



**Sad News NO DANCE I Repeat NO DANCE March 7, 2020**



**JIMMY WIDENER**

*Inducted Oct. 5, 1986*



**HERB REMMINGTON**

*Inducted Oct. 5, 1986*

*Western Swing Society Hall of Fame Profile ~ Page 3*

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**OPEN POSITION on the BOARD**

Please help us fill this position!

**RIP PHIL SPEER**

Thanks For All The Great Years Drumming For  
Western Swing

**Membership Dues to Re-  
sume! The WSS board had a  
meeting and felt that we  
need to start our member-  
ship drive up. A lot of folks  
have already paid their dues  
and will be receiving their  
cards soon, Thank You!**

**The Western Swing Society**

PO Box 2474

Carmichael, CA 95609

westernswingsociety.net

Facebook: SacramentoWesternSwingSociety

Founded in 1981 by Loyd and Perry Jones to enable performance, preservation and perpetuation of the unique American art form known as Western Swing Music.

**Officers:**

President, Rex Barnes (916) 704-1566

Vice Pres, Jimmy Boehnke (530) 886-8375

Treasurer, Linda Swanson

Secretary, Cheryl Dearborn

**Other Directors:**

Tony Arana (775) 971-3070

Ronnie Elkan (916) 765-4345

Linda McCarley (916) 870-7463

Dave Rietz (916) 806-0520

Jeff Tilton (916) 798-9377

**Staff and Committee Chairpersons:**

Admissions Coordinator, Linda McCarley

Bar Manager, Jimmy Boehnke

Bartender, Cyndi Lee

Decorating Chair, Rex Barnes

Equipment and Staging, Gary Blodgett

Historian, (open)

Jam Room, Tony Arana

Master of Ceremonies, Jimmy Boehnke

Membership Director, (open)

Music Director, Ronnie Elkan

Newsletter Editor, Ronnie Elkan

Photographer, Donald deMars

Public Relations Administrator, Jeff Tilton

Raffle, Bob and Virginia Kuykendall

Slide Show, (open)

Sound Engineer, Gary Blodgett

Website, Dave Rietz

**EDITOR'S LETTER**

Hey Folks

Hope you are all doing well and haven't given up on us here at the Western Swing Society. I know for sure you haven't givin' up on Western Swing Music. Here is proof, are great friend and promoter of western swing, John Towner, building up his collection this month. His friend takes him to Goodwill to by old records, remember them?, and then take them home to listen.



Our President, Rex Barnes, gave us a short report this week. I'd like to share it with our members:

*"Hi, Well it's been a full year now since we had our last dance and we all are anxious to get on the stage and dance floor again. So this is what is going on. I talked to our rep. at the Machinist Hall and of course they do not know when they will be able to open again, but he assures me that they will be renting to us at the same rental price of \$720.00 per Sunday. We did not discuss if they have done any upgrades.*



Rex Barnes

*Linda Swanson and Cheryl Dearborn have done a tremendous job straightening out the books. In fact, from now on you all will be receiving copies of the monthly expense and income statements.*

*Linda Michael has advised me that 19 singles and 19 couples have renewed their membership. Good job Linda!*

*I think that we should start having monthly Zoom meetings to keep up on the budget and start discussing any and all challenges coming up when we start up again. I think that there will be many! As always we encourage any member to join meetings. Please let me know if you are interested. ronnie.elkan@gmail.com*

*I will appreciate any questions and comments from you all.*

*Best Regards, Rex  
(President Western  
Swing Society)"*

**DUES PLEASE**

Thanks to all that are keeping the organization going by sending in your dues. It's not that we need the money now, but when we are allowed to have our dances I'm sure we will be operating in the red until we get it going again. I'm up for the challenge as well as all the rest of you are. I can tell by the wonderful support WSS is getting from all our members.

**The Western Swing Society**

Please send your dues in to:

PO Box 2474

Carmichael, CA 95609

I would have to say that is an encouraging message. Thanks Rex for keeping on it.

There is a sign that music is starting to crawl back into society. The band I play

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**Western Swing Society Music News**

is published monthly by the

Western Swing Society

Views and opinions expressed by contributing authors are not necessarily those of the editorial staff or the Society.

Submitted articles, publicity notices and letters not relating directly to the Society or its members may be published at the discretion of the Editor, as space permits. The staff reserves the right to edit any and all items submitted for publication.

**Deadline for Submittals:**

All items, photographs, articles, and ad's are due to the Editor no later than the 10th of the month.

