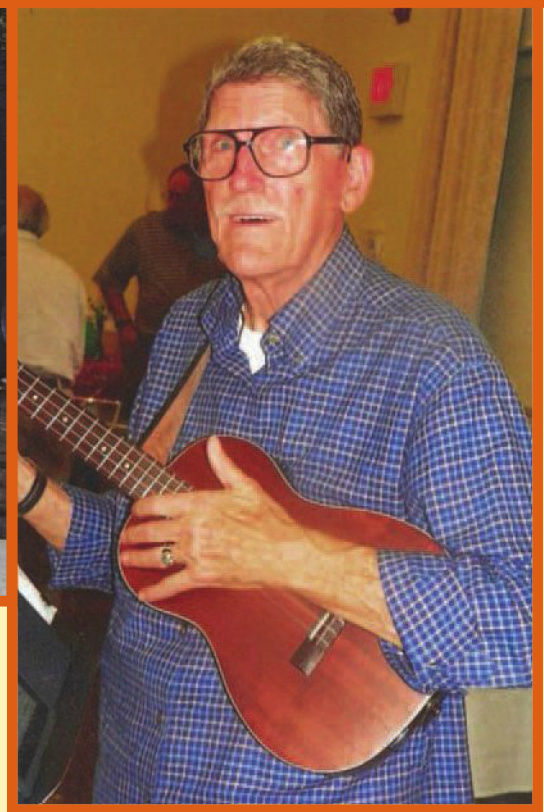
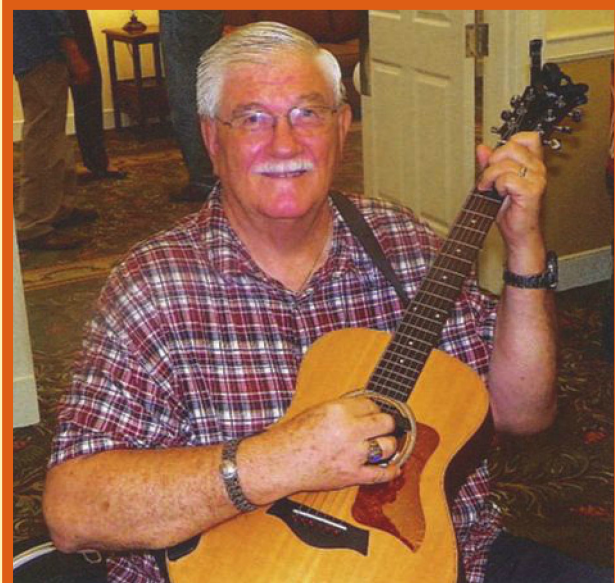


The



Top left: Doug supplies the “breaks” in some of the Strummers’ standards.

Top right: Mary Ann Schroeder and Cappy Riemer keep the beat. In the background is Shirley Jensen on the dulcimer.

Bottom left: On a recent summer gig: Front row, from left Mary Ann Schroeder, Jerry White, Wayne Zernel and Bill Carpenter. Back row: Bob Ciechanski, Al Booth and Jim Inniss.

Bottom right: Jerry White, the founder and chief sparkplug of the strummers. He books gigs, sends out emails, selects the programs and, in his spare time, plays his tenor uke.

Sun City Strummers

By Jim Inniss, *SunSations* team

Sun City Strummers Club is a clan of music-lovers and a Music Guild Special Interest Group. Fifty members strong and a Sun City fixture, the group is the brainchild of Jerry White, whose experience with stringed instruments goes way back to his native home of Indianapolis, Ind. As a toddler, he nestled himself on his mother's lap while she played the ukulele. One of her favorite tunes was "Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree." The seed was sown but it did not bear fruit until much later.

It was not until Jerry enlisted in the U.S. Navy after high school and saw his shipmates taking up hobbies to kill the long, free hours that he began to show interest in music. He decided to learn to play the ukulele and started practicing C, F and G chords. He quickly became proficient and remembers playing "All Day All Night Mary Ann" with a few of his buddies for a ship's audience. Once out of the Navy, Jerry rarely picked up his ukulele on his own, but could always be persuaded to play a few tunes for visitors of his home in Indiana. He eventually befriended a next door neighbor who played the banjo, and the duo quickly became the neighborhood entertainers and also played in area nursing homes.

Jerry landed in Sun City in July 2003 and right away looked around for a string group. The closest he could find were a chorus, a band and an orchestra. None of these was quite his cup of

tea. He was told during his search, "One thing about Sun City; if you can't find a club you're looking for, start one." Later that year, Jerry did just that and put a notice out. He had two bites from guitar players Bernie Dean and Jack Baughn. The name "Strummers" had a good sound to Jerry, and with the addition of "Sun City," the name of the club was complete.

