

Troubadours

PJ Elliott has a new CD release — "Under the Influence: Drinking Songs Vol. 1." These are all covers of classic drinking songs by the likes of Willie Nelson, Grateful Dead, Tom Paxton and David Allan Coe. You should never skip Jimmy Buffett, so his ode to hangovers, "My Head Hurts, My Feet Slink, and I Don't Love Jesus," is on here too.

If you are cringing at the lack of political correctness, that's OK with PJ. Those two words do not appear anywhere in his huge list of songs. He is and has always been a free spirit, a professional musician alternating between California and alternate New York, making a living ("more or less" he'll tell you) with a guitar and microphone.

He's living in Wayne County these days, so he and his wife are catching up with him more often. He's usually in Hammond-sport, Sodus Point and Naples, and sometimes in Clifton Springs and Waterloo.

He let me jam with him on some old blues tunes recently at Lizard's in Waterloo, and that was a good time.



So I'm driving around on a Sunday afternoon with the car on a WEOS, the Hobart (and William Smith) station is airing a National Public Radio show featuring a female singer.

The songs sound familiar, like I should know them, but I don't. The voice is pure and clear. I grew up with the stylings of Joni Mitchell and Joan Baez; for all I know this could be some of their early work. Whoever is singing is a welcome change from the alternative performers who whine with nasal tones, repeat words ad nauseum, and inject primal screams into their songs.

The show's host talked about the singer-songwriter from the Hudson Valley region who is a wife and mom and wrote all the songs on her CD, "Lonesome Sunbeam." Still didn't register with me.

The radio show closed with "This is 'Women in Music' and you've been listening to Jen Clapp." Got it. I do know who she is and I have listened to this album.

Some of you know her too.



Chuck Agonito
Good Times

During her years at Marcus Whitman, she was Jenny Clapp, the quiet student who did not sing and play her Harmony guitar all over the place. She does now.

These days you can find Jen Clapp in clubs and coffee houses throughout the northeast. She's done Manhattan and Boston, sometimes solo, more often with her band which includes her husband, Dan Fisherman, on percussion.

So it was a special treat, and a very good time, when she recently played for family, friends and even former classmates at Geneva's Red Brick Inn. She thanked her mom for arranging the event — you probably know her too — *Alaine Espenscheid*.

It was raining outside. Jen Clapp's soft, sometimes husked, soprano drew the audience into her music and lyrics. The refrain to her title song perfectly described our evening:

*Like a lonesome beam
Persisting through the gray
Unexpected at the end of the
day*

— Jen Clapp,
"Lonesome Sunbeam"



Jen Clapp played recently at the Red Brick Inn in Geneva.

Susan Poulin takes the stage at Bristol Valley Theater this weekend.

Comedienne returns to Naples

NAPLES — Bristol Valley Theater continues its "Swing Into Spring" series of performances with the much-anticipated return of comedienne Susan Poulin in "Shutting Up Peggy Lee," at 7 p.m. Saturday and 2 p.m. Sunday at 151 S. Main St.

Poulin, with her collaborator, husband Gordon Carlisle, has had local audiences in stitches with "Ida's Hair in a Yard Sale," "Spousal Deafness and Other Bones of Contention" and "In my Head I'm Thin" at Bristol Valley Theater in past seasons. Her latest effort, "Shutting Up Peggy Lee," finds Poulin facing a landmark birthday, and while she thought she was happy with her life, the strains of Peggy Lee's, "Is That All There Is?" have started reverberating in her head, and now she's not so sure.

"The show is not really about becoming middle aged," said Poulin. "It's about reaching that point in your life where you feel like you've arrived, then realizing, 'Now what?' Well, maybe it is about being middle aged. Only funnier."

Selected by Portland Magazine as one of the "Ten Most Intriguing People in Maine," writer/performer Susan Poulin has been creating and touring her original theatrical productions for 16 years. She was a featured performer at "The Mirth Canal" and "The Mirth of Venus" at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston, The Maine Festival, the Minneapolis Fringe Theater Festival and Portland, Maine's Cassandra Project. Her work has been supported by the NH State Council on the Arts, the Maine Arts Commission and the Maine Humanities Council. Poulin's essays have been published in the Portsmouth Herald, the online journal "moe pi toe" and the Twin Farms Anthology, and heard on Maine and New Hampshire Public Radio. Ticket prices are \$5 for children, \$10 for adults.

Bristol Valley Theater's "Swing Into Spring" series concludes May 23 with a "BVT for Kids" presentation of the dance troupe Footworks: Steps Around the World. For details, reservations or tickets, call (585) 374-9032 or visit www.bvtnaples.org.

Submitted photo

MAY 16 FOOTWORKS SHOWCASE 2009
 HEAD OVER HEELS
 MAY 22-23 MONSTERS vs. ALIENS
 MAY 23 THE DIVERTERS
 MAY 26-27 OPEN AUDITIONS FOR THE HADDOCK SWIVER
 MAY 29-30 THE CLASS
 MAY 30 BEATLEMANIA NOW
 JUNE 6 GOMORRAH
 JUNE 6 OPEN AUDITIONS FOR GREASE
 SMITH OPERA HOUSE
 THE SMITH.ORG
 THE SMITH COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES