

Newsletter of the

SAN FRANCISCO CALIFORNIA U.S.A.



BAY AREA

ACCORDION CLUB



November General Meeting

by Bob Berta

The November meeting proved to be one of the best meetings to date!

President **Frank Montoro** started out the meeting with a report on **Gordon Piatanesi's** retirement dinner which was fabulous. Over 80 members celebrated **Gordon's** retirement at the Spanish Cultural center in San Francisco. A heartfelt thanks was offered to **Gordon** for all of the years of service to accordionists everywhere...to say he will be missed is an understatement!

The big announcement of the evening, though, was that **Myron Floren** has agreed to put on a concert for us! The date is not set yet but this promises to be a VERY big event. We are planning on over 400 people attending! Much help will be needed in getting the word out and organizing the event. Volunteers will be much appreciated. **Myron** will play with a backup band, so this will be a first rate show. That announcement generated a lot of enthusiasm, but now the members were anxious to hear some great music....and they got it!

Our trusty M.C., **Domenic Saso** took over the program from Frank now to

cont. on p. 4

BAAC's Christmas Party

Put on your Festive hat and be sure to attend BAAC's December general meeting! And bring your family! Santa will distribute goodies to all the good little boys and girls, and perhaps to some of the bigger ones. We'll never reveal Santa's identity, of course. Come a little hungry, because there will also be cake, coffee, and soda.

For the third (or is it the fourth?) year, we'll have a Christmas Carol sing-a-long, led by ex-pres. Mr. Soper (who else?).

A guest from Birmingham, England, Pam Bishop, will play her duet concertina for us and tell us about it. In England, Pam is a member of two bands, one acoustic, the other noisy and electric, both of which play music for dancing. She adds that she enjoys French music in particular, but also likes Irish, American, and Swedish styles.

And Joe Smiell will play his button box and tell us about that!

We've also scheduled John Molinari as a soloist and the San Francisco Accordion Ensemble, who still haven't found a horse for the last couple measures of "Sleigh Ride."

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

December 5th, Monday. BAAC Christmas Meeting, 7:00 PM. Featuring Lou Soper's Christmas Carol Sing-a-long, Pam Bishop (see related article), Joe Smiell, John Molinari, and the San Francisco Accordion Ensemble. Donworth Hall, 22nd and Eucalyptus, San Francisco.

December 7th, Wednesday. BAAC Board Meeting, 7:30 PM. Ed Massolo's, 612 Lassen, So. S.F. Guests are welcome. (415) 589-8409.

December 14th, Wednesday. BAAC Accordion Ensemble Rehearsal, 7:00. House of Parties, Daly City. Call Joe Smiell, (510) 832-6938.

January 2, 1995, BAAC January General Meeting.

January 9th, 1995, Monday. Fun Band Rehearsal, 7:00 PM. House of Parties, Daly City. Call the director, Domenic Saso, at (415) 587-7557.

January 11th, Wednesday. BAAC Accordion Ensemble Rehearsal, House of Parties. Also January 25th.

March 5th, 1995, Sunday afternoon. Veikko Ahvenainen concert, Mercy High School, San Francisco.

Anchorage Accordion Festival

by Denny Huff

One of the things I like about the accordion community (dubbed "Accordonia" by S.F.'s new Main Squeeze) is that it's like a microcosm of the world. There's something for everyone. If you are "into" classical accordion music or individual, virtuoso accordion players, then Anchorage may not have been your thing. But if you liked lively music with crowd appeal, a smattering of accordion vendors and the atmosphere of San Francisco's Fisherman's Wharf, then the *Anchorage Accordion Festival* would have brightened your afternoon. And indeed, a number of BAAC members could be seen enjoying themselves on the stage and among the crowd.

There was certainly plenty of Cajun music (which personally appeals to me,) and the featured bands were two which we all recognize - **Those Darn Accordions** and **Jim Boggio & the Sonoma Swamp Dogs**. Though missing from Cotati, Jim is alive and well and involved in the planning of a new accordion festival for next year (I'm sure he'll keep us informed.) Strolling musicians who provided music in and around the Center were BAAC members Bob Delgado, Dominic Palmisano and Cindy Tuculet and Gene Lovello, among others. And of course, Lou Soper was there with his customary table of accordions, music, conversation and playing tips for interested by-passers.

