

**Mill Valley Oral History Program**  
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Historical Society and the Mill Valley  
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**AUSTIN DE LONE**

**An Oral History Interview  
Conducted by Debra Schwartz in 2016**

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TITLE: Oral History of Austin de Lone  
INTERVIEWER: Debra Schwartz  
DESCRIPTION: Transcript, 17 pages  
INTERVIEW DATE: July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016

In this oral history, musician and songwriter Austin de Lone recounts his musical career and his decades-long residence in Mill Valley. Born outside of Philadelphia in 1946, Austin started piano lessons at the age of 12 and took up the guitar at 16. In 1969, after a stint at Harvard, he formed the band Eggs Over Easy with Jack O'Hara and Brien Hopkins. Austin recounts being a young musician in New York and London in the late 1960s, pioneering what would subsequently be called "pub rock" in England. In 1972, he moved to Mill Valley with his band, and was immediately struck by the "fantastic mix" of people who then inhabited the town. Austin reminisces about Mill Valley's bars in the 1970s, especially the Old Mill Tavern and the Sweetwater, and describes the local music scene during that culturally dynamic period. Austin concludes his oral history with a discussion of his family life and some reflections on how Mill Valley has changed since he made it his home.

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## Oral History of Austin de Lone

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**Oral History of Austin de Lone**  
**July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

**Editor's note:** This transcript has been reviewed by the interviewee, Austin de Lone, and has been edited for clarity and accuracy.

**00:05 Debra Schwartz:** Today is July 7, 2016, and I am sitting here with Austin de Lone. Thank you, Austin —

**00:16 Austin De Lone:** Thank you.

**00:16 Debra Schwartz:** For coming to sit down. My name is Debra Schwartz, and I am interviewing you on behalf of the Mill Valley Historical Society and the Mill Valley Library.

**00:25 Austin De Lone:** Fantastic.

**00:26 Debra Schwartz:** I really appreciate you taking time out of your day to tell us your story. To share with us your experiences of living in the area, and the amazing people you've met in the many years you've been here.

**00:38 Austin De Lone:** Great.

**00:39 Debra Schwartz:** Okay. So Austin, may I call you Austin?

**00:42 Austin De Lone:** Please do.

**00:42 Debra Schwartz:** Austin. How about a little contextual information. Where are you from, where were you raised?

**00:49 Austin De Lone:** I was born and raised outside Philadelphia. Born at the Bryn Mawr hospital, and lived there until I went off to college and then lived there no more.

**01:03 Debra Schwartz:** So you went off to college where?

**01:05 Austin De Lone:** Harvard.

**01:06 Debra Schwartz:** Harvard?

**01:06 Austin De Lone:** Mm-hmm.

**01:07 Debra Schwartz:** So you're born what year?

**01:08 Austin De Lone:** I was born in 1946, which is the same year that the house I live in now, in Sycamore Park area, was built.

**01:20 Debra Schwartz:** Wow.

**01:21 Austin De Lone:** There's something of no particular note. [chuckles]

**01:25 Debra Schwartz:** Well, I know, I've just talked to Sammy Hagar and he said El Paseo was built the year he was born. So maybe it's something you musicians work out. Okay, so you were born in 1946 in Philadelphia and you went to Harvard and studied what?

**01:43 Austin De Lone:** English. I was thinking about being a poet, and I suppose I ended up in somewhat the same direction, as I ended up being a musician and a songwriter.

**01:52 Debra Schwartz:** And so did you graduate from Harvard?

**01:57 Austin De Lone:** I did not graduate from Harvard. I dropped out to come out to California, and to be with a friend of mine who, we had written a few songs while I was still in college, and he was freelancing around the country. One of the songs was called, "One for One." It was the very first song that Linda Ronstadt and the Stone Poneys put out as a single.

**02:24 Debra Schwartz:** How does it go? You can sing it.

**02:28 Austin De Lone:** It's a mildly mediocre song, and it goes like this: "If I hadn't grown with you. And if half my life had been spent — " I don't think it's a great song. It's not at the top of my list, but it was put out as a single. It had a little cello on it and Linda Ronstadt singing in her fantastic voice of hers. And it went approximately nowhere. But the second single that they put out was called, "Different Drummer," which was a huge hit.

**02:57 Debra Schwartz:** So when did you start playing music?

**03:00 Austin De Lone:** When did I start?

**03:01 Debra Schwartz:** Yes.

**03:01 Austin De Lone:** I first started playing music when I was 12 years old and I took some piano lessons in the spring and part of the summer. And then in the fall, I just was more interested in playing football, so I didn't do as many lessons then. With a lovely teacher named Mrs. Housen, I thought she was totally cool. She used to smoke Camel cigarettes, non-filters, of course. I don't even know if they had filters at that point. And one would be dangling from her mouth as she showed me these great things on the piano and I thought she was the coolest. She was really a great woman. And she greatly encouraged my musicality in my ear. She was not a strict disciplinarian. I did a little bit of that later on when I dropped out of college.

