



# The Taylor Times

The Newsletter with "Schmaltz"



Email: myoozik@aol.com  
www.artsounds.com

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## 2013: THE REPORTS

### The Music Report

The first several months of 2013 were spent going through a lot of brass music and either updating it or preparing it for its first publication. Solid Brass Music, the publisher, had lost a number of pieces when the company changed hands, though somewhere along the line they managed to find them again and returned them to the catalog. I gave them several more pieces, but have not heard anything definite yet. I will chalk it up to a revamp of their system, but still need to find out if they're going to publish them. Meanwhile Girshav Publications will be adding the Redmond Overture to its list as soon as we get the cover art and other details worked out.

But music is a constant effort, if at least a pleasant one, (like a pleasant flogging). In April, I had asked the director of the Eastside Symphony if we could play my Tuba Concerto the following season if I had it ready by the end of the summer. After hesitating a bit he soon announced to the orchestra that we would play it at the March, 2014 concert. It was at that point I decided it would be a good idea to start writing it. By the beginning of August it was complete, which is also when I started practicing it. (I may have bitten off more than I can chew, but at least I still have most of my teeth!) Next year's report will let you know just how it all played out.

The next project was a piece for this year's ASCAP Rudolph Nissim competition called Tensions for Orchestra and Percussion. With very little spare time available the piece ended up taking three months to complete, but was still submitted just before the November 15 deadline.

In October, Brass Band Northwest performed the Prairie Winds Fanfare, freshly arranged for that ensemble, and

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### The Travel Report

Our travel this year was limited in time, but not necessarily distance. In September, a short trip up to Birch Bay near the Canadian border, provided a pleasant, if brief period of relaxation. We've always enjoyed that Worldmark location for a quiet getaway, but this year discovered more of the nearby town of Blaine, a destination for many Canadians trying to save a



little money in the U.S. (I think they really just come down for the free parking.) There are quite a few nice restaurants right



on the waterfront as well as a very quaint downtown area, all an easy 10 or 15 minutes from the resort.

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## MUSIC (cont'd from page 1)

earlier in September the Woodwind Quintet was premiered by the Emerald Wind Quintet, who's enthusiasm for the piece was very gratifying. Interesting note, it was the first time I was not actually involved in a performance and was able to sit in the audience and listen, (where I could pretend I had nothing to do with it if it didn't go well, unless pointed out by the flute player!) There is a video of this performance on the [Arts'n'Sounds website](http://www.artsnsounds.com) (www.artsnsounds.com) as well as

electronic versions of the Tuba Concerto and Tensions.

There is still much to do this last month of the year, including writing a brass piece for the Humboldt competition for submittal by February 1. Last year's piece for brass septet, Of Kings and Queens, was written too quickly and was a little too simple to get very far. Time is still my nemesis, but hopefully this year will be different. And much practicing for the Tuba Concerto also lies ahead.

## TRAVEL (cont'd from page 1)

Our other trip took us a quarter of the way around the world to St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands for a week, where Worldmark/Wyndham had just added a new resort. It was an interesting trip but had its ups and downs in more ways than one. The resort is nice but not perfect. The beach is small and the cove is full of anchored boats so the view is a little different though still picturesque. The pool, which

m e a n d e r s around a bit and is no more than 4' deep anywhere, making it ideal for both standing and swimming, is surrounded by an indigenous population of iguanas, and



*Donna herding iguanas by the pool.*

even IN IT. Donna got a scare when one of them hopped off its roost in the vegetation on the other side of the pool and swam straight toward her. I thought it would veer off at the last second but instead dove right under and between her legs. Needless to say she jumped as the critter quickly climbed the poolside steps we were sitting on and clambered up a rock to dry off in the sun. Donna gave him a bitter scolding but it didn't seem to phase him.

