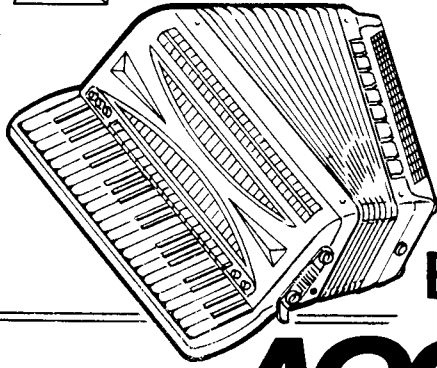


Newsletter of the

SAN FRANCISCO CALIFORNIA U.S.A.



BAY AREA

ACCORDION CLUB

A. Restrepo '94

JULY, 1995

President's Message

by Bob Berta

As your new President, I thought it would be appropriate to tell you a little about myself and my thoughts as to the future direction of the Club.

First, a little personal history. I am 47 years old and have 3 children (21 years, 13 years and 18 months). Another baby is due as I write this article so the next few weeks will be exciting. (Late flash: Andrew Thomas Berta, 8 1/2 lbs., was born July 18th at 6 AM. Father, mother, and baby all doing fine.) Two of the children are from a prior marriage (my first wife passed away from cancer 8 years ago). Nancy is my wonderful new wife and a very talented lady. My oldest son is married and I have a granddaughter. It is fun having a grandchild who is older than your own child!

I have worked for Pacific Gas & Electric Company for 28 years in a variety of electrical engineering and supervisory jobs and am currently the Safety Program Supervisor for the whole PG&E system which covers Bakersfield to Eureka. I also own a photo studio and color lab. Hobbies include bicycle road racing, hiking, photography, cooking and sports car road racing (I have raced 3 different Alfa Romeo cars).

Of course my first love is music. Besides acoustic accordion and MIDI accordion I play organ of both electronic and pipe varieties. At one time I played organ professionally. My favorite music tends to be classical and theatre music. Music is what brought my wife and me together. We met when I heard her playing piano at a party we attended. I was struck by her talent and found out that she was a concert pianist from Michigan. We found out that we had much in common in several other interests besides music and after months of dating we decided to make it official. I never thought I would have a "second" family but it has been fabulous.

As president of the BAAC I don't intend to suggest much change since the current format has been so successful. Rather I would like to add some new things. First I would like to encourage accordionists with other interests to join our club. In particular we haven't had representation from the concertina crowd. Last year I invited Pam Bishop of England to play for our club. She brought her Wheatstone concertina with her and played a fine selection of British and French tunes to a receptive audience. I believe there are a

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

July 28th, Friday. Jorgen Sundeqvist in concert, 7 PM. 5516 S.E. Foster Road, Portland, OR. Call Accordion World, 503-244-2545.

July 30th, Sunday, Jorgen Sundeqvist and Carmen Carrozza in concert 2 PM. 16101 Greenwood Ave, Seattle, WA. Sponsored by Petosa Accordions 206-632-2700.

August 2nd., Wednesday 7:30 PM. BAAC Board Meeting held at Ed Massolo's, 612 Lassen, So. S.F. Guests are always welcome. (415) 589-8409.

August 6th, Sunday, 5:30 PM. Pot luck dinner party for Jorgen Sundeqvist at Marian's behind Stanford. Each person or couple brings a dish *and* a beverage. Call 415-854-1896 to reserve a spot and identify a dish type which you will bring.

August 7th, Monday. BAAC General Meeting featuring special guest artist **Jorgen Sundeqvist**. Also, Joe Simoni, Leo Troitsky, and Mark Ramian.

August, 1995. No Fun Band rehearsals until September 14th!

August 9th and 23rd, Wednesdays. BAAC Ensemble Rehearsal. House of Parties.

cont. on p. 5

cont. p. 3

July General Meeting

by Denny Huff

In a word, the July Meeting was "Fun." All of the players clearly enjoyed being up on the stage entertaining, and the feeling was quickly picked up by the audience. No stage fright among this seasoned group!