**03:47 Debra Schwartz:** So, she just took a look at you and tried to figure out who you were and encouraged that?

**03:52 Austin De Lone:** Yeah. She said I obviously apparently had a good ear, so if she would show me the work that I wanted to do, she would play it once and I would pretty much calculate it, so I knew when I went home to practice that I could get it. And I was really into some sort of early jazz stuff.

**04:11 Debra Schwartz:** So, you're playing piano. What other musical instruments do you play?

**04:16 Austin De Lone:** When I was about 16, I picked up a guitar, I think, was it my brother's guitar? The first thing I did was just put my fingers on it and I played a G chord, I thought, "Oh, this is gonna be easy." So I played the guitar from then. I picked up a saxophone and played two or three correct notes, but that was as far as I got on the saxophone. So I play keyboards of all kinds, especially piano and Hammond B3 organ. Those are the ones I really like, and a Wurlitzer electric piano. And also I play guitar, electric guitar, acoustic guitar. I can play a bit of bass. I can stumble through on drums but you probably don't wanna hire me for that.

**04:56 Debra Schwartz:** [chuckles] So you were in Harvard. Your friend introduced you to a free and easy minstrel life, I suppose, and the wind blew you away and into other places?

**05:09 Austin De Lone:** Yeah, I had actually dropped out of Harvard once when I was having some trouble, took a year off, went back and was having no trouble, I was just sailing through and getting, actually, was getting straight A's. I'm not sure why, but apparently I was smart for those six months or so. [chuckles] And then at the end of it, I just said, "This is not what I wanna do." And that's when I left.

**05:34 Debra Schwartz:** And so, when you turned away from Harvard, where'd you turn to?

**05:41 Austin De Lone:** California.

**05:42 Debra Schwartz:** So you headed west?

**05:44 Austin De Lone:** Yeah. I headed west and joined up with my friend that I'd written the song with. We started playing music and had some band stuff. Then I played with a various bunch of other people around, and soon met a friend of mine named Jack O'Hara. The both of us then moved back to the East Coast, to New York City, and met our third partner named Brien Hopkins and started a band called Eggs Over Easy that we were in from '69 until '80 or '81. And when I moved to Mill Valley that was with that band, Eggs Over Easy. The Eggs.

**06:25 Debra Schwartz:** I have to ask, the name. Why Eggs Over Easy?

**06:30 Austin De Lone:** Well, I could say why not? But basically, it was after a show in New York City. We were out late night and entered into a little breakfast joint at 2:00 in the morning, and our buddy, Brien, looked up at the menu and said, “That’s it. Eggs Over Easy.” And we decided to go with it. We had some other names we were tossing around, but for some reason, we picked that name. Maybe not the best name ever, but probably not the worst.

**06:58 Debra Schwartz:** Yeah, I’ve heard some really bad names. It’s not the worst. So, now you’ve gone from New York, over here, you’re performing, and anywhere else? Did you stay in this country? Did you move around?

**07:11 Austin De Lone:** When we first moved from basically Berkeley, and then Oakland, back to New York, and met our buddy, Brien, we then went to England to record with a guy named Chas Chandler, who was the bass player from The Animals, and also the producer and manager for Jimi Hendrix. And we’d signed on with a film company called Cannon Films, and they had just started their music department with a guy named Peter Kauff, who had been an agent for, well, the Beatles and the Animals, and was good friends with Chas, so we’d looked at a few producers, and then Chas said, “Why don’t you guys come to England and record with me?” We went, “Jimi Hendrix, England, Chas? Eggs Over Easy? No problem.”

**07:58 Debra Schwartz:** Well, the Animals were there, Eric Burdon and the Animals.

**08:01 Austin De Lone:** The Animals were fantastic. Chas was a great guy, a great bass player. Anyway, we went over and recorded with him, and for various reasons, we were not able to put out the album at the time. We left Cannon Films on the advice of our manager, and then we stayed in England for a year and started playing around, and we ended up being credited with starting a British movement called “pub rock.”

