

STRUM notes



As a child, Randi Struxness learned to play the ukulele at summer camp. But the uke was soon replaced with piano and dance lessons and a host of other childhood interests. A few decades later, her husband Paul gave her a ukulele for her birthday. She dabbled with it again but was just too busy being a working mother to commit much time to it. The uke gathered dust.

Three years ago with extra time on her hands after her retirement from teaching in public schools, Randi dusted off that ukulele, and a fire was lit! She enjoyed strumming so much that she was determined to share the joy.

Hoping to find a couple of friends to play with her, she announced in church one Sunday that she was learning to play the ukulele, and if anyone was interested in learning too, see her after church. She got her wish ... a dozen people signed up, and **STRUM** was born! Within a month, **STRUM** began to perform during the worship service at North Oak Christian Church.

Randi's husband Paul also caught the uke fever when he discovered the ukulele bass (U-bass). The deep bass rhythms added another dimension to the group and allowed for an expanded song list which now includes rock and roll, blues, pop, Broadway, swing and Hawaiian tunes.

Over the past three years, **STRUM** has evolved into a performance ukulele band with 16 active strummers from all over the Northland. One of its members, Debbie Rommel, has been Kansas City's finest hula dancer for many years, and she brings the Hawaiian songs to life through the lovely medium of hula. The band also has a flutist, guitarist and several songwriters.

STRUM has played at ArtFeast, River Market Uke Slam, Porchfest, Friday in the Park, retirement homes, ice cream socials, luaus and other events. Randi and Paul also appear as a duo playing covers and their original songs. They are active members of the Ukulele Fight Club of Kansas City and enjoy being a part of KC's growing ukulele community.

