

GETTING TO KNOW YOU ... Gloria Tapper



Hello, my name is Gloria Tapper and I have been an active member of Silver Strings for over two years now. My brother Rick Schalk and his wife Sharon are also Silver Strings members (Rick plays the guitar, Sharon the hammered dulcimer) and they are the ones who got me interested in Silver Strings. I would come with them to the meetings and listen to the music and watch the players and the more I came the more I liked it. One evening at one of the meetings I heard Bob Hlavacek talk about a mentoring program that he and Sandi had going where they would loan you a hammered dulcimer and also teach you the basics on it so I signed up and started playing. After a while I also learned about another hammered dulcimer program sponsored by ODPC, the ones who put on the Evert Dulcimer Festival in July each summer and continued my learning and now I am in Ann Wassel's group from Silver Strings. It's funny how things work out!

I was born in Detroit but raised in Garden City along with two older brothers and two younger sisters. One brother, Rick, played the guitar, and I, for a very short time, played accordion and the recorder in 4th grade. The rest of the family liked other things. We had an old player piano in our basement and that provided our family with all the music we wanted. We would take turns pumping and singing together around that old piano. I thought I was a pretty good singer but at school the teachers thought I'd be better at pantomiming!

Our neighborhood was really special. Every Sunday after church (I attended Good Hope Church where we have our meetings) all of us and our neighbors too would head to Grass Lake near Jackson to swim, water ski, and picnic for the day.

After high school I got married and raised three children. When they were all in school I started my EMT training and became a paramedic for a private ambulance company, Medic One. We did a lot of backup for a nearby fire department. I remember the first time I had to give CPR. I was scared and broke out in tears after I was done.

Now I am a grandma with three grandchildren. My oldest grandchild is in high school, the second is in 5th grade, plays the recorder and gives me tips on the penny whistle, and the youngest is in 2nd grade and plays soccer. My oldest daughter was an ice skater in the Garden City Skating Club where I became secretary and also did a lot of costume sewing for their performances. My middle son was a skateboarder and my youngest daughter a runner (she just completed a 26k run). My husband and I also have a German shepherd named Shadow. He is my husband's shadow all right but likes me better when he gets into trouble and needs a friend.

Every year we travel to Las Vegas for some needed fun, and also every year in July we rent a cottage at Hanlon Lake near Ludington for our whole family to spend time together. Next year we want to go to Hawaii if we can since we have done most all the Caribbean Cruises and want to experience something different.

The hammered dulcimer you will see me playing came from the Evert Dulcimer Festival, which I think everyone should experience sometime. Right now I am learning to use my new tablet where I keep my music on file. Silver Strings has helped me to learn and play sheet music with others and to be disciplined to practice to get better at playing. It is never too late to start learning something new and good for your brain too!