Sal Bartelone led off the music with an old favorite, "*That's Amore*." A song he also played for Gordon Piatanesi at his retirement dinner, if I remember correctly. Next came the "*Tea for Two Cha Cha*." Sal related to the audience that he recently made a trip to Houston to see his son, and reasoned that the next song appropriately commemorated the occasion - "*Deep in the Heart of Texas!*" (By the way, they went to a ball park and watched the Astros beat the "Cubbies.") Sal finished with "*Kansas City*," during which he has attacked by the "Dino Benetti" chair. Master of Ceremonies, **Domenic Saso** explained the chair's checkered history and offered to sell it, but there were no takers despite it being "Swap" Night.

Newly elected President and expectant Father **Bob Berta** was on next with a few comments regarding club mechanics. Some good news - both **Jorgen Sundeqvist**, a Galla-Rini protege, and **Chuck Berger**, a member of the Portland Accordion Club specializing in the Big Band sound, will be giving guest appearances in the coming months. We voted to raise the attendance contribution to \$3 when special guests were here and the club incurs additional expenses such as transportation or housing costs. Bob suggested the possibility of specialized workshops in the future - Bandoneons, Midi's, etc. And maybe more theme nights! Dance night?? Another Dessert Night?? (All Right!) Oktoberfest?? If you have further ideas, contact a Board Member.

If you attend enough club meetings, eventually you can't avoid acquiring at least a minimal music education. We were next treated to some classical music

and an instrument we don't often see - the French Horn..... teamed up, of course, with the ever-popular accordion! New member **Sharon Walters** and **Prisella Nunn** followed Bob on stage and played several selections. In keeping with the evening's "fun theme," it was obvious they were having fun. Their first selection was a sonata by Carelli. Next was a ragtime waltz written by Scott Joplin - "*Bethena*." They really sounded good as a duo, and the audience obviously enjoyed the presentation. Their last number was a mini-medley comprised of "*Willow Weep for Me*" and "*Little Girl Blue*." Yes, the French Horn and the Accordion do sound well together, and we were honored to have heard the duo's premier performance.

I'll have to admit that when I first saw **Rick Bez** hawking those little red accordions at Cotati, I didn't really take him all that seriously. Then I heard him play one, and thought, "Mmmmm, that's not too bad for a little accordion like that." Well, since then I've heard him at the club twice, and I think he is one of the most enjoyable acts we've seen. It was hard to tell that he just spilled coffee on his foot or that he was playing songs he had just recently learned. He was dancing, he was smiling, he was playing up a storm, and the crowd loved it. *La Cumparsita*, *Tico Tico*, *Czardas*, *Gulash Baronen* (?), *Godfather*, *Besame Mucho*. He started off his performance by stepping away from the microphone and saying that he preferred playing for people, not microphones - and he was right. He likes to play for the audience, and they (we) obviously enjoyed it.

More audience enjoyment and participation followed the break when **Val Ballerini** stepped up and promised something "a little different." He didn't introduce his songs, but we all recognized them. "*That's Amore*," "*Cherry Pink and Apple Blossom White*" and "*Eh Compari*" were among his offerings. He got the crowd singing along on several numbers and kept us entertained as he sang one song in Italian. I'd

have to guess it was a little risqué, since the Italian speaking members of the audience were highly entertained - as were we all, despite lingual handicaps. He even wore his "trade mark" red hat for the last number. I hope we see it again.

The "fun" theme of the night didn't evade our next performer, **Tom Cardoni**. Throughout his medleys of mostly European music, a contagious smile kept escaping from him. In recognition of some Scottish guests visiting the club, Tom started with a medley of Scottish tunes including "*I Belong to Glasgow*" and "*Scotland the Brave*." [Thanks Tom for making our visitors feel so welcomed!!] Moving to the southern flank of the European continent, Tom offered up a selection of Italian numbers, including "*Tango della Rosa*," and played them as would befit a musician whose last name ends with a "oni." Retreating northwards, Tom finished with a French Medley which brought to mind many afternoons and evenings spent in a casual Parisian sidewalk cafe'. Just another great job from Tom Cardoni, who's one of our really fine musicians and accordionists.