**08:27 Debra Schwartz:** Pub rock.

**08:27 Austin De Lone:** Pub rock, which lead to the most famous were Brinsley Schwarz, Ace had a big hit called “How Long Has This Been Going On?” [sings]

**08:40 Austin De Lone:** You take the upper part, I’ll take the lower. That whole scene, which really popped up pretty much after we left, we started it in one pub and then —

**08:56 Debra Schwartz:** What do you mean, “British Pub scene?”

**08:58 Austin De Lone:** It’s called pub rock.

**08:58 Debra Schwartz:** Oh pub rock. So, give me an idea, you walk in there, it’s pub rock night. What is that?

**09:04 Austin De Lone:** Well, over here, you might call it a bar band thing. The thing

that was happening in British music back then was the big glam stuff: David Bowie, Yes, Emerson, Lake & Palmer, that sort of heavy big thing. And all we were doing was, we just wanted to play music. We were hoping to get a contract and all that stuff, but we just wanted to go play. So we went up to a pub, and started with one night of music. It was actually a jazz pub at the time. They had six nights of jazz, and Jack went up there and said, “Can we play?” And they said, “Well, we’ve got a Monday night open.” So we played Monday for beer, and then they started paying us.

And a few people came and heard us the first night, and next time we played, a few more people came, and the next thing you know, it morphed into a big scene. The thing that was good about pub rock — and they say which eventually led to punk rock, and all these pubs that burst out mostly around London — the thing that was good was, it was just a place where people could go play and try to write their own songs. There were no big pretensions, and there was no concern about, “Have you got enough money coming in the door?” And, “Are your records gonna sell?” It was sort of anti-hype in that sense. It was just a cool place to go and express yourself, and to have a good time.

**10:30 Debra Schwartz:** So you could be about the music rather than just the creating of the band and promotion, and all of that?

**10:37 Austin De Lone:** Right, exactly.

**10:38 Debra Schwartz:** It was being a musician, doing what you wanna do, without needing the approval of a recording company or anybody.

**10:43 Austin De Lone:** Yeah, that led to some independent stuff, and the punk and new wave stuff, ’cause that was again, was just more people going, getting into the punk stuff. Our stuff was quite sort of musical, like The Lovin’ Spoonful and The Band, a little bit of country, just a nice mix of blends, lots of great vocals.

**11:06 Debra Schwartz:** Did you have a particular song?

**11:07 Austin De Lone:** We didn’t have a punk sound.

**11:09 Debra Schwartz:** Did you have a song that was kind of an iconic song that you guys created at that time? One of your favorites?

**11:16 Austin De Lone:** Oh yeah, we had a few. We had, “I’m Funky but I’m Clean.” “I’m funky but I’m clean, do you know what I mean?” And people would love to sing along, and we did a funny song that we never actually did record, called “The Siege of Leningrad,” which was a silly thing that started slow and ended up going very fast in a faux-Russian groove. [sings]

**11:45 Austin De Lone:** Yeah, we had a bunch of songs.

**11:47 Debra Schwartz:** It sounds like you had some fun.



**11:48 Austin De Lone:** Yeah, we had a lot of fun. We did mostly original songs, but we'd play anybody's covers that we wanted to. We all lived together at this time. I remember that when we first came to Mill Valley, we lived together for a year or two as well.

**12:02 Debra Schwartz:** I have to ask you this. When I'm imagining this punk bar, this rock pub scene, what were you wearing? What was the garb?

**12:15 Austin De Lone:** Jeans and a shirt.

**12:17 Debra Schwartz:** Really jeans and a shirt? No skintight striped pants, nothing like that?

**12:22 Austin De Lone:** No, no skintight, and we probably didn't have bell-bottoms yet. We were just probably wearing normal jeans or corduroys, and a shirt of some sort.

**12:34 Debra Schwartz:** How about your hair?

**12:36 Austin De Lone:** Hair was longish. Hair was longish, definitely. Our drummer for the whole year that we were there, just for what it's worth, was a guy named John Steele, who was the drummer from the Animals. A terrific guy, and a great drummer.

**12:52 Debra Schwartz:** Great, great band. Okay, so you were doing the pub scene, and that was great. But then you ended up coming back to America.

**13:02 Austin De Lone:** Came back to America, went to New York where our manager was, and worked on getting a contract. Got a contract with A&M Records, and went to Tucson to record with Link Wray, who was a great guitar god of the '50s and '60s. He had a hit called "Rumble," that was one of the very first, early big guitar instrumentals. [hums] Anyway, Link was at least part Native American and a fantastic guy. So, we recorded at his brother's studio in Tucson, Arizona, and then moved out to L.A. to A&M Records, to finish up the mixes there. And after we were done with that, the chap who was our road manager, Sidney Hungin said, "My brother lives up in a town called Mill Valley. Let's go up there, and kick back for a minute, and see what we're gonna do next." So we moved to Mill Valley, and I saw some of our friends who also lived here that we had known in Berkeley. We came to Mill Valley in May of '72, and here I am. Still here!

**14:23 Debra Schwartz:** What was your first impression of Mill Valley, when you came?

**14:25 Austin De Lone:** Ah, great, beautiful. We loved it. We started hanging out with some of our friends, and also hanging out at a place called the Old Mill Tavern, right in the center of town, which is now, of course, Vasco Restaurant, and it's gone through quite a few changes since it was the Old Mill.

