



Island Songwriters Showcase

[www.islandsongwriters.org](http://www.islandsongwriters.org)

May 2000

Newsletter

## ISS SOUND BITES

by Shari Diamond

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**Long Island Band *Wheatus* Produced by ISSer Phil Jiminez in contract with Columbia Records!**

**Phil Jiminez** of the band **Jordan River** put his talents together when he produced the L.I. band **Wheatus**, which led them to get a record deal with Columbia Records! This is pretty big stuff. A more detailed article about his experiences will be written by Sonny Meadows and will appear in next month's issue. Keep an ear and eye out for this hot up and coming band.

**A Guest Speaker Will Be Attending Our June 5<sup>th</sup> Workshop!**

Attention Island Songwriter Showcase Members! The ISS is pleased to announce that songwriter **Mel Glazer** will be speaking at the **June 5<sup>th</sup> Workshop**. Mr. Glazer is a "top 10" songwriter whose songs have been recorded by Etta James, Robert Plant and Elvis Presley (among others), and whose collaborators include

Carole King and Sammy Fain. Mel's songs range from R&B to Irish country, from hip-hop to folk, and from inspirational to dance. Mr. Glazer teaches the course "How to Write and Market Commercial Songs" at Hofstra University. He will be discussing songwriting and taking your questions. Be sure to get there early!

### **Bill Meehan Goes Head-to-Head With The Editor Of The Rolling Stone Magazine!**

ISS member **Bill Meehan** wrote a letter to the **Jann S. Wenner**, Editor and Publisher of **Rolling Stone Magazine** giving his reaction to recent articles in the magazine (one about glorifying Axl Rose and another about a homeless guy Ukiah Morrison in Asheville N. Carolina). Bill noted that neither of these individuals has a positive outlook on life nor do they do anything positive for the music industry however the magazine sees fit to focus on these two as if they are role models to be aspired to. Bill's bold letter suggests that Mr. Wenner come to Long Island where he can "take a peek at the numerous singer-songwriters that fill the local coffeehouses and clubs in this area and go virtually unnoticed by major record labels." He adds "What may be intimidating to you though, is that the singer-songwriters I am talking about are intelligent hard working individuals who pay their taxes, raise families, make commitments in their lives and their only addictions are caffeine, fresh guitar strings and the truth they see in their art. You will hear intelligent music and/or songs written and performed by real people. Songs about love, despair, courage, trust, truth, confession, obsession, testimony, brotherhood, motherhood, fatherhood, sisterhood, envy, rain, sunshine, happiness, loneliness, racism, child abuse, debt, blue collars, white collars, coffee, tea, imagery, animals, opinions, freedom, chances, hopes and dreams and the list goes on. You could start here and start a campaign that could expand nation wide; to identify and glorify the silent rock and roll stars who buy your magazine from local newsstands. You might even credit yourself with getting their career in music going and you can sit back and feel proud how you have the power to ignite a new spark in the music world instead of rewriting the same old stories about the same old rock stars. The time is now for something new! I dare you to write an article about the real soul and heart of rock and roll!!" Now that's telling them. You too can send an email to Rolling Stone at: [letters@rollingstone.com](mailto:letters@rollingstone.com). Let's see if they hear this message. From all of us songwriters, thank you Bill for being our voices.

### **Stuart Markus Emcees The 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Folk Festival At Nassau Community College!**

ISSer **Stuart Markus** is very prolific in the Long Island folk music genre so it's no wonder he was asked to emcee the third night of the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Folk Festival at Nassau Community College. This is one event no one should miss. There are top performers like **Christine Lavin**, **Oscar Brand**, and **Mike Seeger**, as well as workshops and craft fairs. The best part is that admission is free! Don't be a dud next year. Talk to Stuart or call the college at (516) 72-7148 for more info on upcoming events.

### **UPCOMING ISS EVENTS**

WORKSHOP MEETING: **May 1 June 5**

OPEN MIKE @ BORDERS SYOSSET: **May 4 June 1**

SONGWRITERS IN THE ROUND:

@ BARNES & NOBLE, COMMACK: **May 11 June 8**

@ BORDERS, WESTBURY: **May 19 June 16**

Food for thought:

For upcoming meetings, should we build in time for FAQ's or specific topics?

Should we try to put out a compilation CD of the ISS?

### **ISS WORKSHOP MEETING**

Five Towns College

04/03/02000

By **Shari Diamond**

We started the evening off with **Bill Anacker** who sang on guitar "*Here and Now*". Stuart felt it was terrifically real and it had a universal theme. He thought the melody was beautiful although he wanted more of a musical departure at one of the bridge/ choruses. Rick thought it was a good song and commented on a line that many agreed was a tad cliché. He put on his "Gerry D." hat since he was out a noted that there may be a need for adding new information and being more specific. Frank G. enjoyed the song and had some minor restructuring comments. Charlie agreed. Sonny Meadows, who was filling in for our fearless leader Sonny Speed (out vacationing in Florida – how dare he!), agreed it was a great job.

