

## Getting to Know You . . . . . Sally Niemczewski



Hi, my name is Sally Niemczewski. I play the ukelele and autoharp, have been a member of Silver Strings for over 9 years, and have worked on the elections and annual banquet committees many times.

I was born in Detroit, but raised in Dearborn Heights in a very active "outdoors" family. I had 5 brothers and 4 sisters, so that meant lots and lots of outdoor fun with ready made teams. We played baseball, kick the can, and rode bikes from morning to dark. One thing I really liked was climbing ropes from our backyard tall trees like Tarzan and Jane did. (Remember them?) Every Sunday, my Mom and Dad would pile all of us into the car for afternoon rides, when gas was 25 cents a gallon! We also took vacations using an old 2 room army tent my Dad bought. There was one room for them, and the other for us kids... boys on one side - girls on the other, all sleeping on the ground. About the only music we had was singing around the campfire or listening to 2 sisters practice piano.

Real music entered my life when I met Bob, my husband of over 36 years. (He's one of the Silver Strings string bass and guitar players.) His father was a great accordian and organ player, his music filled their family home, that's where Bob's love of music all came from, and probably mine too. We have 2 sons, Steve and Joe, and now 4 grandchildren- Kaitlyn (3), Lilly (4), Aubrey (4), and Ethan (5). When each of them was born, Bob and I gave them a new uke (pink for girls- blue for boys). All of our grandkids can now strum on them, and enjoy making up their own simple songs. As a child, I wasn't at all musical. I couldn't sing, keep a beat, or even whistle a whole tune. When Bob joined Silver Strings, I just came and listened, until I attended a banquet and sat next to John and Sharon McAuliffe. They both asked me what instrument I played, and of course I said I didn't play anything. John said, "I bet you could play the uke - I'll help you". So the very next day I went out and bought my first \$20.00 uke, and was determined I could learn to play it. I didn't let Bob even touch my uke - all he could do was tune it for me. The rest was up to me. With the help of John and Sharon, and Herb Danison, I did learn to play the uke, and also learned how to play the autoharp with the help of Theresa Smith. So, if you really want to play an instrument, you can!

Before I was married, I worked at Cox Instruments in Detroit, in the order and accounting departments. When I married, Bob wanted me to be a stay at home mom. So that is what I happily did. We took our boys camping, first in a tent, then a pop up, and finally a travel trailer, on vacations and weekends in Michigan and down South, just like I did when I was a kid. I like to crochet, bead jewelry, sew, and used to make all of my own clothes. I also like to read all kinds of books and materials, play in a uke group called "Uke 'n Sing", and take care of 2 grandchildren on Tuesdays and Thursdays each week. My dreams are to camp in the Rockies and Grand Canyon someday, and for my grandchildren to enjoy music and be successful in their own lives. If you think you could never learn to play an instrument, look me up at the meetings and see why I'm always smiling and happy playing my uke. I'll give you the secret- TRY!