**14:45 Debra Schwartz:** Was it O’Leary’s, too?

**14:46 Austin De Lone:** It was O’Leary’s. It went from being the Old Mill, to different owners at the Old Mill, then to O’Leary’s. Then it was — was it the Frog and Peach or something like that? Annabelle’s?

**14:56 Debra Schwartz:** The Peach and the Frog, yes.

**15:00 Austin De Lone:** And maybe something else, and now this lovely Vasco Restaurant, which is great. So it’s funny when I walk into Vasco, I can look around, and although it doesn’t look exactly the same, I can sort of see, “Ooh, I remember when that happened over there. Whoa, better not look at that!”

**15:15 Debra Schwartz:** What happened?

**15:17 Austin De Lone:** I can’t, not in the interview. [chuckles]

**15:21 Debra Schwartz:** Yes, well that was the ’70s.

**15:23 Austin De Lone:** Yeah. It was a wild time in there. And it was quite an amazing joint. And the thing that really struck us about the Old Mill and the town at that time was it was such an incredible mix of really different kinds of people. There were leftover rednecks — there were about five bars in town at that time. There was the Office, which later morphed into the Sweetwater. There was Quinn’s, which is now Mill Valley Market’s deli and liquor department. There was the Brothers, which is now the Bead Store. [chuckles]

**16:09 Debra Schwartz:** Over down on Miller, off of Miller, near 7-11.

**16:11 Austin De Lone:** Yeah, on Locust, right by, across from the 7-11. And, of course the 2 AM Club, the Deuce, the mighty Deuce, which is still there today. It was just a fantastic mix of, as I say, rednecks, construction workers, gay people, insurance people, doctors, and some musicians, such as the Eggs. It was just a wild mix, and everybody pretty much got along. There would still be some, every now and then, big old fights would break out.

**16:46 Debra Schwartz:** Where? At the Old Mill?

**16:47 Austin De Lone:** At the Old Mill. Oh, yeah.

**16:49 Debra Schwartz:** You had brawls at the Old Mill?

**16:51 Austin De Lone:** Huh?

**16:51 Debra Schwartz:** You had brawls at the Old Mill?

**16:53 Austin De Lone:** Oh, yeah, hell yeah, 'cause, as I said before, in the '60s somebody had told me, "Yeah, this used to be like 'Saturday night fights.'" All our friends would come down, they'd get drunk, and they'd just start fighting with each other.

**17:04 Debra Schwartz:** Well, like, what might precipitate such a brawl?

**17:08 Austin De Lone:** Oh, just an argument. Somebody bumping into somebody on a bar stool. You know, anything that touched off. There were a lot of brawls in a lot of the places that we played back then, and the various places around the county. In bars, it was more common. You don't see it very much nowadays. But even the later days in the Sweetwater, somebody would just — too much alcohol, that always helps. That always lifts it up into a brawl status. And just somebody rubbed somebody the wrong way, and it just escalates.

**17:43 Debra Schwartz:** As a musician, is it your policy to play through the brawl? Or, how do you usually —

**17:52 Austin De Lone:** Very good question. Generally speaking, you'd kind of play through the brawl, but turn the music down. Don't stop, that just brings too much attention to it. And don't keep playing a loud energetic song.

**18:11 Debra Schwartz:** So, you kind of —

**18:12 Austin De Lone:** Just try to back off.

**18:13 Debra Schwartz:** It's like, corralling the brawls subtly with your music.

**18:18 Austin De Lone:** Trying to calm it down, yes.

**18:19 Debra Schwartz:** You can corral and defuse.

**18:20 Austin De Lone:** Yeah. That's the idea.

**18:22 Debra Schwartz:** That's interesting. [laughs] Is that just generally understood with most —

**18:29 Austin De Lone:** I think, it's probably sort of an automatic reaction. It's usually not a fight or flight situation that you have to —

**18:38 Debra Schwartz:** Well 'cause you're up on a stage so you're not in the mix.

**18:40 Austin De Lone:** Well, you're up on a stage, but it can develop into that. I've never been involved in one of those.

**18:45 Debra Schwartz:** Have you ever had people flying across the stage? [laughs]

**18:49 Austin De Lone:** Sure. People at the Old Mill or Sweetwater sort of, but not flying across the stage in a rage, just more in a sort of extended dance, let's say. [chuckles] Anyway, so we were hanging out there when our record came out on A&M and we went and did a tour to disappear from town for about four months mostly. And then, we came back and they said, "What do you guys do? You're down here having a couple of beers everyday and —"

**19:28 Debra Schwartz:** Who's they? Who said it?

**19:29 Austin De Lone:** The people at the bar, at the Old Mill. We said, "We're musicians." And they're like, "You're kidding." "No. We —" "Come and play." So, we started playing some music down there, and that ended up turning into a pretty wild and fun scene, and turned into a lot of music. There were a lot of groups playing there all the time.

