

# Marty Golanka



## **Guitar League member since:**

I'm not sure exactly when I joined, but I think it was the fall of 2008. Juan Junco introduced me to Guitar League and I'll always be grateful.

## **When did you start playing guitar?**

On Christmas Day 1965, there was an acoustic guitar from K-Mart that I believe cost \$5.00. It was to be shared by my two sisters and me. It had a lesson book with it so my sister figured out how to tune it and play the melody to jingle bells and showed me how. Since both my sisters played piano, and were a little older than me, they knew how to read music so it was expected that they'd learn the guitar and teach me but it didn't happen that way.

## **What was your motivation to learn the instrument?**

The guitar sat in a corner until the following June when one of my friends came over with his guitar and I had my first jam session on the porch. We played the opening lick to Satisfaction for a couple hours that day and thought we were rock stars. After a few more days of the Satisfaction Jam, Mom suggested I take lessons. I took lessons at the local music store for about a year and a half, then quit because I didn't like what they were teaching me. That's when I discovered I could teach myself to play by ear and learn all the music that I loved. Back then it was largely Beatles, Stones, Who, some one-hit wonders and of course The Monkees.

## **What style(s) do you play?**

I'm mostly a Rock and Blues player, but have dabbled in jazz, country, bluegrass, funk and anything else that catches my attention and touches my soul. I love to play slide guitar which I initially learned from the Allman Brothers Live at the Fillmore album. My own style tries to fuse some of those genres together. The goal is to create something that will touch your soul. It may sound corny, but it's my goal.

## **What make/model guitar(s) do you play?**

My main guitars right now are a Taylor Acoustic 6-string, Taylor 12-String, Fender Strat Ultra, a Line 6 Variax (modeling guitar) and a resonator. I've got several other guitars, but those are my main ones. Over the years I've played many others, but I like the feel of a Fender neck and scale and I think the Taylors are the most stable acoustic guitars I've found...they just stay in tune even when using a capo. The Variax is a great guitar for a gig because you can instantly dial up the sounds of your favorite guitars as needed. The Strat plays like a dream.

## **What kind of strings do you like?**

I've used tons of different brands over the years, but now I mostly use D'addario phosphor bronze acoustic strings with a 0.011 high E string. For electric, Ernie Balls are my old standby with a 0.009 high E string. Over the past couple years, I've also gotten to like Elixirs for both acoustic and electric. They sound great and last a long time.

## **Do you play out?**

I love to play out but haven't done much lately. Ideally, I'd like to do a gig a month. When I'm playing out I sing and play my best and I feel like I'm 18 again. I love being in front of an audience and sharing my music with them. Depending on the situation, it can be stressful and it certainly demands every ounce of energy that you can summon, but when you're in the middle of it, it's the next best thing to heaven.

## **Do you like to jam with others?**

Yes I do. A few years ago I had a friend who would have bonfires in his backyard and invite all his musician friends. We'd jam, sing and play until our fingers were sore and our voices were worn out. It was a blast. Jamming is a great way to meet and get to collaborate with other musicians. You can never have enough musical friends so why not jam a bit and make some more.

## **What is your practice routine?**

When I was younger my practice routine was simply to put on a record and play along with it, sometimes to learn the intricacies and sometimes just to jam. Now it depends on what I'm trying to learn. If I'm trying to learn a new song, I'll usually start by playing along with it...or finding a YouTube lesson that helps me get going if it's something more complex. I'll play it almost every day until I start to get comfortable with it. If I'm prepping for a solo gig, I'll make my set list and play through it top to bottom over and over until I think I'm ready, and then practice some more. Of course I never really think I'm ready, there's always something I can do better, so I practice right up to the night before the gig. If I'm prepping for a gig with a band, for example Short-Term Memory Loss, we'll schedule rehearsals as needed to run through the set list and of course I practice in between rehearsals. When playing with a band, I'll often practice my lead guitar parts or other embellishments (not the whole song) so I can either improve them or keep them sharp. Unfortunately, when I don't have a gig, my motivation for practicing tends to fall off. I definitely practice more when I have a short-term goal in front of me.

## **What are your current goals? How does GL support them?**

I'm coming back to Guitar League now to help motivate me to play more, meet some new musicians to collaborate with, learn some new things about playing guitar and help out where I can. Guitar League supports all of this. I'm always looking for opportunities to play music, listen to music, learn music and share what I've learned.

Just attending Guitar League meetings and interacting with members and presenters helps support all these goals. Guitar League meetings are the friendliest place to make these kinds of connections because everyone wants you to succeed and appreciates your effort.