

My Guitar Story – Carl Weiss



Guitar League member since:

About 2006. At that time I saw an article in the Post Standard that seemed to be of interest.

When did you start playing guitar?

I started playing somewhat reluctantly in high school but pursued it with much more intent as part of a 2 man group in college. My friend and lead was really talented. I was rhythm at that time. We concentrated on Grateful dead and Bob Dylan songs. I still play with him today. He is on the West Coast so I do not get to play with him very often. My skill set at the time was the result of being primarily self-taught which has inherent limitations.

What was your motivation to learn the instrument?

I love to practice and progress and improve. That is the reward for me at least.

What style(s) do you play?

I enjoy finger style blues. My ultimate goal is to be able to improvise fluently with fingerstyle. That is what I saw first with Loren at my first meeting in 2006.

At one point I had a lesson in Dick Ward's house with Mark Mazengarb. He tabbed a few measures of Halfway Home for me as a start. I've come a long way since then.

I like Tommy Emmanuel and Brooks Robertson and Buster Jones and I always find Chet tunes interesting and challenging.

My musical interest really focuses on Grateful Dead, Jerry Reid and Bob Dylan.

What make/model guitar(s) do you play?

I just have one guitar but it is very high end performance acoustic Taylor 914 CE



What kind of strings do you like?

I was previously using the light gauge bronze wound Elixir strings for years but more recently it seems that the D'Addario XS phosphor strings seem to be smooth and buttery. I first was introduced to these as samples through Guitar League.

Do you play out?

Infrequently but on occasion. I feel that it is an opportunity to improve every time you have to commit to playing somewhere. I tend to play at family events more or less. I started a YouTube channel (Antlerjams) which has been fun. Lots to digest to make that happen. It takes a lot of effort but each and every song that you put out becomes more of a learning template to improve upon.

I did attend 2 retreats at the Blue Moon resort in the Catskills over the last 7 years or so. The first was with Martin Taylor with a focus on jazz which was organized and structured and helpful. The second was a combination Grateful Dead/Allman Brothers revival event which was fun but much less structured. They both have advantages.

Do you like to jam with others?

I do like to jam with others but admittedly it has been very hard to find someone with whom you really mesh well.

What is your practice routine?.

I practice all the time. I will practice pretty much as long as I can until my fingers hurt. I can usually play for 4 to 5 hours on weekends. What has been most helpful is working with a mentor. I have been working with Brooks Robertson on his Truefire channel for a few years now. We meet every week. He is just a great player and patient teacher and he is also a professor of music at the Boston Conservatory so we are learning quite a bit.

I am a very deliberate practicer. I work on arpeggios and scales and inversions as well as right hand and left hand techniques etc followed by Truefire coursework and then songs of interest. The last thing I look at is YouTube. Once you start to explore youtube structured learning comes to an end. I have been working with a foot controlled Looper pedal (Vidami) as well as a band creator pedal (Treo) both of which seem to have enhanced my playing significantly. The Vidami foot pedal really facilitates using YouTube without having to let go of your instrument. It's a much more efficient way to practice.



What are your current goals? How does GL support them?

Improve. Every day. I appreciate the Guitar league's attentive audience.

In closing, I was able to host Josh Turner for the weekend when he was the anniversary presenter about 6 or 7 years ago. It was a great weekend and a great experience. That is something that my wife and I still talk about.