

# THE SONOMA COUNTY FOLK SOCIETY

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<http://www.socofoso.com>

## Singer- Songwriter issue.

**News and inspiration for singers and pickers.**

### You Can Write Great Songs!

by Melissa Phillippe,

As a songwriter and a songwriting coach, it is my greatest joy to hear a song transform from being a “nice song” to becoming a “fabulous song!” I’ve know many people over the years who think that great songwriting is just a gift. They think you can either do it or you can’t. But there are basic things anyone can learn to do to make a song better.

Following are some basic tips for making your songs better. I promise you that if you make changes following these guidelines, more people will walk away with your song stuck in their head.

I am aware that some people do not care about this. You might be one of those folks who simply write for your self, and you don’t care if anyone else likes it! That’s totaly fine. You might want to move on to another article.

But if you are interested in this possibility, read on. Keep in mind that while there are exceptions to every rule, these are some rules to support you in writing great songs. And if you want, when your friends rave about your songs, you can tell them that you’ve simply got natural talent.

But first, two warnings:

First of all, there is a writer’s saying that I find particularly helpful as I turn my attention to editing. “You must kill your darlings.” This does not refer to your family or your children! It simply means that you need to take a step back from your work. When we write something, we can get very attached to it! Okay, maybe it’s just me. But I find this one particularly challenging at times. And yet there are times when I simply must let go of a line, even a great line, if it’s not working to make the song better.

Next, and perhaps the most important of all, do NOT go into “edit mode” from the beginning of your time writing a song! Start off in the “anything goes” mode.

*continued on page 2*



**Notes from our  
President,  
Steve DeLap**

### Where Do All Those Songs Come From?

By Steve DeLap

I’m thinking that all of us who are listeners or players of folk music have occasionally had an idea, a desire or a thought about a song we’d like to write. Many of the folk musicians we enjoy are songwriters as well as performers, and most of them value being able to present their own thoughts, feelings and philosophies in their songs. John Prine, Steve Gillette, Mary Chapin Carpenter, Bill Staines, Greg Brown and many others have developed performance styles, character and reputations, by presenting their own material in their own way.

One of the unique characteristics of folk and acoustic music is openness to individual performance style. If you want to write a song and perform it, there is no particular way that it’s “supposed” to be done. Your words will be your own, your voice will be your own, and your style will be your own. It worked for Bob Dylan, Townes Van Zant, Joni Mitchell and Iris Dement. It could also work for you. However, there some are ways to write songs that work better than others. To get a great start on your own song, check out the *continued on page 2*

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### *Presidents message, continued from page 1*

adjacent article on songwriting by Melissa Phillippe, for some valuable information on song structure and form. Needless to say, working with someone who coaches songwriting, such as Dr. Phillippe, is a great way to get serious in a hurry.

There are also support groups for your songwriting endeavors in Sonoma County, and the best known is West Coast Songwriters. They hold a contest once a month, usually with 8 to 10 aspiring songwriters performing their own songs in front of judges. The judges, usually DJ's, music producers or working performers, give feedback about the lyrics, the music and the performance. One chapter of WCS is hosted by songwriter Ken Risling, and meets on the third Friday at Coffee Catz in Sebastopol. There is another monthly contest, co-hosted by Jay Gottlieb and Mark Rafferty, held on the third Wednesday at Aquas Cafe in Petaluma. Additionally, there are WCS chapters that meet in Napa and in San Rafael.

Performers are judged on lyrics and music, as well as on their personal performance. Guitar is the usual instrument of choice, but piano, accordion and even glockenspiel have been used to accompany songs! Monthly winners are often awarded with a piece of sound equipment or time in a recording studio. During the 12th month of the contest series, winners gather with their respective chapters, and a semi-finalist is chosen. That winner goes on to compete at Freight and Salvage, with other WCS semi-finalists from all over the Bay Area.

In later editions of the FolkNotes, we'll further explore the songwriting process, as well as other local venues and contests that encourage and reward aspiring songwriters. Check out West Coast Songwriters' website at [westcoastsongwriters.org](http://westcoastsongwriters.org)

Meanwhile, Keep Singing!

