



Getting to know you Mary Colgan

I was born and raised as a farmer's daughter among 5 rambunctious brothers. Dad played harmonica, and a little cornet.

The first musical instrument I learned to play was the piano - beginning at age 5 or 6. My grandma gave me my first lessons. After she died, I continued my interest in learning piano, so mom finally agreed to let me start lessons with a neighbor in 4th grade - these would continue for 6 years. During Junior High School, I played Alto recorder. One other girl and I were tutored by the music teacher. We played duets in concert style - mostly classical music. I attempted to learn guitar when I graduated from Nursing school. Now, the guitar is happily being played by my talented son.

I've always been "crafty". Mom taught me to sew at an early age. When my 3 boys decided that "mom made" clothes weren't "cool" anymore, I had to find *something* to sew! I started experimenting with stuffed animals, which led me to learning how to make cloth dolls. I've spent two decades, now, creating sewn dolls of various styles. I find it very challenging and lots of fun.

I love to crochet. I prefer to crochet with thread type materials as opposed to heavier yarns... the thread lends itself nicely for dressing the dolls I have around here. Alana tells me I have too many dolls - I ask... "Is that possible?" We don't count them. I'd LIKE to learn to knit better, but, that isn't my passion. I'd also love to be able to tat... but that technique eludes me.

Freeman's daughter convinced me to take some quilting classes with her a few years ago. My interest mainly is in making doll sized quilts. My first "human sized" quilt was not a planned piece, it sort of happened by accident, and took me 3 months to finish it. I have several quilts "planned" and some even started. But... they take second place to my Hammered Dulcimer playing now.

Freeman and I met in 1993 at a singles dance. We have a blended family of 5 children and 4 grandchildren. I've been teaching Alana, our 7 year old granddaughter, to play Hammered Dulcimer. She's doing really well! You may meet her one day soon!

I bumped into the Hammered Dulcimer when Freeman and I attended a Saturday at Evert Funfest in 2009. We were going to "just listen" to music being played. We were unaware there would be workshops being taught, until we checked in. We attended a "one on one" session first. I don't know the lady's name who gave me my lesson that day, but, she did SO well, by the end of the hour, I began to think "I can do this!" I attended more classes, and Freeman headed to the vendors' buildings to see how much these things cost! I bought my first dulcimer that day. We won't discuss how many I've bought since then....

The only animal I have is carved on the front of my Lost Valley dulcimer! (I bought it used from the lady who commissioned Linda Foley to carve her dog on it, never learned to *play*, and let me adopt it in September 2010). It sounds beautiful, despite the "d-o-g" on the front of it.

After joining other dulcimer clubs, I began hearing about the Silver Strings Dulcimer Society. I had met several SSDS members at festivals as well. My first year of playing HD, I was still working full time and was unable to travel the distance on a work night. Freeman and I joined SSDS in February of 2011. We travel about 1½ hours from Haslett (near Lansing) to attend whenever we can.

I received my B.S. in Nursing in 1976, and I worked in several different nursing positions over the years. I retired in January 2010....that's when life with my HD became my daily focus! I find it *much* easier to practice/play now that I'm retired.

We've been able to attend a variety of local dulcimer events regularly, since I retired from a 30+-year career as a nurse. Music has been important in all my life stages. I expect that it will continue to be. We are happy to be a part of such a wonderful group of people! We're making lots of wonderful friends and learning lots of new music!