



THE REED

January, 2006

Newsletter of The Garden State Harmonica Club, Inc.

P.O. Box 28, New Milford, NJ 07646

"For the Elevation and Advancement of the Harmonica"

We meet on the second Friday of each month, at 7:30 p.m., at The Lutheran Church of the Redeemer
Maywood and Taplin Aves., Maywood, NJ ● email: jbgndlb @ aol.com

Next meeting: Friday, Jan. 13, '06

Deadline For Reed Articles...23rd of each month

Board of Directors

Outgoing President.....Monroe Heide
See P. 2 for Monroe's farewell message.
Vice President.....Bob Kuchar
Treasurer.....Steven Hughes
Recording Secretary.....Isabelle Kool
Trustees.....Dottie Pispecky, Vince Cupo,
Henry Young, Joe Dobish, Andrew Menasian

Sergeant at Arms.....Ellen Singer
Bookings.....Henry Young

Committees

Membership.....Andrew Menasian
Hospitality.....Judy Toker
Sunshine.....Dottie Pispecky
Publicity.....Monroe Heide
Festival Chairman.....Shelly Lulov

Reed Editor.....Dan Bauch

Dues again!

Dues for 2006 are due. Many members responded to our dues announcement in the last issue. But many did not. If you are among the latter, please use the form on page 6, and send them in. Dues are still \$20, and are payable from January 1st to March 31st. You will not receive *The REED* or other announcements after March if we don't receive your dues.

By the way, when you get ready to send in your dues, please remember to send with them the filled out Renewal Form on page 6. We need this record to make sure you are credited for having paid. We've made the back of it blank (more or less!), so you don't have to lose any of our precious news! Your 2006 Membership Card will be sent as soon as we get your dues.

Meeting Cancelled...

Because of last month's unseasonably heavy snowstorm, the December meeting was cancelled. Regrettably, since too few members show up at meetings, not many were inconvenienced!

David Macklin, Part II

(Conclusion of the article begun in December)

Last month, we showed you a picture of David as he appeared at the 2005 Festival. At right is a shot of him during the WWII period. Oh, well.



Anyhow, we've already told you of David's early interest in the harmonica, and of his harmonica group at James Monroe H.S. We reported that he looked toward a career with the instrument and met a number of now-famous players, such as Harry Feinberg, Stan Harper, Alan Pogson, and Larry Adler, for whom he wrote some arrangements. He also ran park contests under the aegis of Borrah Minevitch. We left off just as David had organized "The Seven Philharmonicas" (a name Dave didn't care for!). Now, on with our story...

One of the original "Seven Philharmonicas", Charlie Leighton, subsequently went to another

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2 **President's Farewell Message**

To all of our club members and their families, I wish a happy, healthy and prosperous new year.

We have had a few years of challenge, problems and triumphs. I have to thank the members, and their families for all the help and support given to me during the last two years.

I wish to thank Shelly Lulov for his hard work on the festival in 2005. I wish to thank Joe Dobish for his work with the ensemble and the picnic.

I wish to thank the members of the ensemble for the fun I have had playing with them.

With regret, this must be my final message. My presidency is over at this time and I would assume a new president will be chosen. My wife and I will be leaving the New Jersey area in 2006 and will miss the club.

We will be back from time to time, and visit the club if possible.

Best of luck to the club and its members.

The Garden State Harmonica Club Festival 2006

4- DAY HARMONICA BLUES & JAZZ FESTIVAL

To Commemorate our Club's 35th Anniversary

Wednesday, Thursday, Friday & Saturday

October 25, 26, 27 & 28, 2006

At the CROWNE PLAZA AT PARAMUS PARK
601 From Road, Paramus, New Jersey 07652
(Formally the RADISSON INN)

Hotel Reservations: (201) 262-6900 or (800) 227-6963
Mention the GSHC for reduced room rate of \$95 plus 6% sales tax per night

4 - DAY "FESTIVAL 2006" TICKET: \$100 per person*

*If paid AFTER August 30, 2006 - 4-Day Ticket: \$125

RATES PER DAY:

Wednesday - \$10 (Including Matinee Show)

