

GETTING TO KNOW YOU.....Tom Koppin



You have probably heard of the expression, "You can't teach an old dog new tricks". Well, my name is Tom Koppin and it's not true. I was born in Detroit but grew up in Dearborn with 2 brothers, a Mom who played piano, and a Dad who played guitar. In my elementary school days, I was interested in music, especially singing soprano in our school choir. When I went into Jr. High, I wanted to learn to play the string bass, but the school's music director needed a tuba player for the school band. So that's what I did, along with playing the bass in the orchestra and continuing singing in other choral groups. In my senior year, 2 buddies and I formed the IVY THREE, a folk group. We got to play on the Jimmy Lanz and Dale McCarin's Music Hall Cavalcade Program on WJR one Memorial Day, which was really exciting.

After High School I started college, but Uncle Sam had another plan for me, and that was the Navy. I was Stationed in Hawaii, and while there played guitar in three different bands. One group had 2 guitars, a bass, accordion and drums, and played a lot of traditional music. Another group was a Jazz group, and the third was a Hawaiian group. So I really got exposed to a lot of different music styles. After the Navy, I met my wife, Linda, who plays some piano, and we raised 3 great children Paul, Kelly, and Andrew. Paul now plays the mandolin, Andrew plays the bass and mountain dulcimer, and Kelly enjoys listening to them. I got a degree in photography from Washtenaw Community College, ended up as a tab instructor for 3 years on their staff, and later went into graphics and printing. I currently work for Heidelberg, a German company who manufactures printing equipment, and I have been in the pre-press equipment department for over 35 years. I am always on the road, and my guitar goes where I go, to practice and enjoy. Linda and I have 2 grandchildren, Elizabeth and Luke, 2 dogs, Storm and Ozzie, plus 5 cats, 8 Australian Bourke Parakeets, and some fish. You probably are wondering why so many pets. Kelly, our daughter, is a Vet Technician (nurse), and most came from her, having been abandoned or abused. Our love for animals came from being president of the Wayne County Fair Association, superintendent of the rabbit and poultry barns, and having our kids all active in the 4 H program, where they earned trophies and ribbons showing pigs, goats, sheep, and cows each year at the fair. I found out about Silver Strings when I went to Evart 7 years ago, saw you perform, and learned your meetings were near where I lived. I decided to give it a try, and joined. Since then I have played in most of the play dates and faithfully attended the monthly JAMS and meetings. Linda and I fill our lives with camping, fishing, and enjoying lots of family time together with our children and grandchildren. I have one goal right now, and that is to learn to play my grandfather's old fiddle. It was in pieces when I got it, and slowly (with the help from books and the internet), I have restored it so it is playable again. I even learned how to re-hair a bow. I also play the ukulele, string bass, and sing baritone when I can. Silver Strings has opened up a lot of opportunities for me, as well as meeting some awesome people who have taught me new tunes that I never knew existed before. You will know me at the meetings, because I will be playing on my guitar, also trying to play the old fiddle I restored, and you might even hear me sing some verses to tunes we play, that I really like. Music is a big part of my life, and you can teach an old dog new tricks after all. Look me up and I'll tell you all about my work on my grandfather's old fiddle, and even let you handle it if you promise to be careful!