The "Marquee" performer was old friend **Jim Boggio**, who brought **Kevin Dillon** and **Nils Molino** to accompany on drums and bass. Jim is about to reverse 15 years of accordion discrimination at Harrahs Lake Tahoe by being the first accordion act since 1980. (A gold star if you know who the last was.) From August 22 thru September 3, Jim and the infamous **Sonoma Swamp Dawgs** will be entertaining fortune seekers in Harrah's Cabaret Lounge with numbers like those we heard Monday. "*All of Me*" - and in Jim's case that's not insubstantial, "*Jambalaya*," "*Blue Bayou*," and a selection of Zydeco favorites such as "*Don't Mess with my Tutu*." Jim's another player who loves to perform and easily gets the audience in an excited mood. He specially flew ... one of Louisiana's premier Rub Board players for the evening (it should be noted

COTATI FESTIVAL '95

The fifth annual Cotati Accordion Festival is fast approaching. It's always held the fourth week in August, so the dates this year are Aug. 26th and 27th. The format is similar to last year in that the entertainment will be continuous from 10 AM to 7 PM and that there will be a gate fee of \$5 per person, discounted to \$2 if you are accompanied by an accordion.

Many of you have attended regularly and don't need the directions and background that follows; just skip the next paragraph if you are familiar with Cotati and the background of the Festival.

Cotati is a small town 40 miles north of San Francisco, right along the main highway, 101. Five years ago, residents Clifton Buck-Kauffman and Jim Boggio were looking for ways to put their town on everybody's map. They concluded that an accordion festival had the potential of accomplishing just that, and the idea of the Festival was born. The festival was an immediate success in terms of the crowd it attracted, but, since no entrance fee was charged for three years, there was constant concern that t-shirt and booth sales plus contributions wouldn't be great enough to pay the bills; indeed, the first year they failed to break even. Last year, with the gate fee, the Festival made enough money that it was able to bring in better, more professional acts, and to make a donation to the music program of their local schools as well. The two-day party is held outdoors, in the main square at Cotati. You might want to bring folding chairs along; sometimes seating on the hay bales is limited and the bleachers might well be in the sun. As if past years, there will be a big "jam tent" where you can play to your heart's content with others similarly inclined.

The Festival Committee has announced the following *tentative* schedule for the two days. Players are listed in order of appearance.

Saturday, August 26th, starting at 10:10 AM

Gordon Kohl
 Jim Cert
 Holly & Borelli (BAAC member Ron Borelli)
 Peter Di Bono (BAAC member)
 Baguette Quartette (BAAC member Odile Lavault)
 Kenny Kotwitz
 Leo Aquino
 S.F. Squeeze (all BAAC members)
 Lady of Spain-a-Ring
 Nada Lewis
 Spiral Bound
 Jorgen Sundeqvist
 Dick Contino
 Sev Garcia (BAAC member)
 Motor Dude Zydeco

and on Sunday, August 27th

Rick Bez (BAAC member)
 Bellows & Bow (Norma Parsons, BAAC member)
 Bonnie Birch
 Chuck Berger
 Daran Kravanh
 Ramon Trujillo & His Mariachi Jalisco
 Leo Aquino
 Those Darn Accordions!
 Lady of Spain-a-Ring
 Cafe Babar Jug Band (BAAC member Algis Ratnikas)
 Sourdough Slim
 Dick Contino
 Marian Kelly (BAAC member)
 Soleil Zydeco

Program may be changed between press time and performance time.

July meeting, cont.

that she suspiciously resembled his girl friend Susan), and he additionally honored us with another first for the evening - the first performance of his new number the "Italian Blues." (Look out Lake Tahoe!) Jim also showed us his new accordion which he designed and had built by Petosa in Seattle. Great show, Jim - as always!

Our **Prez Bob** reminded us that if you were lucky enough to sell (unload?!) any accordion paraphernalia at Monday's meeting, please consider a donation to the club. Thanks! D.H.

Mark your Calendars, cont.

August 23rd- 27th. (note date change) AFNA (Accordion Federation of North America) celebrates its 40th birthday with a bangup Festival at the Hyatt at LAX. Call 213-686-1769 for info and reservations.

August 26th and 27th, Cotati Accordion Festival. See Cotati article above.

Sept. 10th - 16th. Button Box Camp. Call Joe Smiell, 510-832-6938.

September 11th, Monday, 7:00 PM. BAAC general meeting, Donworth Hall, San Francisco. Note date change because of Labor Day.

September 12th, Tuesday. Fun Band Practice. House of Parties.

Sept. 15 - 17th, Northeast Squeeze-In. In the Berkshire Hills of Western Massachusetts. Call the Button Box at 413-549-0171.