Thursday - \$30 (Including Matinee and Evening Show)

Friday - \$35 (Including Ice Cream Sundae Bar & Show)

Saturday - \$75 (Including Banquet & Show)

TOP PROFESSIONAL ENTERTAINERS TO PERFORM INCLUDING BLUES & JAZZ ARTISTS

SPECIAL SHOWS THURSDAY & FRIDAY NIGHTS

Stimulating Seminars,

Ole Tyme Harmonica Movie Classics

Open Mic: Wednesday, Thursday, Friday & Saturday

MAKE YOUR OWN ICE CREAM SUNDAE BAR - FRIDAY EVENING PRIOR TO THE SHOW

BIG CELEBRATION BANQUET & SHOW SATURDAY EVENING

Including Cocktail Hour with Hors d'Oeuvres and Cash Bar

MAIN COURSE MENU: Chateaubriand & Capon Wellington combo (Fish & Vegetable dinners also available)

**FESTIVAL TICKETS: Make check payable to: GSHC, INC.
Mail payment to: Shelly Lulov, 5 Schenck Avenue, Great Neck, NY 11021
Include: name, address, phone #, email address**

Your ticket(s) will be waiting for you at the hotel lobby registration desk

**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CALL
SHELLY LULOV, Festival Chairman: (516) 829-5808
Email: thesocietyboys@aol.com**

**WE EXPECT TO BE SOLD OUT FOR THIS FESTIVAL
ORDER YOUR TICKET(S) WELL IN ADVANCE**

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famous group of the time, "The Cappy Barra Harmonica Gentlemen" and other work in Hollywood.

At this point, late in the Depression, Dave left school to assist his father. Around this time, however, he entered a harmonica contest at the 1939-40 New York World's Fair. David recognized that his only strong competitor was a soldier whose nameplate identified him as the judge's brother. Dave informed the judge that he had caught on, thereby making it difficult for the soldier to be chosen over himself. He won.³

Eventually, Dave wound up working for the U.S. Harmonica Corp. of Greenwich, CT, owned by Carl Wetzler. Also there, testing harmonicas, was Mel Held, a former GSHC'er and friend of your editor. This firm made Sears "Silvertone" harmonicas, among others.

Then came World War II. Having won a flight training scholarship and now a private pilot, Dave joined the Navy as an aviation cadet. The Navy told him to stay in the New York area, on inactive duty.

Meanwhile Borrah Minevitch contacted him, to ask that he join The Rascals.

Minevitch promised him air transport back to New York when the Navy called him up. The pay was big for the time: \$45/week! As a result, Dave went on tour to California, with the act, that now included Carl Ford and Pud McCaskey.

Minevitch expected to start his own harmonica factory. Minevitch tried to entice Dave to help him with that, offering to let David fly his own private plane, a Stearman-Hammond. Along the way, David replaced the departing leader, to front the band, and take the comedic abuse of Sammy Ross, who had replaced the striking Johnny Puleo.

(Previously, Johnny Puleo had been offered a lucrative personal contract and a real movie career as a comedian by producer Joe Schenk!

³*The judge was Lou Delin, ghostwriter of a Larry Adler instruction book.*

Minevitch refused to release Johnny, who then went on strike and started to assemble his own group, including Dave Doucette, Pud McCaskey, Carl Ford, the Marquis brothers, Ben Burley, and the late Leo Friedman (another GSHC'er). Lacking Puleo, Minevitch started a new band with Sammy Ross (a fine musician), and good old Ernie Morris, taking over Johnny's assemblage.



A Minevitch group, organized by David during Johnny Puleo's "strike". *Left to right, standing:* David Macklin, Bill McBride, Ben Burley, Dick Rider, Leo Friedman. *Kneeling:* Carl Ford, Sammy Ross, Ernie Morris, Dave "Frenchy" Doucette.

This group made the movie short, "Harmonica School" and was the group Dave joined. Years before that, David had played on the Eddie Cantor radio show, with the original group, when Leo Diamond had written two trios into a very nice arrangement of "One, Two, Button Your Shoe". They appeared along with such film stars as Bobbie Breen and Deanna Durbin.

