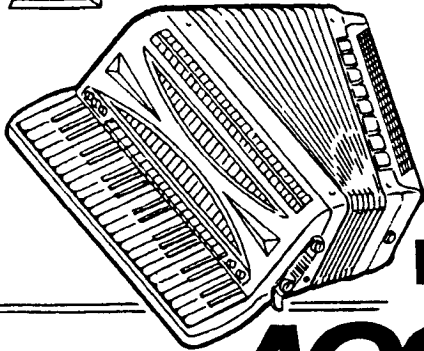


Newsletter of the

SAN FRANCISCO CALIFORNIA U.S.A.



BAY AREA

ACCORDION CLUB

March, 1998

President's Message

by Marian Kelly

Dear BAAC Members and Friends,

Looks like the unfriendly winter rains have yielded to our more normal and gentler diet of mostly sunshine with pretty clouds and a few rain sprinkles just to keep your interest. It's Spring in the Bay Area. In that spirit of rebirth, let's freshen up our Club just a little.

In my first six months in this office, I've recognized well that I don't hear from many of you, even though I know you hold strong opinions. I'd really like to receive more feedback from all of you about what we are doing and what we are not doing. I'd like to know why so many of you play hookey from our meetings and often from our events. What would encourage you to attend more often? What might we do to sign up more members and to keep the members we sign up. Please let me (us) know what you are thinking. Use our voice mail phone if you wish, (415) 974-9210, or telephone me or any Board Member. And when something strikes you as important, please consider writing a Letter to our Newsletter Editor so we can see your thoughts in print.

BAAC is a non-profit organization, recognized as such by the Feds (we're a 501C3). But we've not made very good use of this non-profit status, it seems to me. I've asked Arnie Krenn to look into both the requirements and the advantages of being non-profit, with the thought that we might be able to encourage each of you to donate instruments to the Club, then take a tax deduction on your Schedule-A. We'd be able to use those instruments to lend or rent to young accordion students, of whom there are an increasing number these days! Arnie will report to the Board in April, at which point we'll make a decision about whether and how to proceed. Stay tuned.

We've scheduled our annual picnic for September 20th at a lovely spot in the Oakland Hills. We're planning to change the format dramatically, since the relatively low attendance of the past few years has been a strong message that we need to make changes to our picnic event. Peter Adler, who with Herb Meier is chairing our Events Committee, suggested to the Board that we use Steve Balich's successful model. Steve's Redwood Accordion Club picnic has featured, for the

Cont. page 5

Mark Your Calendars

April 6 (Monday). General Membership Meeting. The theme is "April in Paris". Bring a dessert to share with 8 of your fellow members. Featured artists include, Frank Lima, Roberto Rosa, Michael Sanossian, Mike Zampicini and the Lou Soper band. Val Kieser and Sharon Walters will entertain before the meeting and at intermission. Starts 7:00pm, Eucalyptus and 22nd Ave, San Francisco (first block North of the Stonestown Shopping Center).

April 8 (Wednesday). 7:30pm. BAAC Board Meeting at Ed Massolo's home at 612 Lassen in So. San Francisco. Guests welcome.

April 14. (and every second Tuesday). Meeting of the Golden State Accordion-Aires. 7:00pm. Pietro's No.2. 679 Merchant St. Vacaville. Ca.

April 20. (and every third Monday). Meeting of the Accordion Club of the Redwoods. 7:00pm. Volpi's in Petaluma.

April 26. Ensemble Accordion Workshop For Beginners from 2:30-4:30pm at Boaz Accordions in Oakland, led by Henri Ducharme, professional accordionist and educator, leads beginners workshop. Includes sheet music; bring your own accordion and music stand. Limited to 10 students. \$15 advance, \$20 at the door. Register early to assure a spot and

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Calendar cont. from page 1

have music mailed to you ahead of time. Call Boaz Rubin at (510)653-6983.