There are two restaurants on site, one casual and one higher class. (There are also three more restaurants at the Ritz Carlton next door.) But it's expensive and difficult to get around. It's only a mile to the town of

Redhook, which is very pretty, has the ferry to St. John, lots of restaurants and shops, nice little harbor, but the road there is too narrow and the steep hills (ups and downs) create too many blind curves to make it safe to walk. The only other alternatives are to take a cab for \$5 a person one way, or rent a car for \$60 a day. And by the way, they drive on the left there. Electricity is some of

the most expensive in the world. There was a \$22/day surcharge for energy. Gasoline is above \$5/gal and food in the grocery store is frequently triple Seattle

prices because everything has to be imported. Rum is cheap, though!

We were there just before Thanksgiving, at the end of hurricane season, when it is still hot and humid, though we did have one day with a taste of the considerably drier "Christmas breeze". We ferried to St. John another day where we had a fascinating two-hour tour through the national park, including beautiful views of Trunk Bay and Cinnamon Bay beaches and a walk-through of the Annaberg sugar plantation ruins. On St. Thomas I got to snorkel a couple of times. The reef off Coki Beach was particularly beautiful. On our last night we had

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*Trunk Bay Beach on St. John Island*

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dinner on a sailboat cruise to a quiet cove at Great St. James Island. We weren't really prepared for the rather cramped conditions after so many spacious Seattle area cruises, and it was complicated by the fact that 75% of the passengers were Danish and didn't speak much English, but the food was good and the drinks were strong.



*I wanna guana!*



*The old windmill base at historic Annaberg Sugar Mill, Virgin Islands National Park, St. John*

## **The Jobs Report**

I spent two very enjoyable years with E3 Energy Partners in Seattle. As 2012 neared its end our hours were cut back to 24 per week while we waited for work that was hiding in the wings but not quite ready to step forward. We waited. And we waited. As we got toward April work finally dried up completely for the design side. I began to use what vacation time I had left in conjunction with Work Share (an unemployment sub-system), but by the end of May the money in E3 was gone and I found myself on full unemployment. But the network that I had developed over the years was pretty efficient and by mid-August I was working again, this time for

GE Water and Process Technologies. The good news is it pays well and it looks like there should be work for the foreseeable future. The bad news is it is across Lake Washington in Bellevue and is a very nasty commute from West Seattle making it not only difficult to get to in the morning but also to make some of my more remote rehearsals after hours. There's talk of putting a toll on I-90 as well and that could be the final nail to both working on the Eastside and playing with my Eastside ensembles. City and County councils have no idea how they affect people with their inefficient money-grabbing.

Donna has continued doing a lot of volunteer work, especially for the Susan

G. Komen Foundation for breast cancer research and support, but for other organizations as well. She has also been doing frequent food demonstrations at the local grocery stores and absolutely loves the interaction with customers. You can't walk by her table without tasting whatever she has there! It's required!



*Sunset from Great James Island*

### The Health Report

With the change of job came a change of insurance and the spectre of Obamacare. Because my new employer provides insurance that meets the requirements of the ACA I can't go to the exchanges for better coverage without paying a premium for the premiums. Through the employer it's paid for with pre-tax dollars and with it available there I would not likely be eligible for any government subsidy if I tried to do it on my own. The deductible on this coverage, which applies to all in-patient treatments and surgeries,

is \$5000 each! What makes it especially frustrating is that I had just managed to satisfy the \$1000 deductible for the year with the previous insurance. This whole thing made me avoid going to the hospital just after Thanksgiving when an allergic reaction to a bug repellent resulted in some serious swelling. Had this swelling been in the wrong place it could have been life-threatening. I admit, no matter how favorably I may feel or have felt about the president, I have NEVER been happy with much of the ACA. One day it will have to change.

### The Holiday Report

I'm happy to report there are holidays again this year, perpetuated by the standards set in the past, and they deserve addressing. The address, therefore, is this. Keep the peace, enjoy life. I could get into a lot of details, thoughts, and suggestions, but it will ultimately come down to how

each person decides to treat themselves and others. If this letter arrives beyond the holidays, then I hope they were happy, and we can still wish you the most wonderful NEW YEAR!

Jeff and Donna

## DILBERT