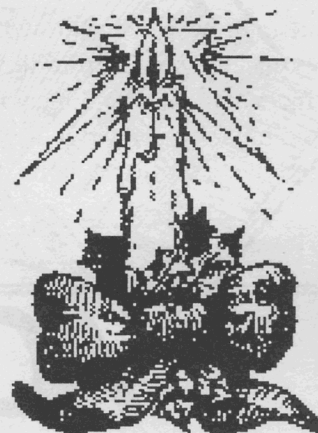
The showcase event was the "Main Squeeze" contest which featured several

familiar faces. And in **Clyde Forsman's** case a familiar body - Clyde shed his shirt and modeled his many tattoos for the admiring and obviously pleased crowd. But the BAAC sentimental favorite was **Jan Schellenberger** who dressed as the Phantom of the Opera and played the accompanying music which he also played for the club at the September meeting. Jan acquitted himself very well, both with his playing and in speaking with obvious composure to the rather large crowd. He didn't win, but we were all quite proud of him.

The winner was a very unique act which didn't exactly fit the profile of the average BAAC member. **Nichole Daluz** played well (particularly considering that she had only two year's accordion experience,) composed her own song, sang with a great voice and even more emotion, and, along with her accompanying guitarist and K9 companion Duffy, was cleverly attired. **Congratulations Nichole!** Second Place went to the **Gospel Accordion to Women**, playing their latest song, "The Janet Reno and Joycelyn Elders Polka," played to the music of "It's a Small World." Their costumes, lyrics and sense of humor were quite inventive and entertaining. I'm glad I wasn't a Judge!

Editor's Note: BAAC member Nancy DeStefanis, the Bandleader of the Gospel Accordion to Women reports that the all-woman, 9-member band gets together several times a year and plays gratis at events promoting the advancement of women.

CHRISTMAS IDEA!!!



Here's a great idea (courtesy of Frank Montoro) for Christmas.

Give a 6-month membership in BAAC for only \$10, half the regular price. Send \$10 to Glenn, our "Teller", with the recipient's name and address, and Glenn will not only sign 'em up, but will also send to either of you a note from BAAC announcing your thoughtfulness.

This is a terrific way to spread the word about Your Favorite Accordion Club, to spread some Christmas cheer, and to increase our membership roster all at the same time. Everybody wins!

Send checks for \$10, made payable to BAAC, to Glenn McClelland at 872 N. Central, Campbell, CA 95008.



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President's Message

Things are a-happening at BAAC. We continue to draw sizeable crowds at our monthly meetings and, from the smiles on the faces of those attending, you know we're doing something right. Another fine accordion quartet made its debut at last Monday's meeting and soloists continue to amaze us.

Thanks to all of you who made Gordon Piatanesi's testimonial dinner such a success. Gloria and Gordon were very pleased and expressed their appreciation to the more than 80 members and friends who attended. Afterwards, Bob Berta presented the Piatanesis with an album of black and white prints which he took and developed and Ed Zaro gave them a video tape as a remembrance.

Looking to the future, our next meeting will be our annual Christmas party. Joe Smiell will be in charge of the program. The San Francisco Accordion Ensemble, community singing by Lou Soper, cake and coffee, candy for the children and, of course Santa are all on the program.

And we are making plans for a really big concert some time next year by a nationally known artist, none other than Myron Floren. We are really excited by this event and we'll keep you posted as plans develop.

Thanks to all of you for another outstanding year and Seasons Greetings to you and your families.

Frank Montoro

Book Review

Accordion Man: The Legendary

Dick Contino is a new book available through Petosa Accordions. Bob Bove, one of the book's two authors, first met Dick Contino while on a tour of duty in Korea. Dick and his troupe were entertaining in the Pusan area at Bob Bove's battery's position. The two struck up a relationship which evolved over the years into a friendship.