May 4. General Membership Meeting. Featuring the ladies of our club.

June 1. General Membership Meeting. The theme is "Family Night".

June 13. Golden State Accordion-aire's picnic. Call Carole (707)864-2359.

July 8-12. American Accordionists' Assoc. Festival, New Orleans, LA. Email Ameracc@aol.com or call (516)746-3102.

July 17-19. Accordion Teachers Guild Festival, Chicago, IL. Email AMYJO@APCI.NET or phone (618)632-2859.

July 20-24. Galla Rini Accordion Camp @ Oceanside, Ca. Contact Ellen Bonica, Accordion World, 12672 S.E. Stark Street, Portland, Or. 97233.

July 31- Aug. 8. Lark in the Morning Summer Camp 1998. Folk music camp in Mendocino, Calif. This is very popular and sells out early. Email Larkinam@larkinam.com or call (707)964-5569 for more info.

August 6-9. Leavenworth International Accordion Celebration. Leavenworth, Washington. Call 509-548-5807 for more info. or Email to info@leavenworth.org

August 15. Accordion Club of the Redwoods picnic. Call (707)838-2859.

August 22-23. Cotati Accordion Festival, Cotati, Calif.

BAAC Ensemble practice first and third Wednesday of each month at Moose Lodge in Daly City from 7:00pm-9:00pm. Contact Frank Montoro (650)574-4757 for additional information.

BAAC Fun Band practice fourth Wednesday of each month at Moose Lodge in Daly City from 7:00p.-9:00pm. Contact Tom Cordoni @ 415-333-5625 for more information.

Beginners Support Groups/Bands
East Bay 510-843-9958
San Francisco 415-673-8835
South Bay 408-258-1258

Please send Calendar Information to your Editor, using the address on the last page.

Thank you.

Next Time You Are In Reno, Nevada

page 2

by Bob Berta

Last month's newsletter asked members to let us know about restaurants and places they have traveled to that featured accordions. The idea is that our members might take the opportunity to combine dining and travel with the sounds of their favorite instrument. The newsletter also asked our own professionals to let us know where they are playing so our members can come and enjoy the music and of course complement the restaurant or tavern for their good taste in featuring accordion music.

Since I recently had the opportunity to travel on business for a week I thought it would be appropriate that I would check out the local accordion scene in that favorite playground of Californians...Reno, Nevada.

Now you are probably asking why anybody would go to Reno on business for a week and spend their free time listening to accordion music. Well, Reno has made it easy to gamble and listen to accordion music.

Of course I recognized that this would be an opportunity to connect with that good friend of BAAC and the president of the Reno Accordion club, Ed Suterko. I called him a few days before and said I would be in town and would he be interested in getting together with me and introducing me to some of the local accordionists. Ed not only agreed to meet me, he planned a good part of my free time to make sure I had an opportunity to meet the local accordionists, visit some fine restaurants and spend a lot of time visiting with him.

Soon as I arrived in town I found two messages from Ed waiting for me in my room at the Eldorado Casino and Hotel. We agreed to meet over at *Harrah's Casino in Andreotti's Restaurant*. This is a great place to go if you like fine Italian dining. This one is popular so you will probably need reservations. After a fine meal, some great wine (compliments of the Casino) and great conversation we had the opportunity to hear Andreotti's house accordionist, *Dick Renko*. Wow,

what a fine entertainer! He played from a seemingly endless repertoire that pleased every musical taste. Between sets and after he completed his performance for the night we had the opportunity to visit and he shared some of his background and some great accordion stories. He has had quite a career having played for 28 years at North Shore, 8 years at the Nugget, 14 at West Shore and something like 3 1/2 years at Harrah's. When I asked him what one of his secrets was he said that he never has a fixed play list. He will go from tune to tune based on the audiences involvement, enthusiasm, spirit, etc. He believes that if you play the wrong song at the wrong time you can ruin your performance.

