

# SongWritersNotes

The Newsletter for San Diego Songwriters

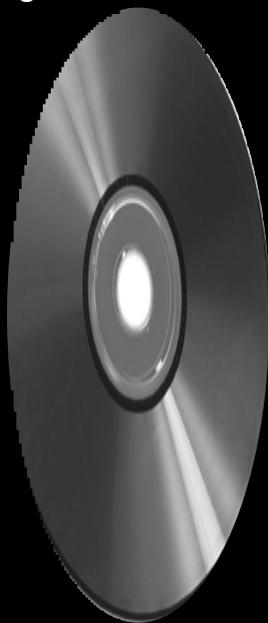
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**Pitch Session Monday, February 28**

# SPIN RECORDS

SDSG is pleased to present a panel of **SPIN Records A&R executives** for our first pitch of the millennium. They will review/critique bands or artists in **all genres**, from **Jazz and Folk**, to **Rock, Country, Acoustic, Instrumentals** and **more**.

**SPIN** is not looking for songs! This label seeks bands or artists with **finished product**, ready to sell. All submissions should be **master quality**.

If you have a record ready to unleash on the world, give it a **SPIN** at the Doubletree Hotel in Hazard Center on February 28. Registration begins at 6:30 PM and closes at 7:00. Admission is **FREE** for SDSG members, \$20.00 for non-members. Pitch submissions are \$10.00 each, maximum two per artist. For more information about pitch sessions, see page 8.

- Tony Taravella

A n E v e n i n g W i t h

# Harriet Schock

Writer of the Grammy-nominated standard "Ain't No Way To Treat A Lady", Harriet Schock will join SDSG **Monday, March 6**, for comment and critique. Harriet will be listening in depth to songs submitted by San Diego writers. Submissions are limited for this special event, so arrive early to assure your song a review. Registration begins at **6:30 PM** at the Doubletree Hotel. Admission is **Free** for SDSG members, \$20 for non-members. Song submission is \$10. See page 4 for more from Harriet Schock and don't miss this session.

- HC Markus

# From the President's Desk . . .

Well the 20th century has come and gone. I happen to be one of the people who believes that the 21st started this year. If you disagree, my apologies. Regardless, the 20th century was a great age for music. It was also a great time for the technology which allows us to hear music. Things have come a long way since Thomas Edison brought us the phonograph in the late 1800s. I wonder if Edison, with all his vision, ever imagined anything like DAT, rock and roll, or internet radio stations? Where will 21st century take us in terms of recording technology? Awesome places, for sure. But where is the music industry going in the new century?



Over the last few years I've heard a lot of complaining and groaning about the state of the music industry. Instead of looking toward the future with hope and enthusiasm, many of my fellow songwriters seem to yearn for "the good old days." We can't go back, of course. Though we don't know what the future will bring, we do know home recording will be easier. Digital equipment that was out of reach a few years ago will be affordable, and more powerful. It will be easy for the average Joe to record his own CD at home and he'll be able to sell it over the internet without the help of a studio, a record label, or even other musicians. This will be great for musicians because we will have the freedom to create whatever we desire and market it to the whole world. On the other hand, consumers may be overwhelmed by the choice they are offered. There will be a lot of nominal-talent "musicians" and "songwriters" out there selling their wares. Just having the latest technology and knowing how to use it does not make one an artist. Talent existed long before synthesizers and computers. How will consumers know which CDs are good and which ones aren't? Can you really tell by listening to a sound byte? The potential fidelity of music played over the internet is high, but until high-speed access is universal, many will be unable to access great sounding music on the web.

Serious artists are now having material reviewed, and then publishing comments from those reviews, on their websites. Of course, there will be those artists who will sink to the lowest common denominator and write lyrics that many people will consider offensive, and there will be plenty of customers who will buy such material. Will a new government agency be created to police CD sales over the internet? Is E-stickering just around the corner?