**19:48 Debra Schwartz:** Like names of groups?

**19:51 Austin De Lone:** Sugardaddy, Contraband, various groups, local groups. I can't think of a lot right now. I can almost think of a few — sorry, they're not coming back.

**20:04 Debra Schwartz:** It's okay. They'll come after the interview.

**20:06 Austin De Lone:** That was 40 years ago.

**20:08 Debra Schwartz:** And so, you were how old then?

**20:11 Austin De Lone:** So, I'm in the late 20s to 30.

**20:17 Debra Schwartz:** Young musician.

**20:19 Austin De Lone:** Young, grooving, having fun.

**20:21 Debra Schwartz:** And this Prune Music was down on Miller Avenue that time too.

**20:24 Austin De Lone:** Prune Music was down on Locust right next to —

**20:26 Debra Schwartz:** Did you used to go visit the Prune Music store?

**20:28 Austin De Lone:** Oh, sure. Absolutely, I used to go. I bought several instruments from Prune Music. And later on Lee Michaels, who was a great musician in his own right, bought Prune Music and ended up putting a recording studio in the back which is where we recorded our last — the last thing that we did as the Eggs Over Easy was an album for Lee Michaels called "Fear Of Frying."

**20:54 Debra Schwartz:** Oh, no. [laughs]

**20:56 Austin De Lone:** Sorry. When your named Eggs Over Easy, these things just happen. [laughs]

**21:01 Debra Schwartz:** And did you collaborate with other local musicians as well? Because there were a lot of people here at that time.

**21:09 Austin De Lone:** Oh, yeah. I ended up playing with a bunch of different people, and Jack ended up playing with a bunch of different people. Brien, more or less kept to himself. He played with some people, but not as much in a gig-ing way. Yeah, I played with tons of different people: Jesse Barish, Anna Rizzo, stuff like that, local stuff. And I started playing with my buddy Bill Kirchen in a band called The Moonlighters and then working with the band that he'd started many years before called Commander Cody and His Lost Planet Airmen. So when the Eggs were done, I ended up working with Cody, and then working with a bunch of other people. I ended up working with The Fabulous Thunderbirds from Austin, Texas for a while with the great Jimmie Vaughan and Kim Wilson in that band, fantastic band.

**22:03 Debra Schwartz:** Jimmie Vaughan was the brother of —

**22:05 Austin De Lone:** Stevie Ray Vaughan.

**22:05 Debra Schwartz:** Stevie Ray Vaughan who's with Bruce Springsteen, right?

**22:09 Austin De Lone:** No, Stevie Ray Vaughan was just — his thing was just his own thing, the Texas blue sky.

**22:15 Debra Schwartz:** The bandana.

**22:16 Austin De Lone:** The big hat, yeah. And concho belts and stuff. And that also led to working with Elvis Costello. I worked with Nick Lowe, a bunch, who was a guy that I'd met way back when the Eggs were in London in the early '70s.

**22:35 Debra Schwartz:** Nick Lowe?

**22:36 Austin De Lone:** Nick Lowe is a guy who produced Elvis Costello's first few albums but also wrote "Peace, Love, and Understanding." He also is one of the supremely admired singer-songwriter guys of today. He's British. I don't know if you'd call him Americana, but he was a great performer, and he was in the band called Rockpile that was a monsterly great band along with Dave Edmunds. So I worked with him. Paul Carrack, another fantastic British musician. I ended up doing some work with Bonnie Raitt, Boz Scaggs. Howard Tate, Carla Thomas, some of the great R&B soul singers from Memphis and Philadelphia. I just ended up doing a lot of stuff. Then I ended up for about 12 years being the music director for something called the Bammies which was the Bay Area Music Awards, a lovely celebration of bands and music from around the Bay Area

that ended up kind of petering out — I don't even remember when, maybe early 2000s — for some reason losing its audience.

**23:55 Debra Schwartz:** Although you had the wonderful award ceremonies and the events. I remember the Bammies.

**24:00 Austin De Lone:** The Bammies was great, everybody was in the Bammies: Huey Lewis, Santana, John Fogerty, on and on, and on. All the various bands, 4 Non Blondes, and all the various bands that were young bands that came up and had a couple hits and were stars there at that time. Counting Crows.

**24:22 Debra Schwartz:** For the Bay Area.

**24:22 Austin De Lone:** It was a big show. Usually most of the years I did it was at the Bill Graham Civic Auditorium in San Francisco.