The following night I traveled to Ed's home and met his lovely wife. Of course I brought my accordion along and we played into the wee hours for each



LtoR Bob, Dick, Ed



LtoR Bob, Corkie, Ed

cont. on page 5

March General Meeting Review

The March meeting celebrated the joys of Irish music and dance. Prior to the meeting and at the intermission we heard a selection of nice Irish tunes by Reno Pucci as he strolled around the auditorium. Thanks to Reno for helping us get in the spirit!



Healy Dancers

We knew we were going to get a treat when it was announced that dancers from the *Healy School of Irish Dance* would make a special appearance. And what a treat it was...the dancers had a great program illustrating various dance styles of the Emerald Isles. The selections of wonderfully spirited Irish dancing performed to the fine MIDI accordion playing of Frank Montoro. For days afterwards both of my youngsters (age 2 and 4) talked about it excitedly and said that they wanted to take Irish Dance lessons.



Carl Hoeckner

Next up was Carl Hoeckner in a great selection of Irish tunes which included horn pipes, reels and other traditional numbers. Carl was very smooth in his playing and had a great relaxed stage presence.

Marian Kelly, on her new chromatic accordion, joined son Paul (guitar) and Sharon Walters (singer) in an audience singing along of well known Irish music.



Marian, Paul and Sharon

Next was the BAAC Ensemble under the baton of Joe Smiell in a selection which included an *Irish Air*, a polka by Joe, *The Great Gate of Kiev* and a selection from the *Tales of Hoffman*. This group gets better and better every time they perform. While the group is growing each time we see them, Joe says that there is lots of room for more. This has to be one of the best ways to improve your playing. Joe is an extraordinary conductor who imparts

his vast musical knowledge to the members of the ensemble. All the members remark how much they have learned from Joe...and how much fun it is! The group gets together the first and third Wednesday of each month at the Moose Lodge in Daly City from 7:00pm to 9:00pm. For more information contact Frank Montoro (650)574-4757.



BAAC Ensemble

Lou Casalnuovo and his quartet, *Sons of the Beach*, played a fine selection of numbers which included *A Shack in Old Shantytown*, *Oh Marie*, and a couple of other numbers which allowed each member to showcase their fine playing. Lou was joined by Charlie McCarthy on trombone, Charlie Balanti on clarinet, Al Cunningham on guitar, and Al Picett on drums.



Sons of the Beach

Last to perform was another special treat, the group *Flowing Tide*. This group featured Rick Rackin on English concertina and guitar, Mike Euritt on anglo concertina and Merilee Buster on fiddle. As they played through a series of Irish jigs, reels and even an Irish polka (just to prove there is such a thing), the audience listened and responded with much enthusiasm for the great tunes they selected.



Flowing Tide

Join us next month for a musical trip to Paris, France. And bring some dessert to share with your BAAC friends!

BAAC Gets Civic Leaders' Attention

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Valarie Morris
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MA in Music, Mills College
(510)222-8442 or (510)222-6672

Lou Jacklich
Private Lessons
Transpose Arrange Chords
50 years experience
510-317-9510
San Lorenzo

South Bay

Mike Zampiceni
Beginner to Advanced
B.A. & M.A. in music
Sunnyvale
408-734-1565

Peninsula

Ron Borelli
Accordion & Piano Lessons
All levels
San Mateo
650-574-5707

A couple of months ago, BAAC member, Lou Soper wrote a fine note to the Mayor and Board of Supervisors of San Francisco. In the letter he described our club and the history of the accordion in San Francisco. He included the fact that the piano accordion was developed and popularized here and that it is the official instrument of San Francisco. He also spoke of the various good things we do as a non-profit organization for the people in SF. In the letter he made available the services of our various musicians and ensemble groups for civic functions.

Evidently Lou got someone's attention as evidenced by the following letter.



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
SAN FRANCISCO



WILLIE LEWIS BROWN, JR.