**JIMMY WIDENER**

Inducted October 5, 1986  
Born February 15, 1924– Died September 8, 2001



Jimmy Widener was born near Cleveland, Oklahoma, started his career in music at the age of 4 when he tried to play his father's fiddle like a guitar using a bobby-pin from his mother for a pick. His father, knowing that he had to do something to save his fiddle, traded his deer rifle for a Banjo

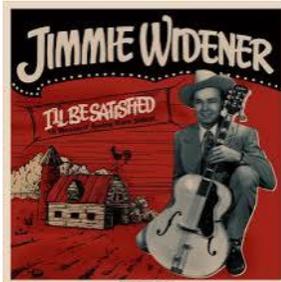
Ukulele. Later, when Jimmie was 6, his father bought him a tenor banjo from Sears Mail Order Catalog.

The year was 1931 and, because of the economy of the times, the Widener musical talents were a real God-send. His mother, Lucy, played guitar, his father, Carl, played the fiddle, and Jimmie played the banjo for country dances and a radio program (KGFF) from Wewoka, Oklahoma, on weekends.

Jimmie met Bob Wills in Hominy OK. In 1934. Bob let Jimmie sing a few tunes and play the banjo. Later, Bob told him to finish his education and he would give him a job. Jimmie went back to school and, in 1940-41, worked with Art Haynes and his band playing dances and a radio show from Shawnee, OK. In 1942 he traveled to California and joined his idol, Bob Wills. Late that year, Bob went back to Oklahoma to enter the Army. Before he left, he told the band they would get together again when the war ended. Jimmie and a couple of fiddle players (Cotton Thompson and Jesse Ashlock) stayed in California and joined the Jimmy Wakely band. Jimmie stayed with the Wakely band until he was drafted in 1943.

After a tour of duty with General Patton in Europe, Jimmie came home, worked a couple of movies with Jimmy Wakely, and rejoined Bob Wills in Fresno, Ca, in 1945.

The next year, he left Bob and worked for a year with Spade Cooley, then rejoined the Wills band until 1950. He then worked with Tex Williams on



*Continued on Page 4t*

**HERB REMINGTON**

Inducted October 6, 2019  
Born June 9, 1926-Died October 27, 2018



Not to sound like a product placement, but this is a case where having an identical name for a product and an artist makes sense. Remington stainless

steel razors and Herb Remington and his flawless pedal steel artistry are a combination that deserves to be housed in the same building. If so, the shed out back would be stockpiled with Remington pedal steel guitars which are engineered, designed, and manufactured by Herb Remington, of course. The steel, as in steel guitar, first came into Remington's life while he was in high school. It wasn't his first instrument. He had been playing piano since the age of five, and those who feel mastery of the keyboard would not expand the abilities of a pedal steel player should provide some other explanation of why no one has ever sounded like this man on that instrument.

Following the Second World War, he went to California and wound up in the Bob Wills' Band, which to a pedal steel player is the same as arriving at St. Peter's gate. Ironically, his trip West had been to



audition not for Bob Wills, but for Luke Wills, his brother. The better-known band leading brother snatching him away is one of the few examples of sibling rivalry involving pedal steel players in music history.

Thus Remington became one of the fabulously swinging and inventive players associated with Western swing, assuring him a place of reverence similar to that granted to the greatest baseball teams. As long as these pickers can still get on-stage, they will never go out of style. Merle Haggard provided employment from the '70s onward with Wills tributes, and two decades later Remington was gathering up the usual suspects for gigs and recording as the Playboys II. Another Western swing project is the River Road Boys, with whom Remington has recorded regularly since 1972. These are all fairly large bands, requiring a musician to be a team player. Remington has always

*Continued on page 4*

*Jimmy Widner continued from page 3*

radio and television on NBC until Tex disbanded the big band in 1957.

After a stint with the Whippoorwills and, later, with Rex Allen, Jimmie organized the Country Gentlemen with Hugh Farr (from the Sons of the Pioneers), Kenny Baker, and Pat Patterson (from the Red Foley Show). The Country Gentlemen took up residence at Lake Tahoe and worked the next few years playing casinos at Lake Tahoe, Reno, and Las Vegas.

He enjoyed his retirement on a farm near Seminole, Oklahoma. Jimmie and his wife, Aileen, have fourteen grandchildren in Oregon, Washington, and Oklahoma. Jimmie was inducted in the Sacramento Western Swing Society Hall of Fame in 1986 when he still played occasionally with the former Texas Playboys throughout Oklahoma.



*Herb Remington continue from page 3*

been something of a leader as well. He was cutting his own instrumental singles for Decca early on, and wrote great material for the Wills' band, including the tune "Remington Ride," which has become a standard for steel players.

His involvement with country & western music also includes something of an invisible legacy, as he was one of a large group of musicians who, in different combinations, made up the house band for the Starday label. Scholars of vintage country music will argue into eternity about who actually played steel on the George Jones sides for this label, but sometimes it is Remington. When it is someone else, it might have been because Remington had gone aloha. He is also an accomplished Hawaiian steel player and works regularly in this genre, guaranteeing him



weeks at a time of sunny working vacations touring the Hawaiian Islands. He lives in Houston, TX, where he manufactures his instruments and teaches. One wouldn't have to travel all the way there to study his techniques: he has issued several volumes of pedal steel instruction on video.