October 2nd, Monday 7:00 PM. BAAC General Meeting featuring special guest artist Chuck Berger!

July Board Meeting

Synopsis

- This was the first meeting presided over by new President Bob Berta.
- Treasurer Algis Ratnikas reported bank balances totaling \$5921. He distributed sheets detailing income and expenses for the fiscal year ending 30 June as compared to budget and also showing his proposed budget for the upcoming year. Board members will study the figures and make any recommendations for budgetary changes at the August meeting.
- Before the August meeting, Frank Schlotter and Bob Smith will conduct an audit of the books for the fiscal year just ended.
- We had a discussion of our recently held picnic. The only real negative at Swiss Park had been the wind and the chill; there was no concensus about whether is was a cold day everywhere or whether Swiss Park is a particularly windy spot. The future Picnic Committee will decide the location of our '96 picnic.
- There was a discussion of the upcoming Cotati Festival and BAAC's participation. Frank Schlotter volunteered to chair the Cotati committee; Frank Montoro, Bob Smith, and Bob Berta will assist. Frank Montoro has already done a lot of work negotiating with performers to allow us to sell their tapes at the Festival.
- Frank Montoro reported a good response from members to the bills he sent out requesting membership renewal. He will send a reminder to those yet unpaid in about a month; after September anyone whose dues have not been received will be dropped from the newsletter mailing list.
- The Fun Band will not meet again until September. Watch the Calendar section in this newsletter for the schedule.
- Val Kieser attended and reported upon the Myron Floren concert sponsored by ALSI in San Diego on June 18th. Article elsewhere in this newsletter.
- Chuck Berger has agreed to perform for the Club at our October meeting. Three dollars will be charged at the door that evening.
- In general, we will charge at least an extra dollar when we bring in an outside guest artist for a meeting. That will allow us to bring in more such guests, which everyone seems to enjoy so much. When guests come, we will help them to sell their own tapes or CD's and will not ask that BAAC be given a cut.
- Mary Alice Eldon has agreed to be chairperson of our Program Committee. Ed Massolo will assist.
- Time for a discussion from members on their feelings about our present meeting location, Donworth Hall. At the August meeting, we will decide whether to stay at Donworth or to check out other places.

MK

August General Meeting Special Guest Artist!!

Recognize the handsome guy below??? Hint. We last saw him and heard him at our August general meeting two years ago, when we celebrated Galla-Rini's birthday a little early. He closed that evening with about 50 minutes of some of the most fabulous accordion playing we had ever heard, and now we have an opportunity to hear him again! He's Jorgen Sundeqvist, of course, Sweden's finest virtuoso accordionist.

Jorgen will be BAAC's guest artist at our August meeting; you definitely won't want to miss him. His musical selections iare likely to be quite diverse and will appeal to everyone; from "Begin the Beguine" and "The Sound of Music" through some folk music in unusual tempos from Sweden and other countries, to, perhaps, Chabrier's "España". In other words, there will be music for everybody, from light, popular selections to classics.

All are welcome to a pot luck party for Jorgen on Sunday, August 6th at Marian Kelly's. See Calendar for details.

As OK'd by the membership at our July meeting, we will charge \$3.00 at the door for this meeting. This new policy will enable us to bring in more frequent guest artists .



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BAAC Annual Financial Report Income Statement, 1 July '94 - 30 June '95

INCOME			EXPENSES		
	Budget	Actual		Budget	Actual
Advertising, Newsletter	\$500	905	Bank Charges	10	44
Cassette Sales	100	18	Concerts		
Concerts	550	0	J. London, Anchorage	0	347
Misc. Concerts	1053	500	Cotati	500	500
Semyonov	250	382	G.P. Testimonial	300	2151
G.P. Testimonial	300	2424	Semyonov	0	592
Cotati	100	0	F. Montoro/B. Berta	100	35
Donations	300	180	Phone	50	59
Door Fees	1500	2442	Postage	50	128
Membership Dues	4900	4842	Gifts	100	150
Membership, 6 mos.	0	90	Guest Artists	400	300
Merchandise	100	87	Hardware		
Misc. Income	100	42	bass accordion	295	295
Picnic	1000	975	microphone	40	40
Raffles	50	0	shielded cable	0	10
Savings Interest	50	62	Insurance	778	709
T-Shirts	100	258	IRS	150	180
Total Income	\$ 10,953	\$13,208	M. Kelly		
			Admin BAAC	100	17
			Admin. phone	200	78
			Cotati., phone	100	35
			Editor	1500	1500
			Newsletter mail	1000	1158
			Newsletter print	1800	1460
			Newsletter prod.	1200	779
			Membership List	0	37
			Misc. Expenses, admin	100	439
			Misc. Expenses, xmas		169
			Picnic (Swiss Park)		400
			Rent	1440	1320
			Service Charge	100	
			Telephone (voice mail)	240	239
			Telephone (board)		95
			Travel		400
			Total Expenses	\$10,953	\$13,665
			Net Profit/(Loss)		(457)