**24:30 Debra Schwartz:** Yeah. I recall, they were quite big events.

**24:32 Austin De Lone:** It was really fun.

**24:33 Debra Schwartz:** So you were the music director?

**24:35 Austin De Lone:** I was the music director, yeah.

**24:35 Debra Schwartz:** What does a music director do? Do you select the bands?

**24:37 Austin De Lone:** I don't know.

**24:38 Debra Schwartz:** [chuckles] I always wondered about that.

**24:41 Austin De Lone:** I always wondered myself. Well, you have to assemble all the various pieces of music and, basically, we had a pit band that would — if you came up to win an award, we'd play a little section of your song, or if there was some kind of segue we had to make some music for. We'd also play music usually to start off the show, and frequently to start off the second half. And a lot of times at the end of the show there would be sort of an organized jam, not jam necessarily, but a song that a bunch of different of the stars would get up and sing, and we'd be the band to back up that. So, fair amount of musical work.

**25:22 Debra Schwartz:** Yeah. That's a lot of organizing.

**25:24 Austin De Lone:** Yeah.

**25:24 Debra Schwartz:** So you really inculcated yourself into this community in a big way.

**25:32 Austin De Lone:** Apparently so.

**25:33 Debra Schwartz:** Apparently so. [chuckles] There are brawls at the Old Mill, there's the Bammies.

**25:39 Austin De Lone:** The Bammies. And I played at the Sweetwater from the very beginning of the Sweetwater, and 142 Throckmorton, which is also another great musical place. I played at Old Mill School, fairly early on. Eggs Over Easy performed and it was pandemonium. The children went wild.

**26:00 Debra Schwartz:** [chuckles] Do tell.

**26:03 Austin De Lone:** It was quite funny. Although now they're probably older and moved on, but I would meet people in their 20s who were working as a waiter — one guy was working as a waiter at El Paseo, he said, "I remember you when the Eggs came and played at the Old Mill School."

**26:25 Debra Schwartz:** I've watched you talk about all the various venues that you played. I have to say, you seem to have a certain amount of pride talking about playing at Old Mill School.

**26:33 Austin De Lone:** [laughs] Well, it was just a funny, noticeable thing. It was a really hilarious little event. And, as I said, it was kind of pandemonium. It wasn't a brawl, but [chuckles] it was kinda crazy. And we did have to calm down a little bit. We did, and just later on, it came back.

**26:49 Debra Schwartz:** And was it first through fifth, right? Would you have a particular —

**26:54 Austin De Lone:** That's a good question. They were awfully young.

**26:57 Debra Schwartz:** Was it in an assembly?

**26:58 Austin De Lone:** They were awfully young. It must have been in an assembly, I don't really remember. [chuckles]

**27:03 Austin De Lone:** It's just a funny thing that happened. And we've played for the library before, a benefit for them, and done various things. I've also done the open mic thing at the Sweetwater for many moons. That's a nice community thing, especially now the new Sweetwater, which is, of course, different than the old Sweetwater was, but it's a great place in its own right. And now that it's got the restaurant café, it means people under 21 can come and perform there at the open mic quite freely. And that's a great opportunity for some. There's a lot of great kids in high school, junior year, bluegrass bands, and whatever, and just talented singer-songwriters. Yeah, a lot of great musicians around, and it's really a nice thing to be able to do that too.

**27:49 Debra Schwartz:** Well, I think actually the open mics are actually sort of under rated. Some of the best music I've ever heard in this town has been at open mic at the Sweetwater.

**28:00 Austin De Lone:** Like I said, there's some really talented folk.

**28:02 Debra Schwartz:** Yeah, amazing. People — obscure, coming up and off the mountain, off the beach, onto the stage, and really rather mind-blowing performances.

**28:14 Austin De Lone:** Yeah.

**28:16 Debra Schwartz:** So, any special memories, let's say, of the old Sweetwater at some point? Is there any moment that stands out as for you when you look back?

**28:32 Austin De Lone:** The Sweetwater was always a great place, a unique place to play, 'cause it was so small, such a great intimate location, so it was always really fun to play there. And Jeannie Patterson, it was the lovely Jeannie Paterson, who was always downstairs, and she run the thing. She had this great setup down the stairs where her office was, a little pool table next door. It was really comfortable and fun hanging out. The underneath scene was in many ways as fun as the scene upstairs, but the things that stand out most vividly for me were the fantastic parties that John Goddard, featuring people that he just wanted to invite to come and perform on his stage. So fantastic bunch of performers. Ry Cooder was at one, with his band; Elvis Costello, the year that I did a tour with him and he came back, Elvis and Nick; and Jerry Garcia were there, Elvis and Jerry on the stage at the same time. Robert Cray, John Lee Hooker, the list goes on, and on, and on.