His innovations in instrument design include the invention of an adjustable truss rod.

Artist Biography by Eugene Chadbourne

**VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY**

If you have an interest in volunteering, please contact President, Rex Barnes (916-704-1566)

Needs/Skills:

- Word processing
- Photo editing
- Set up and tear down assistance

**WE HAVE A BOARD POSITION OPEN!**  
We will be looking for a new secretary if you have the time and the experience.

**APPLYING FOR MEMBERSHIP AND NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTION**

Submit the following information in a note with your check to:  
**The Western Swing Society, P.O. Box 2474, Carmichael, CA 95609:**

Name(s), mailing address, email address, and telephone number.

Fees (make check payable to Western Swing Society)

Individual Membership, \$15 per year.

Couples Membership, \$20 per year. (one address only).

Dues renew every July.

If you join during any other month, your membership fee will be prorated to align with the July renewal.

You will receive a color version of our newsletter via email. Paid membership also includes reduced admission fee at Society music functions, and the right to vote in Society elections and on proposed By-Law changes.

**Sunday, March 7, 2021**

**MARCH DANCE CANCELED**

FOR YOUR ENTERTAINMENT AND DANCING PLEASURE



**RIP GREAT FRIEND, PHIL SPEER**  
**November 9, 1955-March 4, 2021**



Phillip “Phil” Speer was born on November 9, 1955 in Bakersfield, California. He grew up listening to Bob Wills, Ray Price, Merle Haggard and Buck Owens.

When Phil was young his family moved to the San Francisco Bay Area. Phil honed his skills as a drummer and as soon as he was old enough he began playing clubs and casinos in the Western part of the country. During this time, Phil had the opportunity to drum in bands opening for Ernest Tubb, Alabama, Johnny Lee, Charly McClain, New Riders of the Purple Sage, Norton Buffalo and Elvin Bishop.

Since moving to the Sacramento area in 2016, Phil has been involved with the Western Swing Society. He has played at WSS dances with the Buck Ford and the Pure Country band, with Bite The Bullet, and has filled in on drums for the house band when needed. Phil is a team player and has made himself available anytime he has been asked.

Phil said he was honored to fill in for Buck Ford’s drummer, Arron Smith, for six months when Arron was recovering from a serious leg injury. He has since been a reliable backup drummer whenever Buck Ford needs him. He has also been working with Gary Blodgett for the past couple of years which has been a treat.

Phil’s talents as a drummer are evident by the list of top caliber musicians with whom he has worked. He has played with and is respected by Bobby Black (Commander Cody), Jim Baughman (Merle Haggard), Pat Donahue (Home Prairie Companion), Al Quaid (Jason Roberts), Dave Ristrim (Luke Bryan), Bruce Kaphan (Jewel), Jay Dee Maness (Buck Owens), and Buck Ford and the Pure Country band.

Phil’s solid drumming on shuffles and swing keep the dancers on the floor and make him an asset to any Western Swing band.

*In August, 2019 Phil was also inducted in to the Northwest West*

*Continued next column*



*ern Swing Music Society in Washington State. I, Ronnie Elkan, know how proud he was to receive this award in person. He was also able to show his talents off to all of the folks up there.*



*Phil was always there for all of us musicians. You could not only call on his talent, but he was the most reliable musician I ever worked with. He was a regular at WSS for the last few years, always there to play or just help in any way. He will be missed!*

*I have been in touch with his daughter that assures us there will be a Celebration of Life in the future.*

*Ronnie Elkan*

*Editor’s letter continued from page 2*

for, Buck Ford, is starting to book private events and our WSS sound man, Gary Blodgett, is starting back up at the Valencia Club on Wednesday evenings. I believe show time is 7:30 but I would check it out before you go.

It is always so good to hear from all of you. Last month I received so many wonderful emails to wish Shelley and I good health and all the “thank you” for throwing the newsletter together. It is just amazing what a loving group of folks we have at WSS. Thank you all!

Hope to see you soon, Ronnie Elkan (Editor)



**BRAND NEW AT THE WESTERN SWING SOCIETY by Edd Burhans**



Jacket Front with Fitted Ball Cap



Jacket Back



**T- Shirts**

Small - Extra Large      \$15.00  
2 XL      \$17.00

**Polo Shirts (Men's & Women's)**

Small - Extra Large      \$20.00  
2 XL      \$22.00

**Onesies      \$12.00**

**Caps      \$20.00**

**Jackets**

Small - Extra Large      \$78.00  
2 XL      \$82.00  
3 XL      \$85.00  
4 XL      \$90.00

**All Prices Include Sales Tax**



Merchandise is available at our monthly dances and at our annual Hall of Fame.