While playing the Golden Gate Theater in San Francisco, David was called to active duty by the Navy. He phoned his mother to tell her that he couldn't get back in time, flying the DC-3's of the day. Amazingly, his mother managed to talk the Navy into giving him a month's extension! Amazing, because, this being wartime, he might have been shot as a deserter.

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In the course of his training, David wound up at Chapel Hill, NC.

Larry Adler and dancer Paul Draper, on tour, appeared there to entertain the cadets, and recognized Dave (who had arranged music for Adler, as we've noted). Adler called him up on stage to play a duet. Dave had no harmonica with him, but used one of Adler's. Then Larry sat down at the piano to accompany Dave, who played "Stardust".

After the war, Dave started his own record company, Class & Jazz. Their first and only



Dave gives an impromptu performance during World War II. As we mention in the main text, the pianist also played harmonica fairly well.

How the Minevitch got his Rascals

This is a story--as it was told to us--of how the Minevitch Rascals got started. It doesn't begin with Minevitch, but we'll get around to him!

Everybody recognizes that our system of writing music is lousy. It's hard to learn, hard to write legibly, and hard to read. Virtually everybody, therefore, has come up with something better. The only problem, of course, is that there is now such an enormous amount of music written in the "lousy" system that it is not likely to be changed. Bad as it is, people would rather stick with it than learn something new...something of limited usefulness as long as the old system is still being printed.

It's like the typewriter keyboard...well over a hundred years old and far from ideal but,

production was a single of Charlie Leighton and Alan Pogson, playing jazz renditions of "I don't Stand a Ghost of a Chance" and "I Can't Give You Anything but Love". However, promoting the records was an enormous burden. Dave, who had just met the girl he would marry, needed a better career.

Under the GI Bill (by which the government paid for postwar education of former servicemen, DM went to college, majoring in math and physics. This led to a 1951 job as a computer programmer with Republic Aviation. After that, in 1957, David went to IBM, retiring as a Senior Programmer in 1991. Always in love with flying, he bought his own plane and flew to California to see his three grandsons.

Musically, he also arranged for Charles Spranklin and Kim Gutin. Recently, using the computer, he again arranged something for Spranklin that was heard at two recent festivals.

In later years David moved away from the harmonica, becoming an organist and a teacher. He has own approach, insisting that students spend 2 hours/week with him and learn music theory at a college level, including playing the Stephen Foster songs in many keys, major and minor. Learning to use music software is part of his course.

because so many people are used to it, still employed on the latest laptops. The only big change in a century has been the insertion of a "Return" or "Enter" key...an IBM innovation which was required once a motor replaced the typist's hand to push the carriage back.



Max Farage, a good friend and great bass player (now long gone, sad to say), once told us of a new music-writing system that did catch on to a limited extent. And, since this is also bears on the story of how Minevitch's Harmonica Rascals got started, it should be of interest to

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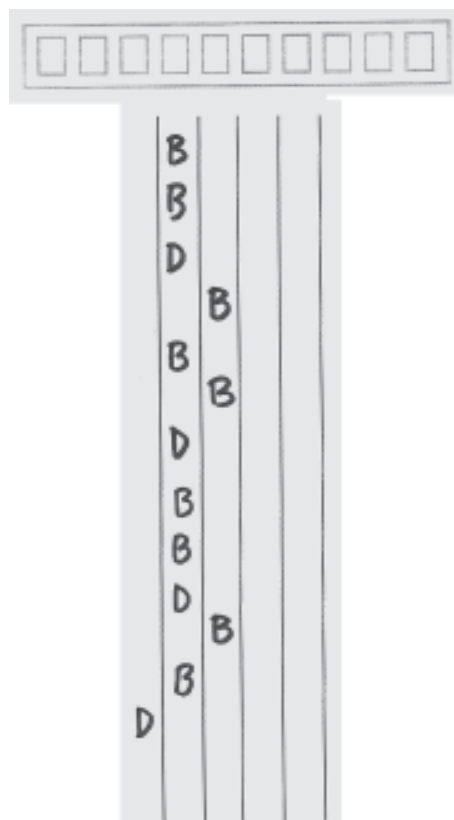
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GSHC'rs. It's a fascinating story, though we can't guarantee that Max had it right, or that we remember it just the way Max told it. In fact, we'd be grateful to any REEDer who can add to, subtract from, or correct any part of it!