### *Phillippe, continued from page 1*

Keep in mind that the Beatles song, 'Yesterday,' started out being "Scrambled Eggs." When we are in "first flow" writing mode, anything should be allowed to be said. It is actually a different part of the brain that's working during this phase of writing. So let your freak flag fly!

Okay, so given these two important points, here are some basic tips:

**The Title of the Song is Clear:** After hearing a song, if your listener can't successfully guess what the name of the song is, it could probably be made stronger. In this case, get clearer about what the song is actually about (in only a few words) and get that into the chorus, perhaps repeatedly.

**The Hook is Clear:** This connects to Tip#1. Even if you are not trying to write a hit song, it's still a better song if the listener walks away singing it (whether they want to or not). To enable this, the whole song should lead back to and support and discuss this one idea, the hook (and title), of the song.

**Confirm Consistency or Clear Changes in V V T S – Viewpoint, View, Time and Setting:**

**Viewpoint:** Be sure that the story is told from the angle of first person, second person or third person, consistently. If this is not the case, be certain your listener knows who is talking when.

**Voice:** Is the singer talking to someone else or talking out loud?

**Time:** Is the action set in the past, present or future? Be positive that if there is a change in this, it is impeccably clear when and why.

**Setting:** Is the lyric happening in a specific (or implied) place or simply in the singer's mind?

**Verse One Basics:** Your first verse should explain who, what, when, where, and why. Okay, why might be optional, but you get the point.

**Following Verses:** Ideally, each verse moves the plot or story forward, or expands information, without repeating the same things or saying the same thing in a different way, or listing.

**The Melody Supports the Lyric, The Lyric Supports the Melody:** Not doing this might be the most common beginner's mistake. Take notice of how you would speak these words, if you were simply talking to someone. Where are the stronger syllables and most important lyrics of the lines? Make sure that the same stronger pulses line up when you sing it. This can involve rhythm and/or melody. For instance you can sustain important lyrics or go up in pitch for those words.

*Part 2 will continue in the next issue, Nov-Dec.*



## **MELISSA PHILLIPPE**

A professional singer-songwriter-performer who has opened for the likes of Jerry Garcia and Kenny Loggins, Melissa started singing and playing music at age 8. One admirer has called her music "Bonnie Raitt meets God."

Her professionally-produced recordings are powerful tools for transformation. She currently has 13 albums of original songs, chants and meditations in release and is working on two more slated to be out within the year. Melissa is a vocal coach as well as a songwriting coach in Santa Rosa. Melissa can be contacted through her website, [www.melissaphillippe.com](http://www.melissaphillippe.com)

FOLK NOTES
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# New North Bay Fiddlers District 10, good news!

By Mark Hogan



The California State Old Time Fiddlers Association has a new district: District 10. We had our first general meeting and concluded all the business necessary to officially become a member district in the CSOTFA. The area we encompass includes Sonoma, Mendocino and Lake Counties.

On July 22, we met at the Cloverdale Historical Society and elected our officers and board members. The officers are Mike Drayton (president), Colleen Hogan (secretary), Chris Carney (vice-president), Mark Hogan (membership secretary), Katy Bridges (state-wide district representative), Doug Laurice (treasurer), and an advisory committee of Don Coffin, Gus Garelick and Janette Duncan.

We are very excited about this new development within the CSOTFA. We were previously part of District 9, which went from San Luis Obispo County to the top of Mendocino County. We hope that by sectioning off a portion of the aforementioned counties into a new district, we can better serve the area. We already have over twenty new members who were not previously CSOTFA members. You don't have to be a resident of the geographic area to be a member of our new District 10. If you want to join or participate, please call me at 707-829-8012.