Jackets and Polo shirts can be customized with name for additional cost.

**Brand New: Womens and Girls V-top Tee. The red in the logo is glitter.**

**It will sell for \$18 Small thru Extra Large. \$20 for a XXL**



**OTHER WESTERN SWING MUSIC ORGANIZATIONS/MUSIC HAPPENINGS**

**Buck Ford & Pure Country Band:** Check Website for schedule, <https://buckford.com/events/>

**CA Old Time Fiddlers Association,** Meets 2nd Sunday. Orangevale Grange on Walnut Avenue in Orangevale, CA. [www.cbaontheweb.org/region\\_details.asp? Region 2](http://www.cbaontheweb.org/region_details.asp?Region%202)

**Carolyn Sills Combo:** <https://www.carolynsills.com/>

**Cowtown Society of Western Music,** Contact: Joe Baker, Membership Director, 940-452-6300, 4361 F.M. 1195, Mineral Springs, TX 76067

**Grace Clark & Swingitude:** <http://www.GraceAClarkMusic.com>

**Greater Arizona Country/Western Swing Association and Hall of Fame, Inc.** PO Box 953, Dewey, AZ 86326. Contact Jim Gamble at 928-458-0714.

**Hot Club of Cowtown:** <https://hotclubofcowtown.com/>

**Lincoln Highway Band** <https://www.facebook.com/lincolnhighwaybandca/>

**Northwest Western Swing Music Society,** Contact: Jeannie Yearian, President, 425-432-7888, or cell 206-271-2295, Lynnwood Eagles, 19223 Hwy. 99, Lynnwood, WA. **Meets 2nd Sunday** [www.nwwsms.com](http://www.nwwsms.com)

**Sactown Playboys** @ <https://www.facebook.com/sactownpbs/>

**Slade Rivers Band:** <https://sladeriversband.com/events/>

**Western Swing Music Society of the Southwest,** PO Box 644, Shattuck, OK 73858. **Meets quarterly.** Go to website at: [www.wsmss.com](http://www.wsmss.com).



**Board Meeting Invitation**

You can attend the Society's monthly Board meetings; first Sunday of each month starting at 10:30 a.m. in the Machinists Hall in Rancho Cordova.

*We buy, sell, & trade new & used gear!*  
*-- Free appraisals --*  
*Serving the Western Swing Society for over 45 years!*

Elk Grove 2740 Auburn Blvd.,  
 (916) 686 - 5666 Sacramento, CA 95821  
[www.skipsmusic.com](http://www.skipsmusic.com) (916) 484 - 7575

**MEMBERSHIP**

**Any Changes?** Keep us up to date on any changes in your membership information, especially email addresses. We can't get your newsletter to you unless we have your current information.

You can mail changes in your information to the Society at P.O. Box 2474, Carmichael, CA 95609; or email it to

[membership@westernswingsociety.net](mailto:membership@westernswingsociety.net)  
 Thanks! Keep on Western Swingin'

**MONTHLY MUSIC SESSIONS**

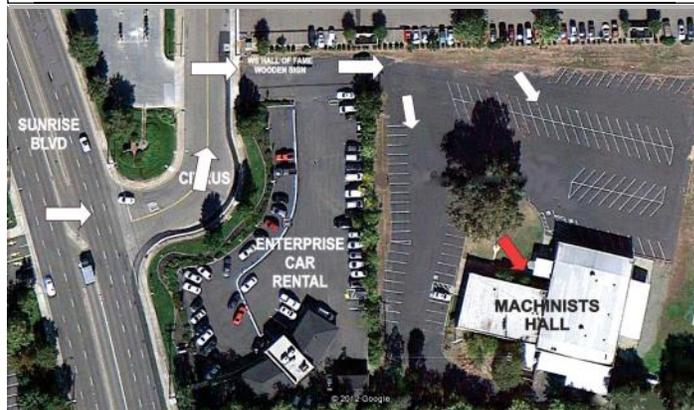
The Western Swing Society holds a music and dance session on the first Sunday of each month, featuring guest bands and artists and jam sets.

1:00 pm to 5:00 pm at The Machinists Hall  
 2749 Sunrise Blvd., Rancho Cordova, CA\*

Donation: \$5 for Members; \$8 for Non-Members

For information, browse to  
[www.westernswingsociety.net](http://www.westernswingsociety.net)

\*The address is Sunrise, but the driveway is on Citrus.



**Driving Instructions to MACHINISTS HALL:** From Hwy 50, take the Sunrise Blvd. South exit and cross two lights (Folsom Blvd. and Trade Center Drive). After crossing Trade Center, be in the left lane and take the next left turn which is Citrus Road. You will see an Enterprise Car Rental lot in front of you. Turn right into the driveway just past Enterprise. You'll see our sign, and you are there. Park, come in and join the fun.