Having performed live on the internet myself, I have taken an interest in internet radio. I foresee an interesting future. World Music Radio here in San Diego plays music from all over the world, which is highly appropriate because it is LISTENED to by people all over the world. Our "world" is getting smaller, thanks to the web. Not only can we email people half way around the globe, but we can listen to their music. People everywhere have been listening to American Rock and Roll and Jazz for years. But now Americans are listening to music from Africa, Israel, and the Balkans. I have found nothing more inspirational than listening to ethnic music and dissecting rhythms that I never heard before. Perhaps in a few decades we will no longer use the term "world music" because it won't be necessary!

1999 was a good year for SDSG. We had many accomplished guests, and we thank each of them, as well as each of our members, for their support. One thing I know for sure: the guild will keep bringing interesting guests and information about the newest trends in the music business to San Diego.

The SDSG Board and I look forward to serving you for another year, and wish you the best in the year 2000.

*-Tony Taravella*

## What's Going On?

### **FEBRUARY 25, 2000 THE SECOND SEASIDE HALL OPEN MIC SHOWCASE OF THE MILLENNIUM!**

Doors Open/Begin Signing Up 7:00. At 7:30 The Show starts! With special featured performers Karl Anthony and Michael Frost and MCs Steve Ostrow & Annella Faye. Welcome, general audience and all kinds of performers. Maximum of 20 performance sign ups. (1 song, or 5 minute per act) Admission - \$8 General, \$5 Performers. All Drinks and Munchies included - Coffee, Tea, Soda, Bottled Water, Cake, Chips, etc. Seaside Hall, 1010 Second Street South of Encinitas Blvd, West of St. Germaine's Cafe, corner of "I" and Second Street, Encinitas. Sponsored by Seaside Church. **Thanks for playing out loud!**

*- Kristopher Stone*

### **MARCH 11, SAN DIEGO NSAI WORKSHOP PRESENTS SONGWRITER JASON BLUME**

(www.jasonblume.com) Jason has had songs on albums which have sold more than 25 million copies in the past year. Superstars who have recorded his songs include the Grammy-nominated Backstreet Boys and Britney Spears, as well as country music stars Collin Raye, John Berry ("Change My Mind") and the Oak Ridge Boys. Jason is one of only a few songwriters to ever have singles on the Pop, Country and R&B charts. Songwriting seminar and Song Critiques Saturday, March 11, 2000, 10:00 AM-6:00 PM at the Stratford Inn California Room, 710 Camino Del Mar, Del Mar. \$40 NSAI/SGA/SDSG members, \$45 non-members

Call (858-481-5650) for more information. *-Liz Axford*

### **Newsmakers!**

The Guild promotes members who have earned successes locally, nationally or internationally.

Email [HCMarkus@aol.com](mailto:HCMarkus@aol.com) or call the SDSG Hotline and leave a message to share your success story.



# Song Contest!

## SDSG News Makers

### 1999 SDSG Song Contest Prize Winners

Grand Prize	Sunny Hilden	Prayer with No Amen
First Prize	Steve White	Delta Dawn
Second Prize	Alexandre Kaluzhski & Vlad Yelizaroff	Gabrielle
Third Prize	Candice & Stewart Graham	One More Chance
Fourth Prize	Jeff Knapp	Love Goes On
Fifth Prize	Matthew Stewart	Drown
Sixth Prize	Gil Rief	Starting Over
(four winners)	Sunny Hilden	unknown title
	Robert Ganey	Restless Wind
	Judy Kruidenier	You Love Her
Seventh Prize	Paul Montesano	Back to Brazil
(four winners)	Matthew Stewart	Heart of the Hurricane
	Joan Kurland	I Believe
	Charles & Marci Can	Baby's First Words

HC Markus appeared on **World Music Radio** with **Oram Miller** just before Thanksgiving. The two shared an enjoyable chat on the air between the winning songs from the **1999 SDSG Song Contest**. Each of the winning tunes was featured in its entirety on the net-cast, and the folks at the station's studio were impressed with the depth and range expressed. Check out **World Music Radio** at [www.worldmusicradio.org](http://www.worldmusicradio.org) (619) 298-7643

### 1999 SDSG Song Contest Judges

**Rex Benson** is an award-winning songwriter and publisher who has had cuts and placements with Garth Brooks, Kenny Rogers, The Oak Ridge Boys, Tammy Wynette and many others. Rex's Publishing Company, Rex Benson Music has placed the song "Buy Me A Rose" (written by Jim Funk and Erik Hickenlooper) on Kenny Rogers' latest CD, "She Rides Wild Horses."

