with a medley of some of his favorite Chet tunes. After Paul came a plethora of great players like **Doyle Dykes**, **Stephen Bennett**, **The Smith Brothers** and many others.

Tommy Emmanuel ended the night with a magnificent display of Guitar playing. Tommy used his guitar to imitate sounds he heard as a kid in the wilds of the outback. It was a pretty incredible thing to see and hear.

Convention 97' was a great experience. I am looking forward to next year. **Stay tuned!**

Up until circa 1900 all Martin Guitars were strung with gut strings. A few special orders for guitars strung with steel strings were made at this time, but steel string guitars did not appear in the Martin catalog until 1923.

Source: Martin Guitars a History by Mike Longworth Four Maples Press inc



Net Picking

by Ed Cummins

Welcome to all of you "Netizens" (*citizens of the Internet*). With the ever increasing advance of Internet use, I thought it would be useful to talk about **GFGA** and the **Internet**. This column will be a semi-regular part of the *"The Fingerstyle Guitarist"*.

I was pleased to see that about half of our registered members have **email** addresses. If you aren't already on the Internet, you should be. The email capabilities of the Internet are worth the trouble if you don't use any other func-

"What the heck does that all mean?"

tion. You can send or receive mail at your convenience and it's fast. Also, after you get over the cost of the equipment and the monthly cost of being connected to the Internet, you can send or receive all of the email you want at no additional cost.

Messages can be sent to an individual or to a group. To send email to a list of people, you only have to enter the message once, and the system sends it to all addresses in the list. I have a list of all GFGA members who have email addresses. It is very easy now to send a broadcast to all of them.

GFGA has its own email address at **GFGA@USA.NET**. Messages sent to this address will be received by me and,

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if necessary, I can forward these messages to all members on the GFGA list, without ever having to retype them. I will respond to all messages sent to GFGA.

Another aspect of the Internet is the **World Wide Web**. Using an Internet browser program on your computer, you can view pages of pictures and information stored on computers, called **servers**, which are connected to the Internet. Businesses, corporations, schools, individuals and just about anyone can have a **web site** on the World Wide Web. Using your browser to view a series of web sites is referred to as "**Surfing the Net**" (it must have started in California).

There are hundreds of thousands of web sites scattered across the net from around the world. We all hear about the bad stuff that is on the Internet almost every time we turn on a newscast. However, most of the web sites on the Internet

"There are some bad things and there are some good things in it..."

are OK. Actually, the Internet is just a reflection of real life. There are some bad things and there are some good things in it.

Web sites are viewed on your computer by entering their address, known as a **URL** (Universal Resource Locator). GFGA has a web site on the Internet. The GFGA URL is:
<http://www.geocities.com/Nashville/6225/>

What the heck does all of that mean? The "**http:**" part stands for **hypertext transmission protocol**. This just tells the browser program on your computer how to handle this information when it sends it out on the net. The "**www.geocities.com**" is the registered address of a server computer connected to the Internet. I don't know where the computer is physically located. It doesn't matter, because, where ever it is, I can

access it through the net. The "**Nashville**" part is just the name of an area on a disk drive on the server computer that stores information for different web sites. The "**6225**" part is the name of an area of the server computer disk drive that has been assigned to GFGA to store our web pages on. This enables anyone with an Internet connection to view the GFGA web site. Once GFGA becomes established and can afford it, we should be able to establish a web site with an address like "**http://www.gfga.org**". This will be a lot easier to remember.

The GFGA web site is currently in the construction stage. This means it is pretty rudimentary, but we are working on it. It probably will never become static, but it should stabilize after a while. We plan to publish our plans, our events, and any other information we think is of interest to finger style guitar players. If you have any information or suggestions about what you would like to see on our web site, just shoot me an email. We are currently limited to 2 megabytes (2,000,000) of information. This will handle a lot of text information but not too much graphical information. As we expand, though, we will be able to include graphics and pictures of interest on our site.