An immediate goal of the district is to develop an interest in old time fiddle playing among the youth. The tri-county area already boasts several events which can help achieve our goal. Within District 10's area, we have the Anderson Marsh Bluegrass and Old Time Festival slated to return in 2013, and the Cloverdale Fiddle Festival, which will be happening on a new date, May 4-5, 2013. We also have a very well attended old time fiddle jam at the Redwood Café in Cotati, California, from 4-6 p.m. on the fourth Sunday of every month. We will also be meeting periodically in Lake County, at a regular time to be announced.

Two members have local public radio shows in Lake and Sonoma Counties, devoted to bluegrass and old time music. My show is on KOWS 107.3 FM, currently from 3-5 p.m. on Mondays. Don Coffin's show runs on KPFZ 88.1 FM in Lakeport, from 7-9 a.m., with a re-broadcast on Saturdays from 5-7 a.m. Both shows can be streamed by going to their respective websites, KOWS.com and KPFZ.com, and clicking on the live broadcast icon.

Remember: the Cloverdale Fiddle Festival ([www.cloverdalefiddles.com](http://www.cloverdalefiddles.com)) will be May 4-5, 2013, and is more than an old time fiddle contest. We have added divisions for youth and adult mandolin and guitar, along with several workshops. The fiddle judges for 2013 will be Janette Duncan, Blaine Sprouse and Vivian Williams.

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### New shows at the Occidental Center for the Arts

EUPHONIA - Free-Range Folk  
Saturday, September 15 - 8 pm

DIRTY CELLO with Rebecca Roudman  
Sunday, October 14, 5 pm

THOSE WERE THE DAYS with William Florian  
Sunday, October 21, 5 pm

THE BEARS OF BLUE RIVER  
Saturday, October 27, 8 pm

STRAIGHT TO THE HEART with Claire Victor  
and Ron Atchison  
Sunday, October 28, 5 pm

**OCA is located at Bohemian Hwy at Graton Rd., Occidental.  
For details: 707- 874-9392; [brownpapertickets.com](http://brownpapertickets.com); occiden-**

### Editor's Eye

**essays correspondence books  
scholastic & newsletters**

Laurie Reaume

(707)869-9230

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**THE NEXT SoCoFoSo  
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**is Sunday September 30th**

**SUBUD HALL  
234 HUTCHINS AVE  
SEBASTOPOL**

**1:00 P.M. TO 5:00 P.M.**

**For details call: 707-861-9446**

**MUCH PICKIN'  
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**Ukulele Undercurrents...**

**Get ready for the 2nd annual  
UKES ON THE LOOSE gathering  
November 10th, 9 am - 10:00 pm  
The Swing Pavilion at  
The Bishop's Ranch  
5297 Westside Road, Healdsburg**



If you didn't attend last year here's what you missed: group sing-a-longs with all the North Bay ukulele groups, peer-led workshops, spontaneous jams, two good meals and an open mike in the evening to showcase our local talent.

There are two ways to attend this event.  
A: \$43/per person includes day use, lunch and dinner. (40 tickets available)  
B: \$10/person day use with no meals. You may bring your own food. (40 tickets available)

Workshops will be announced by mid-September. If you want to help on the 10th, let us know and we will find a job for you!

Come and join in the fun! For ticket info, contact Gary Sugiyama at [gmscmtn@sonic.net](mailto:gmscmtn@sonic.net)



**Blue & Lonesome, aka Ed Neff & Friends**

Bluegrass with some of the Bay Area's finest musicians:  
Ed Neff on mandolin, Paul Shelasky on fiddle,  
Mike Wilhoite on guitar, Larry Cohea on banjo  
and Jeff King on bass.