**Dave Blackburn** is a multi-instrumentalist composer/producer who has engineered and produced Grammy-nominated albums and has worked with many fine San Diego recording artists. Dave owns a powerful digital recording and mastering facility in Fallbrook, CA, where he lives with his wife, jazz vocalist Robin Adler.

Entertainment attorney **David Branfman** is Legal Chair of the San Diego Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences and a member of the State Bar of California's Intellectual Property Section.

**Josquin des Pres** has produced Buckfast Superbee, Mary Dolan, Shuggie, Lisa Sanders and numerous San Diego area local projects. Josquin is currently a staff writer with Sunset Blvd Entertainment. A long-time collaborator with Elton John's lyricist Bernie Taupin, Josquin has numerous covers by international artists.

Publisher of the Music Business Registry ([www.musicregistry.com](http://www.musicregistry.com)) **Ritch Esra** is one of the music industry's most knowledgeable people. Head of West Coast A&R at Arista Records for seven years, Ritch is a walking industry encyclopedia of everybody who's anybody in the music business.

**Harmonica John** cut his blues teeth backing up Tomcat Courtney at the Texas Teahouse in Ocean Beach. A founding member of the San Diego Blues Society, John is well known around San Diego for his harp work.

**Rick LaFave** has 18 years experience with recording, equipment, arranging and performance. He owns R&D Productions, promotes the legendary 'Generator Jam' concerts in the desert and is part owner of Superior Entertainment, a local music production company. Rick somehow finds time to work at Freedom Guitar, too.

As a talent scout for Warner Brothers and agent with Robert Fitzpatrick Corporation, **Art Mitchum** managed the Bee Gees, Sal Mineo and the musical Hair. While with Warner Brothers, he discovered The Association and Tyrone Davis, and as a Theatre specialist for Federal Government, Art produced hundreds of shows across Europe. Art is the founder of The International Entertainers school in San Diego.

Musicologist, musician, author, composer and professor at Mira Costa College Music, **Dr. David McGill** teaches music theory, history and technology. He is the author of Jazz, a jazz-appreciation textbook - now in its 7th edition, as well as Jazz Issues: A Critical History - which deals with the evolutionary study of jazz, and The McGill Ear Trainer for training your ear to hear music critically.

**Nairobi Sailcat** -- producer, Phat-Cat Productions. Former guitarist with Parliament-Funkadelic and Mother Earth, Nairobi has produced and composed for RCA, Sony, Atlantic, and Mercury/Polygram. Nairobi has produced CD's for local Rock, Alternative, and Hip-Hop groups. His CD, "Da Bomb" on Vanguard Records was re-released in January.

**Dona Shaieb** has worked in San Diego radio for 10 years. Dona is Program and Music Director for Sets 102 Radio at 102.1 FM.

Grammy-nominated songwriter **Ellen Silverstein** has written for Grammy-winning artist, Diane Schuur, Billy Griffin (Miracles), Rick Kelly, Axe, Terry Steele (Luther Vandross) and with David Young (Air Supply), Ezra Mohawk (Cyndi Lauper), and many others. Ellen is CEO of Never Off Key Music- a full-service music company- which includes production, development, and consulting.

