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SECTION  
**E**

# CNY

*Life and leisure  
in Central New York*



Courtesy of Jeffrey Pepper Rodgers

# Guitarist Steps Back into the Spotlight

## Guitar League introduces Jeffrey Pepper Rodgers to CNY audiences

**By Mark Bialczak**  
Staff writer

**T**he Central New York music scene invigorates Jeffrey Pepper Rodgers.

He's plugged in with the Folkus Project crowd, fans who gather at least a couple times each month to appreciate the national folk music acts that organization brings to Central New York. He has joined open-mike jam sessions at the Dinosaur Bar-B-Que.

"I find a lot of people doing creative things and receptive to newcomers," Rodgers says.

Add Rodgers to the mix.

After three years of what he calls "a

mixed bag of teaching, writing and playing," Rodgers has decided to pump up the performance portion of his life.

Central New York Guitar League members will get an earful of the singer-songwriter-guitarist at this month's meeting, 7 p.m. Monday at the Center for the Arts on East Genesee Street.

Rodgers will have plenty to share as the spotlight guest. He'll draw on his experience as an author and radio commentator. While living in San Francisco, Rodgers was the founding editor of Acoustic Guitar magazine. To this day, he's a contributor to National Public Radio.

And he can talk about the interviews he conducted for his book, "Rock Troubadours: Conversations on the Art and

Craft of Songwriting," (String Letter Publishing). Talking musician-to-musician with Paul Simon, Jerry Garcia, Dave Matthews, Ani DiFranco and more, Rodgers says he broke down walls.

For example:

"With the Joni Mitchell interview, she's one of the most innovative guitar players of our time," Rodgers says.

"When it was established that that was all I wanted to talk about, we talked for three hours straight. There was so much she wanted to expound upon. It's a thrill to facilitate that, what (the musicians) have to share."

Living in San Francisco, he had to meet Garcia, who started the legendary

### The details

**What:** Jeffrey Pepper Rodgers plays for the Central New York Guitar League.

**When:** 7 p.m. Monday.

**Where:** Center for the Arts, 728 E. Genesee St., Syracuse.

**Guitar League:** New members are welcome. Information is available at [www.guitarleague.com](http://www.guitarleague.com) or by calling 689-6242. Admission is \$5 per monthly meeting or \$50 per year.

**About Rodgers:** Rodgers, 42, is a native of Morristown, N.J. He moved to Central New York with his wife, Cecilia Van Hollen, and their two children, 7 and 12 years old, in 2003.

**Busy man:** Rodgers wrote "Rock Troubadours," which features his interviews with Jerry Garcia, Ani DiFranco, Dave Matthews, Joni Mitchell and Paul Simon about songwriting. He was founding editor of Acoustic Guitar magazine and reports on music for National Public Radio. He teaches writing and editing at Syracuse University's S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications.

**Back to the music:** Rodgers says he's jump-starting his performance career in 2007 with live shows and two CD projects. Besides the Guitar League appearance, he will play at 6 p.m. Feb. 9 at Common Grounds in Cazenovia.

On the Internet:

[www.jeffreypepperrogers.com](http://www.jeffreypepperrogers.com).

# Kick-starting Rodgers' career

## KICK-STARTING, FROM PAGE E-1

Grateful Dead in that city's Haight Ashbury neighborhood. The two talked in the studio of Garcia's good friend and frequent musical partner, David Grisman.

"Grisman's studio was a refuge for Jerry Garcia," Rodgers says. "It's where he got away from the craziness. There, he was so warm, almost childlike in his love for the music."

And they can hear his acoustic guitar and folk music voice, too.

Rodgers was part of the San Francisco scene, too, recording and performing in the band Heavy Wood with his brother, Andy.

Since moving to Fayetteville in 2003 when his wife, Cecilia Van Hollen, accepted a job teaching anthropology at Syracuse University, Rodgers has concentrated on writing and educating.

Now he's ready to share his music.

"Right now I'm feeling energized by getting up there and playing. I want to write more, meet more people, work on recording projects," Rodgers says.

Dick Ward, organizer of the Central New York Guitar League, is glad to give him that chance.

They met when the Guitar League was presenting John Knowles, who stayed at Ward's Elbridge home. Rodgers wanted to interview Knowles for *Guitar Teacher* magazine.

Ward invited Rodgers over and listened to the interview. Rodgers' well-spoken manner and obvious enthusiasm for his subjects earned him a spot on Ward's list of future guest performers.

"He has all the credentials in the world," Ward says. "I know the guys and girls will be interested in some of the anecdotes from his career. We also want to hear him play. That's where we learn and get our inspiration to practice hard."

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Courtesy of Jeffrey Pepper Rodgers

**GUITARIST** Jeffrey Pepper Rodgers performs at 7 p.m. Monday at the monthly meeting of the Central New York Guitar League.