HEY, JUST WATCH US GROW!

The first meeting of the Sun City Strummers, held in Jerry's home, consisted of Jerry, Bernie and Jack. Then Allen Stropher, Joe Tyrrell, Angela D'Aquila and Paul Mademann joined the group. When the group's numbers increased to seven, it outgrew Jerry's living room. Through the Music Guild, Sun City's umbrella group for music, the now nine member group could qualify for space of their own at Pinckney Hall.

The club's first gig was in March 2004 at Carolina House, an assisted living facility on Hilton Head Island, where the Strummers have played on a regular basis. There were about eight players for the first outing.

Some of the early songs in the repertoire were "Angel Band", "Everglades", "Tom Dooley", "Your Cheating Heart" and a club fixture, "Five Foot Two". Since then, as membership increased the playlist of songs has grown to around 150, covering country,



WWW.REVERSEMORTGAGESSC.COM

INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT REVERSE MORTGAGES AND HOW THEY MAY FIT INTO YOUR RETIREMENT PLANS?

Please join us on
Monday, April 22nd
Pinckney Hall
9:30am

This will be a very informative presentation to help you determine if a reverse mortgage is right for you. You will learn:

Reverse Mortgage Basic Qualifications

- How Much Money is Available**
- How Can the Money be Used**
- What are the Costs Involved**
- What are my Responsibilities**
- How Will it Impact my Heirs**

CONTACT DON DAVIS, REVERSE MORTGAGE SPECIALIST LOCATED IN BLUFFTON, SC TO RESERVE YOUR SPOT

(843) 368-5535

DON@FRANKLIN-FUNDING.COM



NMLS #900952 | Lender NMLS #130562
Franklin Funding Reverse Mortgages is a licensed FHA mortgage banking firm specializing in reverse mortgages for senior homeowners in South Carolina.

pop, standards, oldies, and bluegrass, with a sprinkling of Elvis, John Denver and rock ‘n’ roll for good measure. The finale of every gig in recent years has been “Carolina in the Morning”.

Any and all stringed instrument players are heartily welcomed. With a preponderance of guitarists, there are also a few on the mandolin, banjo and bass guitar, one accordionist, a Hawaiian guitarist, a violinist or two, three mountain strings specialists, harmonica players Cappy Reimer and Walter Laskowski, and melodica player Bob Cargen. There is even a kazoo virtuoso who can sometimes be persuaded to take a solo break that is often met with thunderous applause from the audience and a smile from fellow members. There are some real skilled jazz and bluegrass players in the group. These musicians add a touch of class by taking solo breaks during songs while the rest of the group quietly strums along to provide the beat and background. Those so inclined sometimes perform vocal solos.

There are no auditions or minimum requirements for membership. Anyone with a stringed instrument and a willingness to enjoy music is welcome. All levels of expertise join to make a pleasant blend of any music genre selected.

ON THE ROAD AGAIN

One of the Strummers’ chief ministries is playing at area assisted care facilities. Of the 42 gigs played in 2011 and 34 gigs in 2012, many were performed at NHC Facility, Carolina House, Palm Meadow Court, Palmetto Village, The Summit, Life Care, Morningside and at churches in Hardeeville. The Strummers also play for some of the club parties and functions in Sun City. In 2013 so far, we are on a steady pace to equal or exceed 2012 shows.

Jerry noted that it is heartwarming to visit nursing homes where the residents, some of whom are in an advanced state of memory loss and dementia, are sometimes affected by the music and show recognition by responding with a foot tap here and there or a tentative clap of hands.

Last year, a new wrinkle was added to the Strummers crew. A few ladies from other music groups in Sun City began to sing to the Strummers’ accompaniment. The group grew to about 10 and was promptly named the Strummettes. A problem arose when a male, Jerry Grubb, joined the group. The name then morphed into the “Strummettes plus 1.” Included in this emerging group are MJ Wisniewski, Linda Bailey, Lori Gordon, Jackie DeSimone, Ellen Steger, Marsha Gregory, Teddy Mansen and, of course, the aforementioned Jerry Grubb. They now accompany the Strummers on gigs and provide an extra bit of merriment and sparkle to an already fun-loving group.

As for Jerry White, he has never wavered from his love of the ukulele and now leads the Tuesday weekly jam sessions with a baritone uke and a banjo uke, the latter a “surprise” Christmas gift from his wife, Sandee, a couple of years ago. He does have a full sized guitar but that is now in mothballs along with his former Navy ship.