Our next performer was **Steve Lieberman** who brought on tape "*Alive At My Own Funeral*". It almost sounded like heavy metal meets Scottish folk music. A very cool topic for a song. Andrew loved the sound effects and the recording production. He wanted more variation in melody and conciseness in lyrics. Shari (that's me) agreed with economizing and watching the phrasing. She also added about making some noises in the instrumental bridge (like someone choking or dying). Stu wanted more variation in style of music. Charlie felt it was a great piece. Rock on!

Our previous month's songwriter tie winner **Charlie Ward** was next singing with his guitar, "*Only Might Be*". Again he brought in another fine song. Rick liked everything except one little bridge which he thought had too many rhymes. He felt it was real solid though. Andrew agreed but added the melody on that bridge was nice and sort of a surprise. Frank G. agreed. Bill R. commented (after taking a songwriter's workshop class) on the structure of the song and that it didn't quite grab him. Sonny M. agreed. Shari felt it was very fluid. Different strokes folks.

Newbie **Tom Tietjen** brought on tape “*Fool*”. Charlie said he would play this song in his car and sing it at the top of his lungs. That’s a pretty big compliment. He liked the production especially. Shari felt it was very catchy but commented on phrasing and cramming of words. Mike C. felt it was hooky and agreed on rephrasing. Frank G., Stu and Bill R. agreed as well. Some minor notes on some confusion with some lyrics, but overall a great song. We hope to hear more from Tom.

**Frank Gambino** was up next on guitar singing “*A Father’s Lullaby (Allie’s Song)*”. Frank was our other tie songwriter winner for last month. He shows great diversity in subject matter from the previous month by sharing this very sentimental tune. Shari liked the sentiment and commented on the quick turnarounds in verses. She wasn’t sure she liked it or not but she liked that it was different. Some things have to grow on a person. Bill A. felt comfortable with the melody, structure and turns. Bill R. commented on the quick turnaround and noted in production, he should double track it. Stu agreed and liked the changes at the end of the song. Charlie felt he could have the beginning verse and the end fading out. A well liked song by all.

Newbies **Mike Repak** and **Dave Epelone** brought on CD “(*Got Dem Blues*) *In Las Vegas*”. The music was by Flight Of Ideas and the lyrics by Mike Repak. Frank G. liked all the verses except the 3<sup>rd</sup> and he had some comments on the 4<sup>th</sup>. Charlie felt it had a nice shuffle feeling to it. Shari suggested a line change in the 3<sup>rd</sup> verse. Rick wanted to hear it as a straight 12-bar blues and thought there might be more of a market. Sonny M. agreed with Rick and felt the guitar overpowered the vocals. Charlie wanted to hear more vocals to match the instrumentation. Frank suggested a musical variation on the 3<sup>rd</sup> verse. Great first effort and we hope they will come back with more songs to share.

*Well I was up next so this review was done courtesy of our fly web guy **Bill Ryan**.*

Now it was our prolific editor’s turn – **Shari Diamond** brightened up our night with her melodic lullaby/show tune “*The Firefly*”. Andrew liked it – especially its dissonance. As Andrew puts it “dissonance is good – you don’t want to do just consonance”. Stu likened it to Mary Poppin’s “*Stay Awake*” and thought kids might have trouble singing along. Mike C. called it a killer tune, and Sonny M. thought it had a poetic feel and could see Disney characters as Shari. Scary. A good time was had by all.

*And now back to me again.*

Next was our web site host guy **Bill Ryan**’s turn who brought on tape “*Dream Of What Might Be*”, our third lullaby for the evening. Some people might be detecting a pattern – others may simply be put to sleep. What many of you didn’t realize was that this was national lullaby month. Yep! Andrew liked it and had some minor wording comments. Bill A. liked the melody and lyrics and agreed with Andrew. Charlie liked the flow on some lines and had some suggestions for the lines Bill R. wanted to change. Shari liked it and suggested adding more breath throughout the song. Most of all, we stayed awake. Great song!

And now for a complete departure from the lullaby songs, **Andrew Kirschner** brought on tape “*I’m So Happy*”. This is a cult song. It’s strange, weird but wild. Bill A. thought it was strangely interesting and thought it has some potential for a show tune. He added that it’s critical that the lyrics are clear. Frank G. liked it very much and thought his vocals, lyrics and music worked together. Charlie noted the contrasts in the song and felt they worked. He wowed us!