February 6, 1998

Lou Soper
36570 Bonnie Street
Newark, CA 94560

Dear Mr. Soper:

Thanks for writing to call my attention to the availability of the Bay Area Accordion Club of San Francisco for use in promotions and different City functions.

We are fortunate to have a wealth of talent in the Bay Area, and we shall certainly call upon the B.A.A.C. should an appropriate opportunity arise.

Best regards.

Sincerely,

WILLIE L. BROWN, Jr.
Mayor

WLB:MONS:nw

past two years, food mostly provided and cooked by Steve himself. Steve puts heart and soul into the picnic, and attendees sing his praises. He tells us that he is able to charge \$10 and still make a little profit. Sounds like a winner. It's a little late this year to schedule a joint picnic with Redwood, but that's in the back of our minds. For now, expect barbecued chicken to be provided. Also salads, bread, a bit of beer and a little dessert. Peter will welcome offers of food handling help.

In addition to Peter and Herb's hard working Events Committee (they're also planning our Cotati Festival presence and our October annual dinner), we have two other very busy committees. The Membership Committee, chaired by Frank Montoro, has formalized our methods for welcoming new members and for notifying current members of the necessity for dues payments. Membership cards will go to everyone after the next round of dues payments (September). Committee member Lynn Ewing is now handling our mailing list (which feeds monthly into the newsletter), and Lynn is primarily responsible for the nicely presented Membership List which is now available to everyone. And the Program Committee, chaired by Ed Massolo, is using the concept of themes at our meetings very successfully! How about those two St. Patrick's Day cakes at the March meeting? Weren't they beautiful? (And tasty, of course.) Each committee has 5 or 6 members who are giving their time very willingly to help our Club run smoothly. My appreciation and thanks to each of them, but most especially to Frank and Ed.



Message from your Board

Lou Soper's correspondence with Willy Brown is being published here (page 4) at Lou's request.

With the best of intentions, Lou contacted the city of San Francisco in an effort to promote our club and its members. He now wants Club support for his action in the form of publicity and later, as requested by the City, in the form of pro bono accordionists.

As you know, BAAC is always looking for ideas and volunteers to assist our organization in promoting the accordion. However, any action taken by individuals which makes commitments in the name of the Club must have the blessing and approval of the club.

We certainly do not want to discourage new ideas and enthusiasm, but please check with us before you contact someone and make arrangements on our behalf. The Board as a group or individually cannot and will not be liable for any individual's action, no matter how well intentioned, to speak on behalf of our organization without our approval.

(Signed) The BAAC Board of Directors, Marian Kelly, President.

Contact Phone #s for Officers :	
Pres. Marian Kelly	(650)854-1896
Vice Pres. Joe Smiell	(510)832-6938
Treasurer Josephine Hornbrook	(650)591-3009
Record. Sect. Val Kieser	(510)531-4836

other and joined in some duets. Ed is a fine Chemnitzer player and I was very impressed with his fine collection of beautiful Chemnitzers.

The last night together Ed and I met at the *Eldorado Casino/Hotel*. We went to the casino's *Bistro Roxie* which is a fine restaurant and piano bar where we met *Corky Brumble*. Corky has a really unique style which includes performing on both piano and accordion, singing and an ongoing comedy routine. This versatile musician really impressed me with his smooth performances. He uses MIDI equipment to create prerecorded backup "bands" to accompany his playing. His playing was wonderful on both piano and accordion. His ongoing comedic patter kept everyone in stitches. When asked the secret of success he said that he only goes by his stage name of Corky...all the great musicians only use their first name....Elvis, Cher!

A special thanks to Ed, Corky and Dick for making my trip enjoyable. If other BAAC members let the Editor know of other locations they have been at to hear fine accordion playing I am sure other BAAC members would appreciate the information.

You can submit your favorite restaurant and nightclub spots and professionals can submit the locations they will be appearing at to the editor (address on the back of this newsletter) and I will see that it gets posted in the newsletter.