He and co-author Lou Angellotti move chronologically through Dick's life, from his birth in Fresno, early musical training in San Francisco with Angelo Cognazzo, and his sudden transformation by Horace Heidt into a legend in part one of the book. The second part chronicles the good and bad times of the rest of Dick's life and career up to the present.

Bove explains that he was inspired to write the book to set the record straight on the story of Contino's life. He wants everyone to know of Dick Contino, the man who, in the face of tremendous adversity, righted his life with the assistance of a loving family, a devoted friend, and countless fans.

To purchase a copy of "Accordion Man: The Legendary Dick Contino," by Bove and Angellotti, mail \$17.95 (includes shipping and handling) to Petosa Accordions 313 N.E. 45th Street, Seattle, WA 98105. If book is to be shipped to Washington state, include 8.2% sales tax. Be sure to include your name, address, and phone number and the number of books.

November Board Meeting

Synopsis

- Treasurer reported bank balances totaling \$7954.
- President Montoro told of a highly successful testimonial dinner for Gordon Piatanesi.
- The Pres. is in discussions with Myron Floren, who has agreed to be featured in a BAAC-sponsored concert in 1995, date yet to be determined.
- We are still in search of an alternative picnic site which will cost us less than the \$1500 that the Palo Alto Elks Club is now charging. If no alternative has surfaced by January, we will use the Elks Club

facilities as before but will have to increase the admission.

- General meetings will be called to order at 7:15 to allow members a little more time to socialize.
- Domenic Saso and Frank Schlotter attended the meeting to request that BAAC sponsor the newly reorganized "Fun Band" The Board approved the idea. (See calendar for rehearsal schedule).
- Glenn McClelland has volunteered to start a BAAC historical photo album.
- The December Christmas meeting will feature cake, coffee, soda, Santa Claus, and carol singing.

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November General Meeting, cont.

introduce **Reno Pucci** playing a rocker switch Excelsior which had a wonderful tone and complimented his choice of music for the night. He played "Repaz Band March", "Poor People of Paris,



Val Kieser, Harry Harum, Lee Woodall, Mary-Alice Eldon

"Under the Double Eagle", and a medley of popular themes.

Algis Ratnikas was next up. The first portion of his program was a lesson in how to erect a music stand. Turns out that several other performers that night also had a hard time getting their stands to stand up. Perhaps we need a workshop on this subject! **Algis** entertained us with "El Choclo," "One Fine Day" from Madame Butterfly, and "Under Paris Skies."

Next up was the quartet of **Lee Woodall, Val Kieser, Mary-Alice Eldon, and Harry Harum**. After going through the ritual of getting their music stands to stand up, they entertained with delightful renditions of "Bergchilbi Landler," then a landler study in 3 parts by Joe Smiell, then "Sattelegg Landler" in two parts, also by Joe. Their playing was fantastic...and probably a lot better than my spelling of the names of the tunes they played. By the way, a landler is a German waltz for us non-German-speaking accordionists.

After the mid-program "fluid management break," the entertainment continued with the duet of **Brian and Marlene McBride**. They performed selections from Phantom of the Opera and Les

Mis-erables then pulled the audience into the action with a sing-a-long featuring **Brian** on trumpet and accordion

at the same time (!) and **Marlene's** vocals. A nice way to start the second half.



Mike Zampecini

Bart Beninco, a member we don't hear from as often as we would like, took the stage with some incredible playing of "A Media Luz Tango," "Lo Polaro," and "Peanut Vendor". Bart can be heard frequently at Volpi's restaurant in Petaluma. His playing, intonation, and arrangements were magnificent and left the audience wanting a lot more. Hopefully we will see him again soon!

A new member from Sunnyvale, **Mike Zampecini**, was asked at the last moment to play for us, and play he certainly did. Many members had had the opportunity to hear him demonstrating the new Concerto MIDI accordion the day before at the Hyatt Regency. This time he borrowed the Excelsior and remarked that it was similar to the one his father used to play. His playing of "Flight of the Angels," "Pennsylvania Polka" and "Español Cani" were excellent. I especially enjoyed his inspired arrangements of each selection.