President's Column, cont. from p. 1.

lot of potential members out there in the Bay Area who could share their love for their style of music with other members. And our enthusiastic new member, Peter Adler, is trying to get Bandoneon players involved in our club. He is a fan of the Argentine Tango music which many members have seen at the "Forever Tango" production.

We are lucky that we have good Cajun/Zydeco representation from Jim Boggio's Sonoma Swamp Dogs. But we hope to increase that...perhaps with a Cajun/Zydeco workshop featuring Jim. And with the huge Latin presence in the Bay Area we may even get some Conjunto interest. The board also hopes to sponsor a giant Accordion Work Shop next year. The workshop would have sessions on various musical styles, button box, Bandoneon, piano accordion, Bayan, MIDI accordion, and even accordion maintenance and repair.

Any organization doesn't exist in a vacuum though. We need YOUR input as to things you would like to see. Please contact any board member or feel free to attend a board meeting to express your thoughts.

Bob Berta



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American Accordionists' Association

Festival in Houston

by Marian Kelly

When BAAC's Board agreed to send me to the recent AAA Festival honoring Bill Palmer, I agreed in return to compose and publish an accounting of the Festival as I saw it. Now that I am back, I'm only concerned that the accounting may be too long; it was an eventful few days.

I met and spoke with many AAA members who knew very little about accordion clubs, so it was a great opportunity for a little education. We Club people have a different focus in that we who perform are mostly adults and in that while we advocate musical excellence, we play mostly for entertainment. Teaching and competitions have traditionally been a strong focus of AAA gatherings; the fun is assumed but not emphasized. What they *did* know was that accordion clubs are growing in both numbers and strength; they were quite interested in knowing what we are doing and how they can best work with us. Some of the discussions went into the wee hours.

The Festival was well planned, with a variety of activities. On Friday evening the Bill Palmer Tribute Concert was highly enjoyable. Noteworthy were a performance by Pauline Oliveros of one of her own compositions and the University of Missouri Accordion Orchestra directed by Joan Cochran Sommers. On Saturday the competitions began. The competitors were mostly young persons from music schools in the East, but included a few others, such as BAAC member Jack Stankus, who lives in Austin. Saturday evening was the Testimonial Banquet. Performances and delightful speeches about Bill Palmer turned the evening into a touching, poignant tribute to a beloved man and musician who has made it his life's work to advance the cause of the accordion. The affection in the room was tangible; it was a most memorable evening. Sunday brought a

breakfast gathering, then more competitions. Sunday afternoon was the first of two "Summit" meetings, discussions of the state of our instrument (the second came Tuesday afternoon). Monday everybody boarded buses for Galveston, where accordions appeared all over town.

Faith Deffner worked long and hard on this Festival; one area in which she very obviously succeeded was in the promotion. As soon as I arrived at the hotel, I saw TV cameras. There were several TV spots aired during the weekend, and many new registrants appeared at the hotel as a result of the P/R. One journalist spoke to me with a pad in her hand, taking notes. Later, I was delighted to see a very large article with colored pictures in the Houston Chronicle. I quote extensively below.

"OK, y'all. It's the last day of Accordion Week in Houston, July 7-11 as proclaimed by Mayor Bob Lanier. Since Friday about 500 members of the American Accordion Association have been doing their part to bring some respect to the Rodney Dangerfield of the instrument world.

Have you done yours?

Were you, for instance, at the Transco Water Wall Monday morning to hear 300 accordionists play *The Yellow Rose of Texas*?