**THANK YOU TO ALL OUR FINE JUDGES AND CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR WINNERS.**

**SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS AND THE SDSG BOARD FOR PUTTING ON A GREAT SHOW.**

# JUDGING Your Own MATERIAL

by Harriet Schock

*Harriet Schock is a songwriter (Grammy-nominated "Ain't No Way To Treat A Lady"), a recording artist with five solo albums, a performer, a songwriting consultant, teacher and lecturer as well as an author. In 1999, she completed an eleven-city tour with her newly released CD, "Rosebud," signed to Evening Star Music Group, distributed by City Hall Records, and her new book, Becoming Remarkable. Her songs have been recorded by such diverse artists as Smokey Robinson, Roberta Flack, Helen Reddy, Lee Greenwood, Johnny Mathis, Nancy Wilson, Manfred Mann, Carl Anderson, Vesica Pisces, and the Little Mermaid. Her feature film and TV song credits include "The New Adventures of Pippi Longstocking," "Delta Force II," ABC's "The Secret Garden," Motown's "The Last Dragon" and "The Real Life Adventures of Santa Claus," coming out Christmas, 2000. As a songwriting consultant, Harriet teaches and consults with professional and pre-professional songwriters in person, privately and for the Songwriters Guild Foundation in Los Angeles, in seminars and over the internet.*

I HAD A REALIZATION RECENTLY at a songwriters' showcase I was hosting. The talent for judging one's material comes later than the talent for writing it. Having observed for years that becoming a great songwriter was a most formidable task, I assumed nothing could take longer. Even if it took additional time to become a wonderful performer, I thought that would be the last step, that the rest of the package would just fall together. From then on, I thought, it would be a matter of growing in what you had to say and saying it well. If you could do all that, surely you could put a great set together, select your own material for your CDs, and know which songs to put on your compilation demo tapes. But this seems to require another skill, altogether, and just because someone is a great songwriter and an incredible performer, that doesn't mean he has this other skill. It is the skill of judging one's own material, of deciding which song is exceptional and which song is just good. I'll go so far as to say the skill

of telling exceptional from absolutely awful is sometimes missing. Frequently I've heard publishers, producers and record executives say "He/she's inconsistent." Now I realize more than ever what that means. It can mean the songs are not at a consistently high level or that within one song, the quality varies. Have you ever heard a song with a great first verse and chorus, and the second verse is from Mars? I often hear a song that barely makes sense until it gets to the killer chorus, which is wasted on a song with lame verses.

A real record producer, and by that I mean, someone who is wearing the hat of a producer—not simply an engineer who's making it all sound good—a real record producer will choose or help choose the songs on a CD. Even at the level of Michael Jackson, when Quincy was producing him, I heard that Quincy sent Michael back time and time again for more songs. When Jackson was interviewed regarding the success of "Thriller," he commented, "We just found the best melodies we could find..." Well, the "we" included Quincy. And lyrics were also seriously considered. So it's not just neophytes who have problems distinguishing between their songs, in quality.

Nik Venet always chooses the material for his artists, and in many cases, gets the artists to write the needed songs in the first place. Since he's not the writer, Venet feels he has a perspective the writer can't possibly have. John Stewart, Fred Neil and Dory Previn always looked to him to choose the material for this very reason. In the case of "California Bloodlines," John Stewart had 30 or 40 songs to choose from. Venet was looking for just the right short stories to make up the novel. Even though John's song, "Daydream Believer" was a hit, it wasn't right for that album, so Venet didn't include it. The vision to see the entire forest is often difficult for the artist



who's so close to all the trees. Frequently a more external perspective is necessary. That could account for why so many of the self-produced CDs out there have no continuity; and there is a wide inconsistency in quality between cuts.

Some writer/artists depend upon their live audiences to give them feedback. And this feedback is valuable, to be sure. But what works in concert is sometimes quite different from what will work on a CD. I got talked into recording a show-stopper type of song on my third album, and I really regretted it. It was humorous and the crowds loved it. But it no more matched the rest of the songs on the album than a pink boa would go with a black suit.

Some of the reasons I think writers fall in love with their homely children are: 1) They're new and every new song is the best song you've ever written . . . 2) It feels really good to sing it . . . 3) The circumstances of writing it were exceptional (e.g. It was the only good thing to come out of a bad relationship. . . . It was the first song you wrote with so-n-so. . . . It was the only song you wrote on your vacation in Bermuda. . . . It evokes lots of pictures of your life you like to look at, but which you left out of the song . . . etc.) 4) You've been asked to do a 30 minute set, and you only have 20 minutes worth of good songs.