Our last performer on this somewhat light night, was **Rick Crawford** on guitar singing “*In The Fullness Of Time*”. Mike C. stated it so well when he said: “Who are you and what did you do with Mr. Crawford?” This song had hope and was positive. It even had lots of major chords. Mike however wanted minor changes in the melody. Shari felt it was one of his best. She commented on watching syllables, phrasing and minor changes in strumming. Bill A. and Stu agreed it was his best. Bill A. agreed on changing strumming in the bridge. Sonny M. agreed but wanted more diverse melodic changes between verse and chorus. He also felt Rick might want to consider speaking some lines since the lyrics read like poetry. Charlie wanted to know where the source of the song came from. A big star for Rick for a very well liked song.

That was the evening folks.

**Special thanks to Sonny Meadows for not just filling in for Sonny Speed this month but for doing an outstanding job running the meeting.**

*Next meetings are **May 1** and **June 5**. Special guests will be appearing for the May and June workshops.*

Please make sure you check out our website [www.islandsongwriters.org](http://www.islandsongwriters.org) for info about the ISS, past newsletters, and member performances. If you would like to have a newsletter emailed to you, please send your request to Shari Diamond at [shari@kidstestedtunes.com](mailto:shari@kidstestedtunes.com).

\*\*Please note that my old email address to Erols will be expiring so use the address above \*\*

**SONGWRITER’S CHOICE**  
**Shari Diamond for “The Firefly”**  
**Tom Tietjen for “Fool”**  
*By Shari Diamond*

I know what you are all thinking. I am writing this article, was responsible for collecting the votes in Gerry Dantone’s absence, and I tied for the winner this month. Well, it happened! Get a life! We didn’t have that many songs this night but we had quality and that’s what counts. I really appreciate everyone’s support

of my song, “*The Firefly*”, a children’s lullaby-ish song. It should be noted that even though I got votes, comments were made to make the song better so for what it is worth, the winning song does not have to be “perfect” to win. Now on the other hand, the other winner, **Tom Tietjen**, had a very catchy song titled “*Fool*”. But what makes his situation unique was that this was his first time here! Not too shabby.

The runner-ups included **Andrew Kirschner** with “*I’m So Happy*”, **Frank Gambino** with “*A Father’s Lullaby (Alli’s Song)*”, and **Bill Anacker** with “*Here and Now*”.

It was another fine evening of talent and I am confident that there will be countless more.

## **BORDERS RECAP**

*Borders, Syosset*

Our host **Bill Ryan** led the night with wonderful music from various ISS members. It’s a relaxed atmosphere and performers can play 2 of their songs. The ISS is about quality musicians, songwriters and performers and audiences know this. Be a part of the music scene.

*Next Borders event is **May 4**. Support the ISS and original L.I. music.*

## **SONGWRITERS IN THE ROUND - COMMACK**

*Barnes & Noble - Commack*

There was a last minute date change for this event to April 27<sup>th</sup> so we hope not to many were put off. **Bill Ryan** hosted this night in place of Sonny Meadows, and was joined by **Sarah Haddock, Mike Mattel and Brian Sendrowitz**. Next month there will be performances by **Martha Trachtenberg, Stuart Markus, James O’Malley** and host **Sonny Meadows**. There was a lot of great music as well as in depth discussions on the creation of music. You can catch some of the best L.I. original music the second Thursday of the month here. See Sonny Meadows for more info or call him at 673-3605. Support L.I. music.

*Next B&N roundtable event is **May 11**.*

## **SONGWRITERS IN THE ROUND - WESTBURY**

*Borders - Westbury*

This Friday night at Borders on April 21<sup>st</sup>, patrons were treated to the music from host **Rich Stein, James Yarsky, Tim Lannen, and Gary Ivan**. I don’t think it can get any better than this. The music starts promptly at 8pm so get there early and settle in with a hot cup of your choice and do something good for your soul.

See Rich Stein at meetings or gigs for more info or call him at 742-2817 or e-mail him at [clearsteer@aol.com](mailto:clearsteer@aol.com).

*Next Borders roundtable event is **May19**.*



## Scoop's Link O' the Month

The ISS Web Site News

[www.islandsongwriters.org](http://www.islandsongwriters.org)

### Check it out - ISS artists are being broadcasted on the Web as we speak (or read) - MP3LI.

Go to the Island Songwriter site - [www.islandsongwriters.org](http://www.islandsongwriters.org), click on the MP3LI link, this will take you to Live365.com. You'll need an MP3 player, such as RealAudio's Realplayer or Winamp. If you already have one the broadcast begins automatically. If not you can go to the Live365 help page - <http://www.live365.com/help/index.html>. There you'll hear ISS members - **James Yarsky, UniversalDice.com (Gerry Dantone), dunderhead (Walt Sargent), and OverSoul 7 (yours truly)**. Help us out - click on the "Rate this Broadcast" to move the station up in the charts. Click on the "Tell A Friend" link to spread the word. Oh and, If you'd like to get your songs up on internet radio or converted to MP3 for other sites, email me at [scoop@optonline.net](mailto:scoop@optonline.net) or call me 516 628-1163.