Uh-oh. Chances are you also missed the Saturday evening performance of *Fiddler on the Roof* by an accordion orchestra with more than 100 musicians who were squeezing it, teasing it and, only occasionally, wheezing it.

Wait. It isn't too late to find out for yourself what the 5,000 members of the association around the country already know: The accordion is coming out of the closet. Digging long-forgotten instruments out of storage, a middle-age contingent of accordion lovers are re-discovering their musical roots.

Marian Kelly, a member from California, said she started playing at age 12, got busy raising a family and has only recently started playing again.

"I've played the accordion with my son's rock band," she said. "But what I really like to perform is stuff that's too tough for me. Things that border on the classical with big sounds and wonderful chords."

Kelly said the accordion was big in the late '40s and early '50s, and then she watched it drop out of favor as rock music developed. Now, she said, it is enjoying a resurgence, especially with young people.

She encounters them on the Internet, which has a user group for accordion enthusiasts. She thinks it's great that a lot of young people are starting to play rock music on an instrument more closely associated with a rousing polka played by someone in a leisure suit and white shoes.

That image, she said, is limiting and doesn't encompass the wide variety of music that accordionists play.

Kelly is in the audience at the Endless Performance Ballroom at the JW Marriott Hotel. Members of the accordion orchestra are assembling for a rehearsal for the Saturday night tribute to Willard Palmer, a Houston musician who convinced the University of Houston to become the first university to offer a major in the accordion. Palmer taught there from the early '50s to the late '60s.

Palmer, 78, dressed in a navy blazer and a sporty gray beret Saturday, gets sentimental over the memories the association meeting is dredging up.

"They make me laugh, they make me cry," Palmer said. In addition to teaching, Palmer and one of his students, Bill Hughes, now deceased,

American Accordionists' Association Festival in Houston, cont.

toured the country performing concerts. They played at Carnegie Hall three times, and once appeared on the Lawrence Welk Show in the days of black-and-white TV and the Lennon Sisters.

Palmer is credited with doing more than anyone else to bring the accordion into the big league of instruments. He improved the design of the accordion; created an instructional system for it, along with Hughes; and led an accordion symphony at the university.

"I would preach to my students that they had to know every piece in every key," Palmer said. "We had to play better than anyone else. We were the underdogs."

Palmer arranged the works of Bach and other classical composers for the accordion, claiming the accordion could do many things the piano could do. And, because of the bellows, it can do some things the piano cannot do, such as sustain notes and go from a crescendo to a diminuendo.

"The bellows is what most people murder," he said. It can make a gasping sound in the wrong hands. "The bellows is the soul of the instrument."

The bellows are what created the modern-day accordion, a modification of the ancient Chinese woodwind instrument called the *cheng*. Forms of the present-day accordion showed up in various ethnic communities about 150 years ago. Since that time, it has been associated with ethnic and folk music, weddings, and celebrations.

One of these ethnic traditions is currently popular — zydeco, from Louisiana Cajun roots.

Palmer approves of zydeco, which relies heavily on the accordion for its peppery, dance beat.

"I like it. It's appropriate to the accordion," Palmer said. "If I were

writing now, I would write zydeco music, because I like it."

In the hall outside the ballroom, other accordion players wander about, their accordions slung over their backs like knapsacks. In one room, several players have their ears pressed to the wall. As it turns out, they are listening to the competition in the room next door because they couldn't get in.

Though most of the members of the association are middle-age or older, several teen-age bands perform rock music primarily on the accordion. A few backup instruments round out the sound. They are squeaky clean-cut: jeans with no rips, checked shirts, no body piercing whatsoever.....

The accordion seems to draw people who like to be open about their feelings.

A group of middle-age men have gathered in the Club Pub, an ongoing jam session anyone can join. They are talking about how playing the accordion calms them down, relieves their stress.

Mike Kochanek, from Jasper, Texas, remembers his father taught him to play the *Polish Wedding March*.

"It was the last song in the book," he said. "When my father died, I got out my accordion and played the *Polish Wedding March*. It took care of all my feelings, and I was able to handle everything else."