Although judgment is something gradually acquired and not easily taught, I will suggest a possible way to start. Find your best song—the song that never lets you down, or anyone else down. It could be the song everyone asks for, the one you would show someone who really wanted to know you as a songwriter, but had only 3 or 4 minutes. It's not necessarily the most "hit" sounding song; but it the song that captures most people when they hear it. Ask yourself what's in that song. What is it about the melody, the chords, the rhythm, the story, the pictures, the subject matter—really look at that song in depth. Get into the experience someone has when they hear that song. Does that magic occur with your other songs? If so, to what degree? Use your magical song as a measuring stick. Maybe all the others don't come up to that highest mark, but is there substantial merit, in how it affects listeners and you? You be the judge.

*This article is excerpted from Harriet Schock's new book, BECOMING REMARKABLE, published by Blue Dolphin, available nationwide. For further information about her book, CDs, teaching or consultation, go to [harrietschock.com](http://harrietschock.com) or call (323) 934-5691.*

## ***Personnel Department***

**MEMBERSHIP MANAGER** SDSG is looking for someone to assist with the Guild's membership database and mailings. Please call the SDSG Hotline to volunteer.

**SONGWRITER, GUITARIST**, looking to collaborate with other songwriter musicians for feedback and improvement. Could definitely use a real vocalist.  
Call Karl at 619-281-9664 karlnw@aol.com

**SONGWRITER, COMPOSER** from Switzerland (french and english speaker) is looking for a lyricist collaborator to write english lyrics in the Pop, Top 40 style.  
Yves Durr (858) 273-2151 Ouarg@hotmail.com

Mail your ad of 40 words or less to San Diego Songwriter's Guild, 3368 Governor Drive, Suite F-326, San Diego, CA. Or, you can email your ad directly to HCMarkus@aol.com Be sure to indicate your phone number so that we can contact you if there are problems.  
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## Dana LeeWood on Lilith Fair

The professionalism that I viewed while participating in Lilith Fair, San Diego was incredible. These people had there acts together! This was a job - and not an easy one. From the road crew to the artists to the vendors to the tech crew, everyone who traveled on this tour exhibited an incredible work ethic. Each person in the production had a valued role. For a short time I was a partner in a dance that, to succeed, required all to participate. My partners were *wonderful*.

I had the awe-inspiring experience of meeting Sara and so many other incredible artists... I watched Lisa Sanders run from one meeting to the next and it was a blast to be on stage at the end of the show with Sheryl Crow and Sara and all the amazing people who were part of the tour. I also thought it was a hilarious to not recognize K.D. Lang... she was wonderful to not draw attention to herself.

After the last song we were all rushed off the stage... everyone hauled buns to the buses. I mean a FAST walk - Move it, move it!

I watched Sara give a check to a local women's shelter. She was very passionate, as were the other artists, about making this world better. She uses her talent to return what has been given.

# Stories from the Trenches

## IS PROCRASTINATION SABOTAGING YOUR CAREER?

**The definition of procrastination is "to put off intentionally and habitually"** according to Webster's Dictionary. And when you procrastinate, you go nowhere fast. Procrastination is very different from pacing yourself and taking time for yourself between tasks. Procrastination leads to immobilization. Taking time to yourself can serve as a bridge between your daily creative lives; it can give you a place to let your ideas simmer and take shape- like a warm-up before a workout. For instance you might want to clean up the clutter around your desk, or tidy your studio before getting started. Or, you may spend time gathering materials such as a rhyming dictionary and/or a songbook to study chord progressions or do a few stretches or breathing exercises. But anything longer than ten or fifteen minutes- especially on a regular basis- should send up a red flag. If you find yourself paying bills, cleaning the entire house and deleting old e-mails from the in-box instead of writing, then you're in trouble.