It seems that a man named Sam Perry was running a harmonica school for kids. (Perry himself also performed under the name "Harmonica Bill".) Like many, many others, considered the standard music-writing system hard to read. So, he devised a new method, especially for the ten-hole "Marine Band" kind of instrument.

What he did was to turn regular music paper so the staff lines ran vertically, a novel idea, to say the least. As you'll see in the picture, he thereby created 6 spaces . . . four between the lines and one to each side of the staff. Each space corresponded to a hole in the harmonica, as we indicate here. Perry naturally didn't include the harmonica picture. We're just showing it to clarify the idea.

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This is how Sam Perry's harmonica music looked. Read from top to bottom and figure out the tune.

Dues (\$20) are due!

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Please note!! Those who joined the club after Oct. 1st, and paid 2005 dues, need not pay again until 2007.

A final word: Our membership has been slipping of late; in 2004 we ended up with 97 members. If you know of anyone who is interested in the harmonica, whether beginner or expert, please pass the word along. Maybe we can reverse this discouraging trend.

If you haven't sent in your dues,
please be sure to use the form
on the reverse side and
Do It Now!

Vera Fagley writes with Good News...

To tell us that she coming along nicely and has resumed practicing keyboard. She goes on to say that she is looking forward to rejoining the ensemble in the near future.

January Birthdays:

Molly Baker Joseph McIntyer
 Bob Kuchar Don Hayek
 Roberta Lulov Bobby Bang
 Charles Petersen

If you know your "Marine Band", you know that the first three holes are not actually intended for playing tunes; they're really just for accompaniment, so there's little need to write music for playing them.

Perry made no use of the lines. Reading from top to bottom, he just put a B or D in each space as necessary. We won't insult you by telling what those stood for! This system did not indicate time or the duration of the notes. It depended on the player's own familiarity with the piece.

Now, about Minevitch. He had achieved quite some fame as a harmonica soloist...not that he was especially skilled, as we now understand "skilled". (You can hear him in the movie "One in a Million", and form your own opinion. The Rascals' performance of "Limehouse Blues" and of the title song are worth the price of admission in any event.) But back when the chromatic harmonica was a novelty, anybody who could play music that was suited to a ten-hole chromatic (something with a few scattered sharps and flats) and could also inject into it a bunch of trills and gliss's was considered a veritable Heifetz.

Anyhow, it seems that Minevitch heard of Perry's class and offered to put the whole group into show business, as "his" harmonica orchestra. Their debut was at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, and Max did show us a large newspaper advertisement announcing that performance. It occurred in the late twenties, as we recall.

Audiences were charmed by all the youngsters playing together, and Minevitch began to see real commercial possibilities in the thing. Within a few years he had whittled the mob down to a handful of the best, and The Harmonica Rascals were born.

Except for the newspaper advertisement, which we have seen, and for some yellowing sheets of handwritten music in Perry's distinctive system, we know of no evidence to substantiate any of this. So--as we said up top--corrections or additions by readers would be most welcome.

Now that we've said all of the above, we must admit that there is one music writing system that does seem to be catching on. As with almost everything else nowadays, it has been imposed on us by the computer. More about it next month.

GSHC Dues Renewal Form

New Member

Renewal

Cash

Check

Please make checks out to GSHC and send to:

Garden State Harmonica Club
 Att: Membership
 P.O. Box 122,
 Ridgewood, NJ 07451

Your Name: _____

(If the information below has changed since last time, please print the proper corrections)

Address _____ Town _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone _____ e-mail _____

Birthday(mo/day) _____ / _____ Spouse's Name _____ Birthday(mo/day) _____ / _____

Occupation _____ Anniversary (mo/day) _____

Are you interested in joining a committee? If so, which? _____

For GSHC use only:

Membership _____ President _____ Reed _____ Sunshine _____