Faithe Deffner had asked me to moderate the two summit meetings which were held; those two meetings make an interesting story. Each meeting lasted between 2 and 3 hours. The goal for the end of the second meeting was to come away with one or more agreements among the varied participants of how they would promote the accordion in the coming year. Since at-

tendees were teachers, owners of music stores, manufacturers and distributors, and club representatives, that was a tall order. Mrs. Deffner had asked the general accordion public for suggestions of issues to be discussed (see her letter published in BAAC's February '95 issue). I had compiled and summarized those issues, and the summary was included in the Festival's informational material. The first meeting featured a panel of 12, representing the various attendee types (the audience was not allowed to participate) who were asked to discuss any of the issues thereby raised and to identify some tentative conclusions. At the second meeting, the issues were further discussed with audience included this time, and, to my great relief, the group managed to identify several specific activities on which all agreed.

Firstly, they have proclaimed 1996 **The Year of the Accordion**. We all agreed to publicize the concept of The Year of the Accordion at every opportunity and to increase the number of public performances of the accordion by playing in public places — parks, malls, museums, etc. Each group is to decide how best it can join in this joint promotional effort.

Secondly, the group agreed that the AAA should contract with a public relations firm to promote the accordion, and should pay to that firm \$1,000 per month for twelve months. The money will come from everyone; several organizations in attendance pledged either specific amounts. I will discuss the issue at our next Board meeting.

I really appreciated the opportunity to attend this meeting, to become acquainted with so many well known accordion names, and to spread the word about the Bay Area Accordion Club. I was fortunate in my role as summit moderator, in that it provided good visibility, authenticity and status. Thank you all for your trust in sending me. MK

Myron Floren Father's Day Concert in El Cajon

by Val Kieser

Since I was scheduled to be in Southern California for other reasons at that time, I decided to take advantage of the opportunity to attend the much-publicized Myron Floren concert organized by the Accordion Lovers Society International (ALSI), the San Diego accordion club. My ALSI friends tell me they intend this to be an annual event, of which this was the "second annual."

Well, at \$12 for the ticket, I feel I got many times that in pure pleasure. Wow! What energy that man has, and what an incredible performer he is — a true showman! He played, of course, many of the "wunnerful" old tunes we remember from the Lawrence Welk show, plus many other pieces, some extremely complicated, and with amazing dexterity, without even glancing at the keyboard — it was awesome! He also played



several numbers for singalong, and the audience sang along with great enthusiasm. Myron also kept everyone laughing with his many anecdotes and jokes and acting. He literally throws his accordion on and off, as if it weighed 5 lbs.!

Also on the program were Gordon Kohl (who started off the program) and Lou Fanucchi, both virtuoso players in their own right. Lou, as many of you know, is one of Anthony Galla-Rini's protégés. And of course, it was a very special treat to get to see (and hug) Tony and Dolly Galla-Rini. Tony was warmly presented to the enthusiastic audience. The combo of piano, bass and drums which backed Myron's program also performed one of their own numbers for us. It was very well done and involved both plucking and bowing by the bassist.

Near the end of the show, Myron called Gordon Kohl back onto the stage, and they played a very rousing "Beer Barrel Polka" together. The show ended with "God Bless America" with everyone singing along. It was all over too soon, leaving the audience begging for more. But then, out in the lobby of the theater (Performing Arts Center of El Cajon), everyone got to meet Myron Floren personally and have him sign photos, CD's, tapes, or whatever (one fellow had a very old LP record of Myron and Lawrence Welk, and brought it for Myron to sign).

In person, Myron Floren is totally gracious and ever so patient, with throngs of people shoving various items in front of him for his autograph. Myron had something special

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to say to each and every person, and never stopped smiling. He had flown in from the East Coast that same morning, and was flying out again that evening! He travels 250,000 miles a year. I'll never know where he gets all that energy.

Thanks, Myron, and thanks, ALSI, for an experience to treasure!

If you would like to join the San Francisco Bay Area Accordion Club, please send a check for \$20 payable to BAAC to our Financial Secretary, Frank Montoro, 1448 Tarrytown, San Mateo, CA. 94402. You will receive a newsletter monthly from July '95 through June '96. We welcome all interested persons!

STICKY KEYS

by Bob Berta and Vince Cirell

Does old "Betsy" have a hard time "waking up" when she has been in her case for a while? When you push down a key does the key stick and then pop loose? Like all of us, an accordion starts having an assortment of ailments as advanced age kicks in.