That's the scoop for this month. – *Bill Ryan*

## MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS at FIVE TOWNS COLLEGE

(Dix Hills) ~ The Island Songwriters Showcase (ISS) is a no fee organization. Group efforts include monthly meetings at Five Towns College, located on Burr's Lane in Dix Hills, Huntington, NY, generally on the first Monday of the month. **IT'S FREE**. Songs are often premiered at the meetings, and so much material is presented that there is limit of one song per writer. Writers may bring an acoustic guitar, CD, or cassette tape (no Dolby n/r reduction is best), and a piano is available for keyboardists. Lyric sheets are encouraged and ensuing discussions regarding presented songs can range from passionate to hilarious to instructive. To become a member, simply come to a meeting. That's it! Really!

**Come join us on the first Monday of the month at 7:30 P.M. on the following dates: May 1 June 5**

Becoming an ISS member also entitles you to participate in our open mike night **Borders Books in Syosset** on the first Thursday of the month. Sign ups are at 7:30 P.M. All artists are able to play 2 original songs. Also, you can become eligible to be invited to perform at one of our Songwriters in the Round. No critiquing – just fun! Original bands are also welcome – please call Sonny in advance. Make friends. Make contacts. Get heard!

For more information call our director Sonny Speed at (631) 462-3300 or email him at [mcspeed@aol.com](mailto:mcspeed@aol.com).

### Schedule of Local Open Mikes:

#### Wednesdays

- **The Broadway Beanery** – 9:00 P.M. 2 Broadway, Lynbrook. 596-0028, hosted by Stuart Markus
- **The Cup Café** – 9:00pm. Railroad Street, 3268 Railroad Ave., Wantagh. 826-9533
- **J.P Murphy's** (formerly Sonny's Place), 3603 Merrick Road, Seaford 826-0973, hosted by Dave Isaacs
- **JP's Long Island Grill**, 354 Main Street, Farmingdale, 845-9300, hosted by Frank Walker

#### Thursdays

- **Moonstruck** – 8:00 P.M. 225 Smithtown Blvd, Nesconset, 724-0185, hosted by Michele Monté.
- **BORDERS Syosset** – 425 Jericho Tpk, Syosset at 7:00 p.m. sign-up, 7:30 p.m. start on the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of the month, ISS exclusive showcase hosted by Bill Ryan.
- **Bunnery Pub** - 9pm. 3120 Hempstead Tpk, Levittown, 735-0105, hosted by Frank Walker

### ISS Postcard Mailer

If you didn't receive the postcard mailer that was sent out recently, or want to receive future updates on ISS events via mail or email, please provide Sonny Speed with a completed membership form available at meetings or gigs.

### Director's Blurb

ISS workshops have become increasingly popular and we want to ensure that all members get enough time for comments. If you want your song heard but you're not looking for critique, please save the debut for the showcase. If you want feedback, **please remember to bring 25 copies of the lyric sheet** (or be prepared to pay a hefty fine – just kidding!)

### ISS Address

**ISS**  
**P.O. Box 430**  
**East Northport, N.Y. 11731-0430**  
**Phone: 631-462-3300 (Sonny Speed)**

- The Stephen Talkhouse - 8:30 P.M. Amagansett. 267-3117

E-mail: [mcspeed@aol.com](mailto:mcspeed@aol.com)

### Weekly Venue:

- Sundays at Seven Series - Northport Historical Society. 7 PM. Contact hosted by Kate Kelly at 757-1111 for listing of scheduled performers. Admission is generally \$2.

### ISS Staff

- Ø **Director:** Sonny Speed
- Ø **Press Secretary:** Bob Catrano
- Ø **Newsletter Writing Staff:** Gerry Dantone, Bill "Scoop" Ryan, Walter Sargent, Michael Clark, Sonny Meadows, Mike Mattel, Martha Trachtenberg, Vince Crici, Rich Stein, Andrew Kirschner and James Yarsky
- Ø **Website Coordinator:** Bill "Scoop" Ryan
- Ø **Newsletter Editor/Publisher:** Shari Diamond (holiday bound)

### Songwriters In The Round:

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month @ Barnes & Noble, Commack, hosted by Sonny Meadows
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of the month @ Borders, Westbury, hosted by Rich Stein.

You can email Shari at: [shari@kidtestedtunes.com](mailto:shari@kidtestedtunes.com) or call her at (631) 427-7074.

If you would like to contribute to the newsletter, call me at the above number or email me. **It's your newsletter!**