Final performer of the night was **Peter Di Bono**. He started with a neat warmup New York medley of familiar tunes like "East Side, West Side", "Autumn in New York," and "New York, New York." He then proceeded through "Chitarra Romano," a Chopin waltz, "First Loss," "Nola," and "Dance of the Comedians." Peter is a great musician and the members always look forward to hearing his unusual arrangements.

After that, some satisfied folks went home, while others gathered at Lyons for yet more accordionizing.

Who's Playing??

Joe Simoni and Marian Kelly....in Fiddler on the Roof, at the Fox Theater, 2215 Broadway, Redwood City. Friday, Dec 2nd through Sunday, Dec. 18th, incl. some Wednesdays and Thursdays. Call Peninsula Center Stage Box Office, 415-363-8581.

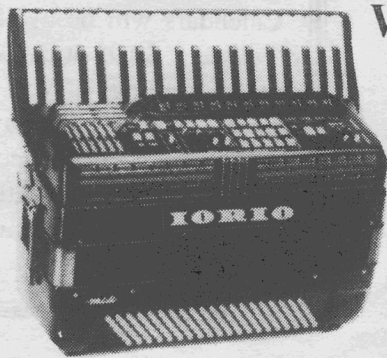
They're not BAAC members, but you shouldn't miss the four fellows who play the bandoneon throughout the show at Theater on the Square, 450 Post in San Francisco. The show is **Forever Tango**; the cast and orchestra is Argentinian—you'd swear Astor Piazzolla was conducting—the dancing is first rate, and the 10-piece orchestra (including the 4 bandoneons) is amazing. The Little Man that the Chronicle uses is jumping out of his chair. **Tango** runs through the end of December. Call Theater-on-the-Square at (415) 433-9500 and treat yourself to a memorable evening.

MIDI Demo

You are invited to a Demonstration of a small, inexpensive, easy-to-use Expander Module which will turn your acoustic accordion into a MIDI unit.
Midday demo: Wednesday, Nov. 30th at 10 AM.
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MODELS

C-411 P MIDI P: 41 treble keys, 120 basses, 4/5 sets of Musette Hand finished reeds, 11 treble shifts, 5 Bass shifts. Color: Black. Keyboard size: 19 1/4". Built-In Stereo pick up system.

C-500P MIDI: Same as Model C411 P Midi except with Hand Made reeds.

C-502DP MIDI: 41 Treble keys, 120 basses, 4/5 sets of Hand Made Reeds, DOUBLE TONE CHAMBER, (1 Bassoon, 2 middle, 1 piccolo reeds) 11 treble shifts, 7 bass shifts, 1 Master shift. Color: Black. Keyboard Size 19 1/4". Plus built-in Stereo pick up system.

C-502DP-M: Same as Model C-502DP Midi unit except with Mother of Pearl Treble Keys and Basses.

CALL TODAY FOR COMPLETE INFORMATION 1-800-622-3525

Gordon and Gloria Dinner

by Denny Huff

Sitting around the accordion equivalent of the cracker barrel, listening to the old timers reminisce about the instrument's heyday, I've heard it stated that you could walk into any music store and the accordions would be lined up on the shelves like guitars are today. One might ask one's self, "Where did all these accordions come from?"

Well... at one time there were at least 7 accordion manufacturers here in San Francisco alone, and on Sunday night, October 23, 1994, a large group of accordion players and fans paid tribute to the retirement of the last of these fine companies, Colombo & Sons. **Gordon Piatanesi** and his lovely wife **Gloria** were the Guests of Honor at a festive dinner at the El Patio Espanol on Alemany which featured a pleasant meal, accordion music (played on Colombo accordions of course) and appropriate tribute to Gordon and Gloria.