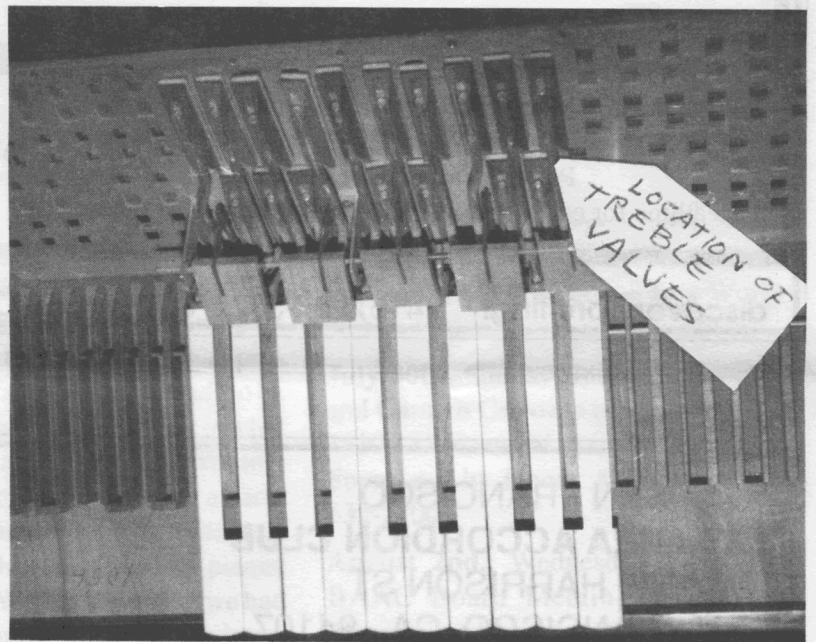
If Betsy is around 25 years of age or older she may be suffering from the effects of a bad choice of glue by her Italian creator. You see, in the search for a better glue, the Italians developed a glue that would always remain slightly tacky so that the leather and felt would stay attached to the valve. Unfortunately the long term effect of this idea was that the glue would leak through the felt and leather and make the key stick to the metal plate the valve seals against. Besides sticking the leather is often pulled loose from the valve. The fix for this is a replacement of the valve felts and leathers. I understand that German accordions also suffered from this malady.

Another potential problem is seen when the valve has a layer of foam rubber between the wooden part of the key and the leather. This was an alternative method of construction which would replace the felt. As you know foam rubber tends to deteriorate. You will start seeing this foam rubber crumbling and gradually the leathers will fall off. Prior to this the pieces of foam rubber may get into the reeds and cause them to stick (no sound). Again the solution is a repadding job.

What do you do? If you and "Betsy" are on good speaking terms I would bite the bullet and repad the valves. On the other hand if you hear the siren song of an alluring accordion in a hunt for a new/used accordion and it has these symptoms you might want to pass it up and keep on looking unless it is a higher quality accordion. Replacing

those valve seals is expensive since it requires the removal of the entire treble key mechanism or the bass mechanism....or both if keys are sticking on both sides. You can expect, if you are having trouble on one side, you will have problems on the other side soon enough. On the other hand a fine accordion once reconditioned will be the equal of any top accordion made today and will probably be one heck of a lot cheaper than purchasing a new one of equal quality. Generally any tone chamber accordion (subject of future articles), one of historical significance or any with hand made reeds would warrant this reconditioning.

If you wish to see if there is foam rubber in your valves that is crumbling you can gain access to the treble keys by removing



Vince Cirelli

the 2 thumbscrews or pushing the push buttons on each side of the grill. GENTLY remove the grill being careful to not dislodge any microphone wires. You can gain access to the bass side by removing 4 small screws in the end plate....but don't expect to see much. The bass mechanism will probably prevent you from getting a good view of the pads. The attached picture will illustrate the parts of the accordion you would be concerned with. In any case don't attempt to disassemble anything to get a better view....you may end up with a giant three dimensional puzzle on your hands!

The most important advice though is DON'T try to fix it yourself. You can cause EXPENSIVE damage if you don't know what you are doing. For a list of accordion repair persons you can check past issues of the BAAC newsletter or contact our own repair person extraordinaire, Vince Cirelli, by calling (415)467-2208 - Monday to Thursday.

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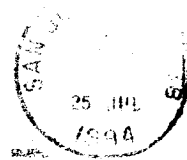
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