Thursdays, 6:30 - 10:00 pm

Willowbrook Ale House, 3600 Petaluma Blvd. North  
Petaluma 707-775-4232



**Kevin Russell Presents:**

**September 21st** Tony Marcus, Patrice Hahn and Paul Anastasio at Sebastopol Center for the Arts (6870 Depot St., Sebastopol)

Doors at 7:30, showtime 8:00pm  
PLEASE NOTE: this is NOT The Sebastopol Community Center

**October 20th** Jim Hurst at Sebastopol Community Center Annex. Doors at 7:00, showtime 7:30pm

**November 9th** Nell Robinson & Jim Nunally at Sebastopol Community Center Annex  
Doors at 7:30, showtime 8:00pm

**December 14th** Rob Ickes & Jim Hurst at Sebastopol Community Center Annex  
Doors at 7:00, showtime 7:30pm

*Unless otherwise noted, all shows will be at the Sebastopol Community Center Annex  
425 Morris St., Sebastopol, California*

Tickets: \$22 in advance,  
\$20 for CBA & Folk Society members, \$25 at the door  
Contact Kevin @ 707-824-1858  
or [krussellmft@aol.com](mailto:krussellmft@aol.com)

**Pick'n Pot Luck recipe**

**POTLUCK PUMPKIN DESSERT**

- 4-6 eggs, lightly beaten
- ½ tsp. cloves
- 29-oz. can pumpkin
- 13-oz. can evap. milk
- 1 cup sugar
- TOPPING:
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 box yellow cake mix
- 1 tsp. ginger
- ½ cup (1 cube) butter
- 2 tsp. cinnamon
- 1 ½ cups chopped nuts

Mix first 8 ingredients. Pour into greased 9x13 inch pan.  
Cut butter into cake mix; sprinkle over pumpkin mix.  
Sprinkle chopped nuts over all. Bake at 350° for 1 hour.



## Lessons • Lessons • Lessons

◇ Fiddle Lessons: Contra and Square dance styles, Celtic, Scandia and other International styles by ear and reading with music theory, Janette Duncan 707-570-2745

◇ Lessons in guitar, old time banjo, piano and beginning accordion. With Ingrid Noyes, in Marshall, on the shores of Tomales Bay. For details: 415-663-1342 or e-mail [ingrid10@sonic.net](mailto:ingrid10@sonic.net)

◇ Kay Eskenazi loves to teach guitar, Folk, Blues, Jazz, Bossa Nova, Fingerstyle, Celtic and Classical styles. 707/869-9642 [service@WomensHeartsAndHands.com](mailto:service@WomensHeartsAndHands.com)

◇ Music lessons at your location: note reading, theory, piano instruction for all ages. Laurie 707-869-9230

◇ Steve Wharton teaches Bluegrass: banjo, Old Time banjo, dulcimer, and autoharp For details, 707-887-2518.

◇ Learn to play Polish fiddle  
Nanette Fynan 707-569-0565

◇ Play the String Bass: lessons in Sebastopol  
Bill Amatneek 707-824-8084

◇ Mandolin lessons with Phil Lawrence in Sebastopol  
All Styles--All Levels  
(707) 824-1198 or email: [phlawrence53@yahoo.com](mailto:phlawrence53@yahoo.com)  
[phillawrence.com](http://phillawrence.com)



## Turn Your Radio On KRCB: Our own NPR Station at 91.1 or 90.9 FM

Great programs, some of particular interest to folkies...

◇ Mondays: 8:00 to 10:00 PM

• **Your Average Abalone**, hosted by Johnny Bazzano, 1st and 3rd.

• **Shaken, Not Stirred**, hosted by Chris Olson, An eclectic music program and some... 2nd and 4th.

◇ Tuesdays 10:00 to Midnight

• **Crossing Borders**, hosted by Amy Contardi, World music

◇ Wednesdays: 8:00 to 10:00 PM

• **Connections**, hosted by Doug Jayne and alternating host, Allegra Broughton, Folk, Rock, Blues and Americana  
◇ Thursdays: 8:00 to 10:00 PM

• **Freight Train Boogie**, hosted by Bill Frater, Roots, Country, Folk, Blues, Rock, *alternating with*

• **On The Road Again**, hosted by Linda Seabright

◇ Saturdays: Noon to 1:00 PM

• **Thistle and Shamrock**, Celtic music

◇ Saturdays 1:00 to 5:00 PM

• **Our Roots Are Showing**, hosted by (*alternating hosts*) Robin Pressman and Steve DeLap. Folk, Acoustic, Singer-songwriter, Blues, Bluegrass



