

23 December 2010

Subject: Thank-you to LakeMacUkestrans and new beginners session and Merry Christmas!

Hello LakeMacUkestrans,

This is an email to say thank-you for a fantastic year. I am sending individual emails to each Ukestra - a bit like a year wrap up. I think I will post them on the website - but not just yet.

The LakeMacUkestra evolved from my early observations that there seemed to be a bunch of people attending the Ukastle Ukestra who were from the West Lakes area and who were retired. I followed that through and started LakeMacUkestra in February.

We have had an interesting year, and sometimes it may have felt as if you were in the shadow of the Ukastle Ukestra (Lake Macquarie in the shadow of Newcastle??? Who'd of thought it!!!).

At LakeMac we started off with a large bunch of people, some crossover people from the Ukastle Ukestra who preferred the day time and who also seemed to prefer an older repertoire. We enjoyed the Teralba Bowling Club for a while but then transferred across to the Five Islands Recreation Club, where Lindsay has been a congenial host (with a well delivered joke each week). Not everyone made the transition from Teralba, and some people have dropped off. Nevertheless, we have had about 85 different people attend LakeMacUkestra throughout the year.

But there have been some stalwarts who have helped me judge what is the best way to continue at the Lake. Particular thanks are due to keen supporters and new ukulele converts Neil & Margaret, Maree, Kerry, Susan G, Sue H, the Motor Home Club!, Ted & Betty, and of course John Dickinson who, though not so much recently, has been so supportive of people learning.

Specific LakeMac highlights which come to mind include:

- The ABC Radio interview with Jenny Bates which was much fun (<http://www.abc.net.au/local/audio/2010/05/27/2910820.htm>)
- Our first performance at the CA Brown Anglican Village (Aged Hostel) in May
- The numerous (many over 70) people who have come and had a go and have had their musical interest piqued again after decades of neglect.
- The small performance victory for Peter at his Probus club.
- The fact that numerous LakeMacUkestra people have initiated their own ukulele get togethers in their local communities.
- The cancellation of the Melbourne Cup day session and then the huge surprise session in at Newcastle that night with a big LakeMac contingent.

Of course many of the small LakeMacUkestra victories have been inextricably mixed in with the Ukastle Ukestra as there is a close relationship between the two with many people coming into Tuesday nights and to relevant performances. However I do understand the value of the LakeMacUkestra for those who live out at the Lake, and/or appreciate a day time uke opportunity.

In 2011 I still expect to be doing Tuesday afternoons 2:00pm - 4:30pm. I have decided to cease offering beginners lessons at the beginning of each session. This is so we can focus on rehearsing and improving our playing in a more concentrated fashion. Anyone you know who wants to learn, please tell them that I am now running once a month Beginner Uke sessions (on a Saturday). The first one is on Saturday 8 January, at the Five Islands Recreation Club (Speers Point), at 10am. It will be for two hours and will cost \$20. I need people to contact me beforehand though, so I can

organise ukes etc.

The advice and persistence from various LakeMac people has been quite integral to me figuring out how to best manage new people, reliability, continuing to offer new musical challenges and growth generally. Thank you for that.

For those who are on this mailing list but we haven't seen for a while, you are more than welcome to turn up when time & interest allows. However please also don't hesitate to ask me to take you off this mailing list if it no longer interests you.

Have a joyous Christmas, and I will see some of you on Tuesday 4 January when we resume. However I will be taking a week off in late January (having holidays in Victoria). I won't be available on the 18th of Jan. But being the active bunch you are, I expect some of you will gather anyhow.

Keep spreading the word, and make sure you play that ukulele under the Christmas tree to the grandkids!!!

With gratitude,

Mark.