If you have any questions about email, the Internet, or the GFGA web site, please send them to me. I will answer them in a future column.

*Les Paul once made a guitar
from a piece of railroad track!
(that's heavy)!*

THUMBOLGY

by Johnny Carlton

Mulenberg County, Kentucky is said to be the birth place of Thumb and Fingerstyle Guitar. One of the early pioneers was **Kennedy Jones**. Legend has it Kennedy bought his first thumb-pick because his thumb was sore from play-



ing so much. Jones supposedly created the first banjo type rolls on the guitar using thumb and fingers. **Mose Rager** and **Ike Everly** combined the styles of Jones and black blues fingerstylists **Arthur Shultz** and **Sylvester Weaver** to create the early beginnings of fingerstyle guitar we know today.

Weaver was born in Louisville, Kentucky in 1897, and is credited with making some of the earliest blues recordings. Two of his recordings are *Guitar Rag* and *Smoketown Strut*.

Arnold Shultz, another black blues fingerstylist from western Kentucky, was remembered by his peers as one of the best. No known recordings as far as I know exist of him today.

Sam McGee, a fingerstyle guitarist from Tennessee was born in 1894. Sam also played alternating thumb accompaniment on the bass strings while picking out the melody on the treble. McGee played on the Grand Ole Opry Radio Show and surely inspired many young guitarists in radio land.

Mose Rager worked with **Grandpa Jones** on the Opry, and recorded with **Curly Fox**. Rager is probably best remembered for playing with Ike Everly, father of **The Everly Brothers**, Don and Phil.

There were several other early pioneers such as **Roy Harvey**, **Lester English**, and **Leonard Copeland**. Little is known about these players, although a few rare recordings are said to exist.

All the above players influenced **Merle Travis**, who in turn influenced **Chet Atkins**, who influenced **Jerry Reed** etc.

We will explore more Thumbology in our next Newsletter, **Stay Tuned!**

<http://www.geocities.com/Nashville/6225/>

NASHVILLE NUMBER

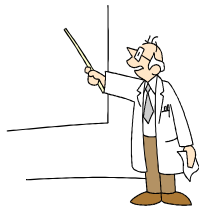
CHARTS

by Johnny Carlton

Back a few years ago I landed a house band job with a top forty country group in a local club. This was one of the best jobs around at the time and I was glad to fill the position. I took the gig on short notice, (two days) and was given tapes with over one hundred songs to learn. This would have been an impossible task for me had I not known how to read and make number chord charts.

Simple number chord charts are easy to grasp, and a great way to keep a record of songs learned over the years. In this and following issues I will illustrate how popular songs are charted in numbers.

The number system is a system whereby musicians read chord charts uti-



lizing number symbols instead of letter symbols. Example A. below shows how a chord progression is written using letter names. Example B. utilizes the number system.

Example A. C Am F G

Example B. 1 6m 4 5

In example A. the progression is in the key of C. In example B. the song can be in any key. The advantage of using numbers is the chart does not have to be changed to transpose the progression to a different key. The

number system is derived by giving each note in the major scale a number name. Number one is also referred to as the tonic or root note. See example C. below.

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

A "G" scale would be:

G A B C D E F*

An "F" Scale would be:

F G A Bb C D E

Below is an example of a progression written in the key of C. Try also using the keys of G and F

Example D. ||:1 4 1 5 1 5 4 1 :||

The sign ":||" means repeat from the same sign at the beginning of the song. The above song would be repeated twice. Below is a progression for a twelve bar blues song. E is a great key to practice this classic progression.