## Turn Your Radio On KRSH: 95.9FM

◇ "Krush Uncorked" Sundays 8-11 AM. Singer-songwriter acoustic and unplugged music with Bob Sala

◇ "Krush Americana" Monday evenings 7:00 to 10:00 PM. Old n' new twang, Country, Americana and Roots Music with Bill Bowker



**A great opportunity for stardom! Would some of our members please share some of their favorite recipes for the Pick'n Pot Luck column.**

**They can be simple and easy, please email em to [steves32@sonic.net](mailto:steves32@sonic.net), Many thanks, Steve H**



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## Sonoma County Folk Society Membership Application

Please fill out and mail: - \$10.00 Individual - \$15.00 Family Make checks payable to SoCoFoSo.

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Name

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comments:

Membership begins and ends in the month you join or renew.

Contributions to the Sonoma County Folk Society are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.

# Acoustic Music Jams :

## • THE REDWOOD CAFE

8240 Old Redwood Hwy, Cotati

◇ The Celtic Sessions, led by Janette Duncan and Roxanne Oliva

Second Sunday of the month from 4 to 6 PM.

For details call: 585-3138

◇ Old Time Jam

Hosted by Janette, Steve and Chris

4th Sunday of the month, 4 to 6 PM. Details, 570-2745

## • MAIN ST. STATION RESTAURANT

16280 Main, Guerneville

◇ Slow Celtic Sessions

1st and 3rd Wednesdays, 7 to 9 PM,

For details call: 869-0501

## • COFFEE CATZ

6761 Sebastopol Ave, Sebastopol,

On Hwy 12 at the Train Station, east end of town.

Check it out every Saturday afternoon from 2 to 5 pm.

◇ Old-time, bluegrass, old country.

## • MURPHY'S IRISH PUB

464 First St Sonoma

◇ First Sunday of the month, 3:30 - 5:30, celtic jam

For details call 935-0660

## • MOUNTAIN HIGH COFFEE & BOOKS

16295 Hwy 175, Cobb, CA 95426

Old Time Jam - 2nd Saturday of every month - 4-6pm



## • BLUEGRASS AND OLD-TIME JAM

◇ The 4th Wednesday of every month, 7-9pm at Aqus Café in Petaluma

For info and details: 415-706-1997 or murphyjohn2008@yahoo.com

## • BLUEGRASS JAM.

◇ 1st & 3rd Tuesday of every month, 7pm - 9pm,

Subud Hall 234 Hutchins Ave, Sebastopol. Intermediate to advanced jam.

Hosted by "Uncle" Dave Carlson. 707-843-5181

## • SANTA ROSA TRADITIONAL FRENCH SESSION.

◇ 2nd Wednesdays, 7-9 PM, Gaia's Garden Restaurant Traditional folk music of central France on unusual folk instruments (such as the hurdy-gurdy). For details, [www.santarosafrenchsession.com](http://www.santarosafrenchsession.com).

## SANTA ROSA SLOW CELTIC SESSION

◇ 3rd Wednesdays, 7-9 PM, Gaia's Garden Restaurant, Santa Rosa.

Trad celtic players of all levels welcome. [www.srslowcelticsession.com](http://www.srslowcelticsession.com).

## Singer's Circle...

◇ Meets 4th Friday of most months.

For information call Dennis Drury at 829-0883.

## Dance Dance Dance...

### • DANCE AWAY

◇ Contra and English dancing every weekend! Live music, lessons and callers. For detailed info contact: NBCDS Dance Line (707) 527-9794 or [www.nbcds.org](http://www.nbcds.org) or email: [info@nbcds.org](mailto:info@nbcds.org)

### • APPLE TREE MORRIS

◇ Weekly in Sebastopol. Information: 829-3478 or [kalia@sbcglobal.net](mailto:kalia@sbcglobal.net)



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• NEXT DEADLINE FOR ARTICLES •  
October 10th  
To Steve: [steves32@sonic.net](mailto:steves32@sonic.net)