**29:53 Debra Schwartz:** Muddy Waters. No. Who was performer the blues performer that — B.B. King, wasn't he a friend of John's?

**30:02 Austin De Lone:** B.B. King was a good friend of John's. I don't believe he ever played at the Sweetwater, though he probably set foot in it. And he was one of John's biggest customers, apparently. He would come through with this bus and just load up. And Elvis Costello was also, I know, a big, big customer of John's.

**30:22 Debra Schwartz:** Did you use to hang out at the Village Music store?

**30:23 Austin De Lone:** Of course. I was at the Village Music all the time spending what little extra cash I had, to get the latest and the greatest. And John was always a fantastic resource. You'd go, "Who did that funny song about the bullhorn and over there?" He says, "Oh, of course, that was blah, blah, blah." And he would be able to spill it off. His knowledge was just great and he was very helpful with me, helpful with me a lot for the Bammies when I had to research certain musical things and if he didn't know it right away, he would dig in and find out. And just his collection of records, which is still my favorite form of music. I still like listening to vinyl best, best of all. It's fantastic.



**31:10 Debra Schwartz:** So, you bought a house here in Mill Valley?

**31:12 Austin De Lone:** Yup.

**31:14 Debra Schwartz:** And you've raised your children here?

**31:16 Austin De Lone:** Raised my children here. I've got a daughter, Caroline, who's 24, also a lovely singer and songwriter in her own right. Fantastic voice, we just did a show at the Sweetwater last week.

**31:28 Debra Schwartz:** How does that feel watching your own child, as a performer yourself, making the choice to be a musician, and then watching your child up on stage?

**31:39 Austin De Lone:** Fantastic. She really has such a lovely voice. She's quite good and she writes good songs. She even writes better songs than me, which kinda makes me angry but I'll get over it. [chuckles]

**31:52 Austin De Lone:** So I'm thrilled to see her moving and doing this thing that she really, really likes. And she has a younger brother who's 18 now, his name is Richard, who's a lovely, sweet guy, but he has a terrible genetic disorder called Prader-Willi Syndrome. It's very tough for him, of course. He lives in a group home now. Very tough on the family and very tough on Caroline growing up too. It's just an unusual situation and it presents some difficulties that are hard for one to just come over. My wife and I actually started a non-profit named after our son called The Richard de Lone Special Housing Project and with the view of creating residential situations for people with that specific disorder because it needs such specific care. You have to lock up food and there's other complications with it. It's not for the general public, because you can't generally lock up food from people, it's messing with their civil liberties, but in this case it's a medical —

**33:04 Debra Schwartz:** Because part of the condition is that they have an inability to control their appetite.

**33:09 Austin De Lone:** Right. They cannot control it. So you really have to control their eating or they're in trouble, big trouble.

**33:16 Debra Schwartz:** Life-threatening.

**33:17 Austin De Lone:** Lif- threatening trouble, yes.

**33:19 Debra Schwartz:** So you've got your Foundation.

**33:22 Austin De Lone:** So we have the Foundation we've been working for a while and raised some money, and doing pretty well in that way, mostly through our friends in the music business. We've done concerts at the Great American Music Hall and Bimbo's and in The Chapel, in the city with our friends Elvis Costello, Ry Cooder, Boz Scaggs.

And we've just done a couple this year and last year at the Sweetwater, smaller sort of more high-ticket big dinner, private invitation events. Last year with Elvin Bishop and the great Bonnie Raitt. And this year with our good friend and benefactor Boz Scaggs. And so that's been great, and the Sweetwater has been fantastic to help us and give us a good deal on doing an event there. We're very fortunate for that.

**34:18 Debra Schwartz:** Very fortunate to live in a town where there really is community support. You actually have the venue to do big things around here. It's a small town but there's a lot of heart here, I think.

**34:29 Austin De Lone:** There's a lot of heart. And then we've done a bunch of things and of course the Throckmorton also does some wonderful things for the community just as a whole, all that great variety and all that acting stuff they do with kids, and also the benefits that they've put on, we've done a couple of fantastic things there.

**34:47 Debra Schwartz:** I noticed that you're in the band for a benefit that's coming up on the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Mill Valley Art Festival.

**34:54 Austin De Lone:** Yeah. The Great Mill Valley Arts Festival.

**34:55 Debra Schwartz:** So I'm actually involved in the gala affair, and I call this band Musical Sons of Mill Valley because you and others, locals, will be performing and the benefits go towards the Mill Valley Art Festival.

