

# News from PICKERING BEND

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## Christmas 2009



## Way Down Upon the Suwannee River... Approaching Forty Years



November was beautiful in northern Florida this year at the Suwannee Dulcimer & Autoharp Retreat. Held at the Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center, this two-day event featured concerts and workshops by many hammered dulcimer, mountain dulcimer, and autoharp performers from all over the country. Ivan had about a dozen enthusiastic students participating in the autoharp workshops which covered all levels from new players to advanced.

The Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center is located in White Springs, Florida, near the intersection of I-10 and I-75. White Springs is one of those picturesque, sleepy Florida towns with lots of charm. Spanish moss hangs from the multitude of Live Oak trees so typical of Florida.

The Suwannee River, made famous by Stephen Foster (spelled "Swanee" in *Old Folks at Home*), runs lazily through the town and along one border of the Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center. Nothing could be more relaxing than sitting on the banks and listening to the birds singing.

While in White Springs, Ivan had a delicious peanut butter pie that made his toes curl. Upon returning, he went to work making some changes in the recipe and came up with the following.

### Ivan's Toe-Curling Peanut Butter Banana Pie

#### Ingredients

- 1 14 oz. can of sweetened condensed milk
- 1 8 oz. package of Philadelphia® Cream Cheese
- 1 cup of chunky peanut butter
- 1 8 oz. tub of Extra Creamy CoolWhip®
- 2 8" ready-made Oreo® Cookie pie crusts (or chocolate graham pie crusts)
- 2 bananas
- Chocolate topping
- Caramel topping

#### Directions

Beat together sweetened condensed milk and cream cheese until smooth. Add peanut butter and beat again until smooth. Fold whipped topping into mixture. Quarter two bananas lengthwise and slice into small chunks. Fold into mixture. Fill pie crusts with mixture. Drizzle chocolate and caramel topping over pie. Chill before serving.

#### CAUTION:

This pie lives up to its name and it will curl your toes. If you choose to make any substitutions with "Lite" ingredients, you should do so at your own risk. It won't be the same. If you have to make "Lite" substitutions, you shouldn't be eating this pie anyway. Enjoy! 🍷

January 31, 2010, will mark the fortieth wedding anniversary for Nancy and Ivan. They were married at her parents' historic Bucks County home in Newtown, Pennsylvania. Although the weather outside was cold and dreary, the atmosphere inside was warm and inviting as family and friends gathered to celebrate the occasion. After the ceremony, Nancy and Ivan dashed to the airport for a flight to Miami, Florida, where Ivan's family met to greet the newlyweds. On the next day, the couple left for a week in Nassau, Bahamas, where they enjoyed the warm sunshine and beautiful waters. They stayed at a condominium given to them for the week by a friend of Ivan's whom he met aboard the *Michelangelo* on a transatlantic crossing to Europe in 1969. Upon arrival at the condo, there was a bottle of chilled champagne waiting for them.

Looking back over the past forty years, Nancy and Ivan have been quoted as saying, "It's been the happiest ten years of our lives!" 🍷

### Three New Videos On YouTube

Hear three new offerings this year from Ivan on YouTube: The Cigar Box Autoharp, The Star-Spangled Banner, and Autumn Leaves. Just go to [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) and type "Ivan Stiles" into the search window to find all the videos. 🍷



## Carrie and Derek Have a Great House with a Yard, Lots of Room

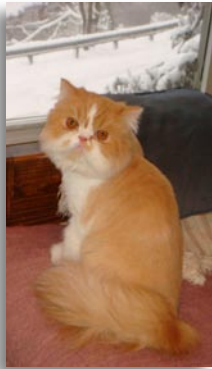


Fiancés Carrie Weiss and Derek Stiles have moved to a nice house in the Baltimore suburbs. She teaches and he still does purchasing for steel company Ackerman &

Baynes. They have a cute part Border Collie named Max and the ever-adorable orange and white male Persian, Wickett, after the Ewok.

Derek converted to Judaism this year. His naming ceremony will be held soon at B'Nai Jacob in Phoenixville. His Hebrew name will be Hillel. (He was a well-respected rabbi. Legend has it that Hillel was originally a wood-cutter by trade who only came to Jewish study later in life.)

The couple plan to marry in July, 2011, at the Inner Harbor, in Baltimore. It should be a beautiful wedding. The colors are black and ivory with a dash of fuchsia. Ivan is designing the invitations and place cards. 🌿



## Ouch! A Broken Humerus Is Not So Humorous for Nancy

She wants to say she fell off her Harley, but she really just slipped on wet steps wearing platform flip-flops. Now, there's a titanium rod from shoulder to elbow with three pins in it. It usually only hurts when it's cold and wet. She spent a whole month not spinning or knitting and had to take two weeks off from teaching French, Spanish, and English at Upatinas School.

Ivan underwent surgery this year where the doctor re-sectioned the left shoulder after removing a bone spur. He's still in pain, but it does improve on a monthly basis. He really wants to move to Florida to escape the Pennsylvania winters. He also especially needs a roadie to schlepp his stuff around at gigs.

The two of them are looking forward to the Mountain Laurel Autoharp Gathering in June, where Ivan is a featured performer. Nancy is hoping for a trip to the shore, preferably Ocean City, New Jersey. Last summer, Nancy and her mother, Becky, had a week in a condo right on the boardwalk, up at the quiet end. The shore has amazing restorative powers for several members of the family. It's so nice of Daddy Ken to pay for this vacation! 🌿



## Onion Flats and Green Design Take the Lead in Ginni's Life



Ginni has had a great year since graduating from the Art Institute last winter. She still helps manage various aspects of Onion Flats, the green design/build company

in Kensington for whom she interned last year. Now she lives in the first Leed Certified green house in Philadelphia. It's modern and comfortable. Among other eco-friendly features, it traps rainwater to be used to water the garden. Clever! Her house mates are wonderful, including a dog to keep her three cats on their toes.

Recently Ginni did her first solar panel installation in Northern Liberties. She designed it and went up on the roof to help install it.

One of the coolest things Ginni does is drive around in a Zap! three-wheeled electric truck that goes about 30 mph tops. It's great for getting around town even if it can't go on the expressway.

Ginni continues to crochet. (She recently made a colorful hexagonal afghan.) She also makes jewelry for super gifts.

She has many nice friends and is happy in her Fishtown neighborhood. She'll be a bridesmaid in Carrie and Derek's wedding. 🌿

## Sawyers Break World Record at the New York Musical Saw Festival



The Seventh Annual New York Musical Saw Festival was held this year at the Trinity Church in Astoria, Queens, New York. A total of 53 sawyers (including Ivan) took part in breaking the world record for the "Largest Musical Saw Ensemble" for the Guinness Book of World Records. Shubert's *Ave Maria* was the composition chosen for the ensemble and was accompanied by the impressive church

organ. The former title was held by a group of 27 sawyers from Poland.

In addition to the record-breaking ensemble, a number of original tunes composed especially for musical saw were performed by featured sawyers from around the country. This was followed by individual presentations and a Chorus of the Saws. The event ended with a musical saw workshop. 🌿