Procrastinators are addicted to the low-level anxiety that procrastination produces; it's what they know - it's their comfort zone. It's easier for them to obsess about what they aren't accomplishing than to take action. It's terrifying to face the proverbial blank page. It's much easier to sit and think about what the odds are of succeeding and convincing yourself that it's not even worth trying. The procrastinator asks him/herself such questions as: "What if it's not good enough?" and "What if I never make it?" And the kicker is that procrastination is self-fulfilling. If you don't do the work, you can't succeed and then you get to be right that it's not good enough and/or it's too hard to make it. But the worst part, is that procrastination robs you of the joy and enthusiasm that led you to become a creative person in the first place.

To stop procrastinating means to be willing to risk change- to try something new. It means being willing to face your fears and move through them, one step at a time. The way to do this is by taking action. Some people think they have to take giant leaps when, in fact, they only have to take one small step at a time. (In my experience the hare makes more noise but it's the tortoise who ultimately gets the rewards.) Unfortunately, one of the problems with procrastination is that people don't always realize that they are suffering from this paralyzing problem. They believe that they are taking action when in fact they are just keeping busy. Years can go by frustrating the creative person into believing that it is his or her talent that is missing, when in fact they are suffering the long- term effects of chronic procrastination.

Try to identify which tasks are time-burners and which are career builders. By doing so, you can drastically accelerate the pace at which your career is moving. Manage your time and work on what motivates you to procrastinate. If your work life is more efficient and fulfilling, and you focus on your goals, you have the best shot at success. - *Ellen*

*Ellen Silverstein is a Grammy-nominated songwriter, and producer. She is CEO of Never Off Key Music a production and artist/songwriter development company. You can reach her at (858)259-8831 or ellen@neveroffkey.com Her website: www.neveroffkey.com*

I see this attitude on a local level all the time. It shows a breed of people that I have had the honor of being around for many years.

As for the life on the road, well I guess you have to weigh the whole thing out. I have talked to many successful artists who have stopped touring. I asked them why, and the answer was always the same. "I missed my family." So it takes a lot of sacrifice, not only to get to

the top but to remain there.

I will never forget Lilith Fair for many reasons but, of course, the greatest moment was my time on the stage, singing with Lisa, the audience supporting us every step of the way!

Dana LeeWood performs with her band throughout San Diego. Dana won the Grand Prize in SDSG's 1998 Song Contest. She's a class act.

# Songwriters' Events Review

SDSG closed out the century with some great meetings. From a discussion and pitch session concerning music for films and TV, to Tech Talk to the business of music, each session allowed our members to gain the perspective and insight which can only be achieved through personal contact.

We thank our guests for generously sharing their time & expertise with us in San Diego.

PEN Music's **Michael Eames & Kelly Jones** October 4

Producers/Engineers **Nairobi Sailcat** and **HC Markus** October 11

Songwriters/Mentors/Authors

**Pete and Pat Luboff** November 1, and **John Braheny** December 6

We would be remiss if we didn't mention the support of SDSG's members throughout the world's finest city, as well as SDSG's staff. We couldn't do it without you!

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# Tony Taravella Crosses Borders With New Release

SDSG President Tony Taravella draws a broad panorama in his sophomore release "On the Border Between Two Worlds." By blending the sounds of Americana with shadings of jazz and rock, Taravella sows the seeds of his unique, personal vision. Tony takes us from the hell of a lonely GI to the gates of eternity in this musical journey. Along the way, we wander through the smooth acoustic jazz of "Shadows," a beautiful reflection on the space between extremes. A world of sorrow and bittersweet illuminated by the bright light of hope is revealed in the anthemic "Hungry Children Cry," while "Building the Union Pacific" returns us to a genre familiar to Taravella fans: the loping sound of the western railroad. The performances on this recording, particularly pieces featuring solo acoustic guitar, are dynamic and moving. With his fresh perspectives on traditional folk elements, Tony Taravella delivers a critical commentary on American lifestyles, tempered by simple truths. - HC Markus

**ON THE BORDER BETWEEN TWO WORLDS IS AVAILABLE FROM BOUND FOR GLORY RECORDS**  
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## " THE PITCH SESSION "

**PRODUCERS, PUBLISHERS, A&R REPRESENTATIVES, MANAGERS and ARTISTS** may screen for a specific recording project. They use these events to find songs, singers, musicians, etc. Our guests may critique your song and give you valuable feedback on how you could improve upon it if time permits. The guest may "pick-up" your song which means they would like to hear it again for further consideration.