Community Service Program

by Frank Montoro

Added to the long list of BAAC members who donate time to senior centers is Mary-Alice Eldon. Mary-Alice has recently been playing at the Bonnie Brae Towers in San Mateo.

Our list of volunteers is growing. Please let us know at our April membership meeting if you played during March at convalescent hospitals, senior centers or schools by calling Frank Montoro. It is important that we document our service to our community as part of our tax exempt status. If you are interested in volunteering your services, call Frank at (650)574-4757 and he will help make arrangements for you. (650)574-4757.

The Mysteries of Accordion Reeds Explained.

by guest columnist Alan Polivka

Question: My accordion has 3/4 banks of reeds...what does it mean? Also, when an accordion is tuned wet or musette how are the reeds tuned in relation to each other and how does this compare to a dry tuned accordion?

Answer: 3/4 means you have 3 sets of reeds on the right hand side and 4 sets on the left hand side (unless you have something like a Titano that breaks them into twice as many short blocks). On the left hand side there are typically two sets of reeds per reed block. Each reed block has two sides, with reeds on each side except for one of the bass reed blocks in accordions that have an odd number of bass reed sets.

An accordion typically will not have all the bassoon reeds on the same block, nor all the clarinet reeds on the same block. Rather, the reeds are usually grouped on the blocks according to white keys vs. black keys. This is done in order to compensate for the difference in lever-arm length between white keys and black keys. An exception is some tone chambered accordions which have to make different arrangements to accommodate the chamber.

In response to the second question the clarinet reeds are tuned straight (exactly one octave higher than the bassoon reeds, e.g. to A=440 Hz).

Standard accordion marking indicates the number of reeds in each octave. Lowest reed (Bassoon) is the bottom dot, number of middle reeds are indicated by the number of dots in the middle space and high reed (if present) indicated by dot in top space.



Example of 3 treble reeds; one bassoon, one clarinet and one piccolo.



Example of 4 treble reeds; one bassoon and three middle reeds.



Example of 4 treble reeds; one bassoon, two middle reeds (clarinet and violin) and one high reed piccolo.

Though they can be tuned the same as the clarinet reeds, the violin reeds (second set of middle reeds) are typically tuned sharp. The farther apart the two sets of reeds are tuned, the "wetter" the accordion is said to be tuned. The closer they are tuned together, the "drier" the accordion is said to be tuned.

On a 4/5 accordion, you can have three sets of middle octave reeds plus the single bassoon reed (the 5 indicates 5 sets of bass reeds). The third middle set may be tuned sharp or flat relative to the clarinet reeds, depending upon the person doing the tuning, etc. More often than not the third set will be tuned flat. Musette accordions, polka accordions, and vari-

ous other types will typically have this reed arrangement (3 middle octave reeds).

On the other hand, some 4/5 accordions have only two sets of middle octave reeds, with the fourth set of reeds being piccolo reeds. Piccolo reeds are an octave higher than clarinet reeds (two octaves higher than bassoon reeds). Piccolo reeds, like clarinet reeds, are always tuned totally dry.

About the author. Alan Polivka is an accordion repairman who lives in Florida. His explanations of the mysteries of accordions, that he submits to the Internet occasionally, are well done.

\$50 Reward Offered!!

Did you make a video recording of the Jan. 27th American Music Hall Award show on TV that featured a special appearance by Those Darn Accordions, Drew Carey, Yankovic and Contino? If so I will pay you \$50 for a copy. Call O. Henry Olsen at 415-461-2140 or write to me at 107 Altura, Greenbrae, Calif. 94904

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Accordion Roots

Compilation of facts from the Internet

The accordion is a highly complicated musical instrument with a highly complicated life history. Although it is usually said to have been invented during the early 19th century, its origins can be traced as far back as 1100 B.C., to a Chinese instrument known as the *sheng*. This was a device which consisted of a wooden mouthpiece attached to a gourd that was equipped with bamboo pipes of varying lengths. According to one legend it was invented by a Chinese emperor; another story gives credit to a Chinese empress.