**35:14 Austin De Lone:** Right. I know Sammy Hagar has pitched in his great stuff on that with some extra VIP stuff.

**35:23 Debra Schwartz:** Yes, with the El Paseo Restaurant offering the restaurant and some donations.

**35:28 Austin De Lone:** The old El Paseo.

**35:29 Debra Schwartz:** And we've got Bill Champlin coming to perform with you.

**35:30 Austin De Lone:** Fantastic, yeah, great.

**35:33 Debra Schwartz:** And I'm really excited to see that. Listening to your story, I have to say that I'm touched by the world and the community that you live in and thrive in, the support that you have. When you think about what it is to live here, how would you describe your experience as a community member?

**35:58 Austin De Lone:** Well, we live in this little neighborhood in Sycamore Park, it's just sweet. It's now become fairly expensive neighborhood, but it started out as just sort of working class homes, postwar bungalows we would call them. And just the neighborhood that we live in has been so fantastic to us. Lots of kids running around back and forth from house to house, everybody was friendly, and when our son was born with

this terrible disorder, they were quite fantastic and really helped us out in some pretty serious situations when he would sometimes run out of the house and we'd get a call from Valerie, "Hey, Richie's down here at our house. Come and get him." And lots of other things. Valerie, by the way, is Valerie Gellner now, formally Valerie Varney, whose family used to own Varney's Hardware, which turned into — well, more recently was Tyler Florence's place — but the big downtown hardware store, fantastic.

**37:28 Debra Schwartz:** So, Valerie is your wife?

**37:29 Austin De Lone:** No.

**37:30 Debra Schwartz:** Valerie is your neighbor?

**37:31 Austin De Lone:** Valerie is just a neighbor. She was just an example of somebody who would — everybody on the street was really, really helpful with Richie when he looked like he might get into trouble. And also they were just terribly sweet with him, all the kids were really good with him, and it's a great lesson that a lot of kids are learning nowadays. People who are disabled are much more accepted, and kids in school are totally accepting. It's like no big deal, no big deal about that stuff anymore. It's just like the same thing with gays and stuff like that. For this generation, it's like, "What's the problem?" There is no problem 'cause they're just people. Kids will sometimes look at Richie and stare a little bit but it's not the fear factor that used to be around in the '50s and '60s when I was growing up. People are getting better, it's all just slowly moving and getting better. My wife is Leslie de Lone, the lovely Leslie from London.

**38:43 Debra Schwartz:** Oh, you met your bride in London?

**38:45 Austin De Lone:** No, I met my bride in a small town called Mill Valley.

**38:49 Debra Schwartz:** Oh my.

**38:50 Austin De Lone:** Yeah. Many years ago.

**38:53 Debra Schwartz:** Do you see Mill Valley changed much?

**38:56 Austin De Lone:** Yeah, I'd say Mill Valley has changed. The personnel that has changed, a little bit less of the working class community. But there's still a lot of community organization and a lot of community feel. You can sense it a lot, just around the Sweetwater. So many people have contributed to creating that fantastic thing. Besides, of course, Michael Klein's been great and a lot of the investors, there are so many investors that are generous and they really care about the place and come out for it. And so, that's really great whereas the old Sweetwater was really Jeannie Patterson and really almost like a one-man operation. She had a great team working with her, of course, Dixie and John, JB, and all those people that worked there.

**39:57 Debra Schwartz:** Okay.

**39:58 Austin De Lone:** So it's still a great community. There are too many traffic lights. [chuckles] What else? Traffic is a constant problem with everybody nowadays. There are a lot of people more in a rush than they used to be. It used to be a calmer town. But still, it's a spectacularly beautiful place and I'm certainly happy to be here.

**40:24 Debra Schwartz:** Well, before we close up this interview, I have one last question for you. Is there something that we haven't talked about that you'd like to talk about in this interview? Any last thoughts, any last comments, anything we missed?

**40:41 Austin De Lone:** I don't know.

**40:46 Debra Schwartz:** Did we get it?

**40:48 Austin De Lone:** I think we got it all. And if not, call me up. [chuckles] Bye.

**40:58 Debra Schwartz:** Thank you so much for giving us your time and your story.

**41:00 Austin De Lone:** Thank you, Debra.

**41:01 Debra Schwartz:** I particularly enjoyed the brawl in the Old Mill. [laughs] Played through the brawl.

**41:06 Austin De Lone:** I know you liked the brawls in the Old Mill. You liked the Old Mill School story.

**41:10 Debra Schwartz:** So, the concluding thought would be, "Play through the brawl. Stay calm. Bring the sound down."

**41:19 Austin De Lone:** Keep calm and carry on, yes indeed.

**41:21 Debra Schwartz:** A good motto to live your life by. Thanks very much.

**41:24 Austin De Lone:** Thank you.

**41:25 Debra Schwartz:** Okay, we'll see you at the Sweetwater, and we'll see you at the Throckmorton, and we'll see you around town.

**41:31 Austin De Lone:** Great.