### Submission Rules

- One song per Guild Member will be listened to before those of Non-Members.
- On exceptionally busy nights, we reserve the option to limit the number of tapes submitted by an individual to any event. This option applies equally to those members submitting tapes by mail. We ask that writers number their tapes, #1 being your first choice, #2 you second, so that we may play them according to your priorities.
- Due to time limits, we cannot guarantee that your song will be heard in the Pitch Session.

### Fees

- For the admission price of \$10 per song (limit 1 to 2 songs per writer, varies with guests), you may enter your song(s) for the Pitch Session. Members may sign up tapes in advance.
- If you want more than one song in any event, it is \$10 for each additional tape.
- You may join The San Diego Songwriters Guild on the night of an event for a \$45 yearly membership fee. Non-members are charged a \$20 door fee in addition to tape submission fees. The door fee must be paid by non-members wishing to pitch songs.

### How It Works

- Bring neatly typed lyric sheet and cassette cued to the beginning of the song you want heard.
- Tapes will not be accepted for the Pitch Session after the start of the event.
- Be sure to include your name and phone number on both your lyric sheet and your tape because they may get separated.
- The Pitch Session is limited to 70 tapes. Once event is filled, sign up is closed, even if the event has not started. SDSG reserves the right to limit the number of submissions further.
- When you check in your tape, sign in all names of writers, song title and phone number, so that others who hear your song can contact you.
- Tapes will be referred to by song title. Writers may or may not remain anonymous during the Pitch session depending on our guest for that event.

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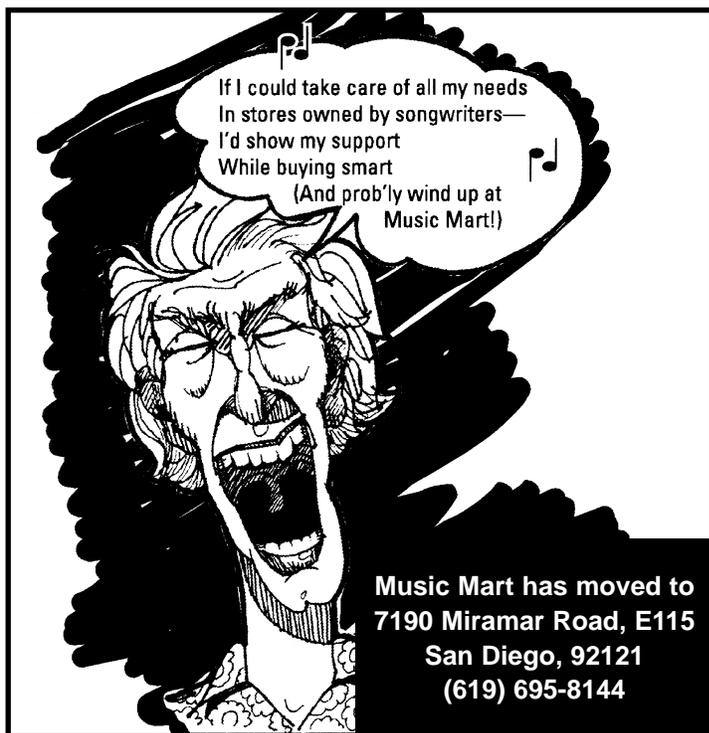
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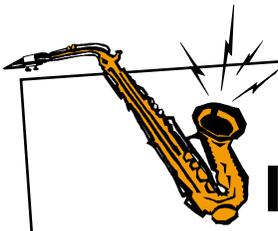


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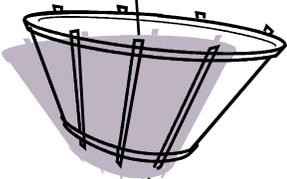
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