1 4 1 1 4 4 1 1 5 4 1 5

Until next time----- **STAY TUNED!**

Home of the Legends

by Maxine Cummins

Muhlenberg County, Kentucky, is the site of the annual Home of the Legends Thumbpicking Contest. The 1997 event was held in August beginning with a Thumbpicking Jam on the Courthouse Square in Greenville, Ky. This is a bit of Americana thoroughly enjoyed by those who attend. Just bring along a lawn chair and select a comfortable place on the lawn of the Courthouse. As the sun goes down and evening settles over the little town of Greenville, you'll hear some delightful music. The styles and tastes may vary, but every musician puts forth a "best effort" performance.

The activities continue the next day,

but the venue moves to Central City, KY, where the Brewer Complex is the site for the Thumbpicking Contest. Pickers settle down to some serious picking for this event, while the audience finds comfort in the shade of the beautiful hardwoods and tries to guess who the winners will be. This year a second competition category was introduced so that guitarists who were not thumbpickers could also compete. The judges had their work cut out for them! The finalists would not be known until the evening activities were underway.

Evening brings yet another unique musical experience. A whole block is closed off in Central City and a mobile stage is set up for the performers. The finalists are brought back to compete once more and the winners are announced. The winner takes home a beautiful Taylor guitar! Then the music continues...the combined talents of Billy Grammer and Bob Saxton producing some of the best listening ever and it is only made better by the beautiful Kentucky evening.

"Sunday brings "Goat Roping" day..."

Sunday brings "Goat Roping" day! Thanks to Eddie Pennington and his family the picking just keeps on going. The site is their camp which is close enough to be easy to get to...but far enough away so the music is undisturbed by traffic. When we left, dusk was approaching and still there was music. We were told it is only over when the last picker leaves the camp...

It is a weekend of good music and good fun. Refreshments are provided by local groups or vendors so you don't even have to miss a note while you enjoy your lunch. Just bring your lawn chair but make your hotel reservations early. You're sure to enjoy a weekend in Kentucky with the guitarists who make Home of the Legends Thumbpicking Contest a very unique and special event.

Watch for the 1998 date!

Member News

James Childers spent most of the month of October entertaining at the Georgia Mountain Fair. While he was at it, he did a great job of promoting **GFGA**.

James handed out over 30 membership applications. **Thanks James.**

Greg Butler, of Monroe, GA won the guitar competition playing fingerstyle at the Georgia Mountain Fair Fall Festival. We should have all been there to see him win. **Congratulations Greg!**

James Childers will represent **CAAS** (the Chet Atkins Appreciation Society) on Oct. 30 when the Georgia Dept. of Transportation officially dedicates a portion of I-185 as the "**Chet Atkins Parkway**". At the same event, member **Robert Henry** will drive a fuel hauling tractor down the road with Chet. (*these guys are having too much fun*).



Carla Ulbrich will perform at the acoustic guitar competition at **Eddie's Attic** in Decatur, GA on Nov. 28, 1997. **Good luck Carla!**

GFGA Events

To give you a chance to arrange your schedules so you can attend the **GFGA** meetings, we have put together a **tentative** schedule .Notice the emphasis on **"TENTATIVE"**.

Sat. 1/31/98
Sat. 5/02/98
CAAS Convention - July
Sat. 11/07/98

These dates will be confirmed to you as early as possible prior to the event.

We are trying to schedule our meetings so they do not conflict with the **Chattanooga** Thumb and Fingerstyle Guitar Association meetings. This will give members of both groups an opportunity to visit the other's meetings.

Meeting Location

We are still looking for an appropriate meeting place. The first requirement is that it must be inexpensive. In fact, that may be the only requirement..

Several members are investigating different locations. We appreciate all the help we can get. If you know of some civic club or other organization

that has a suitable building, please let us know. We will be glad to check it out.

Clarence Leo Fender was born in a barn on August 10, 1909 in Orange County, California. In 1938 he opened The Fender Radio Radio Store in Fullerton, California.

Source: "The Fender Amp Book by John Morrish , GPI Books, Miller Freeman Press.

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If you have an article you would like to write that would have looked good in this space, send it in. We will put it in the next newsletter.
-Ed.

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