While the Chinese were blowing their *sheng*, the Greeks and the Egyptians were pumping their bellows. Archaeologists have unearthed sculptured representations of musicians playing bellows-operated instruments. These designs resulted in two well-known instruments called the *portative* and the *regal*. Both had bellows and a keyboard, and were in these respects related to the accordion. But both lacked the typical accordion sound which is created by the vibration of a free reed. It was from the *sheng* that the free reed principle was derived.

The *sheng* could have been brought to Europe by missionaries returning from the orient, by trading caravans, or even by the Crusaders returning from the Holy Wars. Whatever route it took, however, it had its musical rendezvous with destiny in Berlin in 1822 when Friedrich Buschmann built an instrument called the *hanaoline*. Seven years later, Cyrillus Damian of Vienna came out with an improved version called the *accordion*. This however didn't have much resemblance to your own accordion. Knowing a good thing when they heard it, numerous manufacturers chimed in. The result was a not too harmonious production of a variety of types of the new instrument.

It took a few more years for the many variations of the accordion to become more sophisticated but even today the accordion is in a constant state of development and flux. Free bass accordion, MIDI accordion, different keyboard layouts, even new electronic versions that don't have real reeds but instead have electronically sampled sounds from real accordions are just some of the family that has joined the more traditional varieties.

Probably no instrument has been so versatile, seen so many different variations and been accepted in so many different musical styles. In future articles we will explore more interesting tidbits of the history of the accordion.

To join BAAC send a check for \$10
(until Sept. 30) to:
BAAC
31 Aliso Way
Portola Valley, Ca. 94028.

March Board Meeting Synopsis

◆ Treasurer Josephine Hornbrook reports bank balances totaling \$10,986. The Board asked her to move \$2,000 from the savings account into a CD so that we may earn more interest.

◆ The April agenda will include a comparison of budgeted receipts and expenses to actual for the first six months of our year.

◆ The Irish night program on March 2nd was a success, but was marred by excessive noise at the back of the room during the performances. This is a BAAC problem of long standing, but it was particularly apparent at the March meeting, when people were actually getting up to leave and folding their chairs when the last act was still going on. In the future, the President will take the stage at such times and ask the Membership Committee to go to the noisy individuals and ask them to keep quiet. We hope that will help.

◆ Peter Adler recommended, and the Board agreed, that this year's Picnic, on September 20th at the Nature Friends in Oakland, be run similar to the pattern Steve Balich has set with his Redwood Club. We will charge (probably \$10) admission and will provide all the food.

◆ The Board agreed that we would donate \$500 to the Cotati Festival Committee this year, as we have done in the past. In exchange, we receive booth space, an ad in the program, and our name on the Jam Tent.

◆ The decision of whether to raffle an accordion as a fund raiser was deferred, pending ideas from each Board member about how else we might raise the \$1,000 which we budgeted.

◆ To help us in restructuring membership costs and door fees, the Membership Committee will do a survey in April of persons who attend the general meeting, to determine how many attendees are members.

Marian Kelly

FOR SALE LISTINGS

Three accordions for sale. 2- 120 bass and 1-80 bass. All in excellent condition including cases. Reasonably priced. Call (408)296-6123.

One accordion for sale. Iorio Syntara MIDI Accordion 4/5 reeds, 120 bass. \$1800. Call (408)297-4558.

One accordion for sale. Piermaria C6. 41 treble, 120 bass. 4 treble/6 bass superior handmade reeds. Beautiful sounding and looking professional quality Italian instrument. Asking \$3,000. Call (415)924-6901.

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Marian Kelly	Joe Smiell	Josephine Hornbrook	Val Kieser

If you would like to play at a meeting contact Ed Massolo at (650)589-8409

