

# My Guitar Story

## Tom Gafrancesco



I first heard about the Guitar League through a friend John Wolford who was a member and later became the sound engineer for the Guitar League as a volunteer. He convinced me to attend a meeting and boy I'm glad I did. We became good friends, and I would help him set up and tear down on league meeting nights. I realized there was always a place for volunteers because it took the talent of many people to keep the Guitar League going each month. It was always easy to jump right in if there was something to do. It's like a family and the stage is like a front porch. People play and we all get to listen, watch and learn. They share their knowledge and skill and give pointers on how they got to where they are. With me it was listening, watching and practicing. Like anything else, if you put in the time practicing you advance to different levels. That's what it's all about. Getting to another level of skill and passing some along to others all while enjoying the close-knit relationships that form. Many times, at Guitar League we get the chance to play and learn with whomever we want to. People are just that friendly. It was a whole new world of people who share the common interest of guitar and love of music. They come from all walks of life and each is at their own level of knowledge. They want to share it too. That was the very first thing that I remember from first attending a monthly meeting. What better place to learn from everyone, and all at your fingertips so to speak (pun intended).

When I first started playing guitar it was in my bedroom with a hand me down Goya guitar my older brother had given me. Now I have a Taylor Model 410, dreadnought style. It opened a whole new world of creativity and interest. At that time in the 70's we were listening to the music of Jim Croce a lot. There was something about that sound that captivated and motivated me to want to pick up the guitar and learn. That sound. I would play by attempting by ear and stumbled all over the place but eventually found my way getting better with time. Keeping the fingers moving by practicing scales daily really worked for me. We have been playing since we were about 17 years old. We just love the guitar and everything it gives you back. Especially the friends you make. I found that this was the common thread with everyone at the Guitar League too. The passion at every level of skill there could be. As the Commissioner (Dick Ward) put it, Rookies Minors and Majors. These are the three groups we break off into after the pre-show, and main show. There really wasn't a better way to put it. Somewhere, we all play within one of these skill levels and move around with all the challenges. Just after the shows you get the chance to move freely within one of those groups of your choice. In each group you learn so many different things. From types of guitars, to playing style, to type of strings used, a certain song or two, or about the different musicians of the past that paved the way to create the passion for us guitar players to learn from. Simply put, you learn the tools that get you playing better.

After being with the Guitar League since about 2015 my whole world changed.. Friends carry on open jams at their homes at any given time and reach out to invite you. They share new venues with you where you can play. We all support each other through the relationships made through the Guitar League when we can. It's like a big family.

I really am happy to be part of such a wonderful group of people that treat you like you're part of the family. I have made some great friends and have learned a lot in growing musically. The presentations are always awesome as are the pre-shows. I enjoy the wide variety of music that everyone brings to the table. You just can't get that anywhere. The breakouts are always different and informational and all from within its members.

What a great place to build your skills and the Guitar League supports every aspect of my growth as a guitar player! But then again what do I know?

Just an average Guitar League member,  
Tom Gafrancesco