Our Master of Ceremonies, **Domenic Saso**, did his usual fine job of handling the microphone, but when he got to the history of the company, Gordon couldn't constrain himself from jumping in to assist. Gordon's Grandfather, Colombo, learned the trade in Castelfidardo, Italy (World Capital of Accordion Manufacturing) before immigrating to America in 1907, where he began by buying into and operating the Guerrini Company in San Francisco. In 1927 Colombo and his two sons sold their interest in Guerrini and began the Columbo

and Sons Company which operated continuously until 1994. The Columbo accordion quickly became one of the most respected in the field, and the quality and service offered by three generations of Piatanesi allowed the company to out last all of the then robust competitors in the area. Those interested can find further details in the Golden Age of the Accordion, which also included an interesting section on Gordon's Great Uncles who were involved in accordion manufacturing in Chicago.

Throughout the evening appropriate musical selections were provided by **Frank Panacci** and **Gina Avola**. We later learned that at one time Frank actually worked for the Colombo Company. Now there's an interesting piece of BAAC accordion trivia!

It would serve no purpose to mention all of the many speakers who stepped forward to recognize and pay tribute to Gordon and Gloria, but it was very easy to identify the common thread in all of the comments. A gentleman.... always available to help.... did whatever it took to solve a customer's problem (including sending the accordion to a competitor!)..... stood behind everything he did or sold... made a great accordion! It was obvious that the quality of the man was equal to and as important as the quality of the accordion.

Gordon was presented with several plaques and a banner which we all signed (made up by **Glenn McClelland**.) Gor-

don and Gloria were thankful for the attention and honor, and Gordon stressed that he was only retiring - not leaving the area. He assured us all that he fully intended to remain in contact with all of his many friends in the accordion community. And we intend to hold him to that promise!

Congratulations Gordon and Gloria! And thanks to **Frank Montoro, Glenn McClelland, Bob Berta, Frank Panacci, Gina Avola** and all of the others who helped make the event a rousing success.

Date With an Accordion 1995 Calendar

What a good idea! What a great gift! An accordion calendar, which opens to 11" x 17", featuring big color photos of 13 famous accordionists, one for each month plus Galla-Rini! Other names you'll recognize include Myron Floren, Carmen Carrozza, Dick Contino.

Calendars will be available for purchase at \$9.95 at BAAC's December meeting. If you can't attend the meeting, you may order a calendar from Petosa Accordions, 313 N.E. 45th St., Seattle, WA, 98105, enclosing the same \$9.95.

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Accordions on the Superhighway

by Bob Berta

For those of you into computers...are you familiar with the Internet computer network? Internet connects schools, large companies, military, and individuals through telephone lines, but using digital information instead of a voice. The Internet is in most countries, and has over 20 million people tied to it.

I have Internet access through my company. It turns out that there are thousands of special interest groups on the "Net." Marian Kelly introduced me to one group devoted to the accordion. Joining is simply a matter of sending a Net note to the group indicating that you wish to join. Once on the membership list, you will be able to send and receive messages from the other 350+ members of the accordion group throughout the world. (Editor's note: we found Pam Bishop, who will be our guest and will play for us at our December meeting, through the Net. We read her message that she would be visiting Berkeley from her place of work in England and asking whether there were persons interested in the accordion in the Bay Area; we began a dialog with her as if she lived in the next town!) You will have the choice of either sending a message to an individual or sending it to a group of individuals, such as the accordion group, since both individuals and groups have their own distinctive "Net address".

In the short time I have been on the Net, I have made contact with a person at the University of Dundee in Scotland, a physicist in Germany, several people from Scandinavia, and many from the British Isles in addition to people from across the US and Canada. While this group tends to be populated by people with a preference for concertinas, melodeons and button boxes, there are many who are piano accordion players and even several who are MIDI accordionists.

The Net is a fine way to research

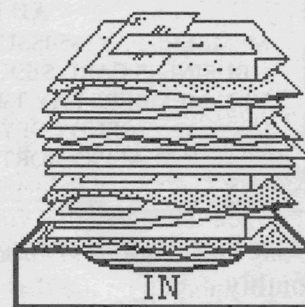
obscure music and accordion history publications from Europe. There is talk about a used instrument listing in the future. Recently I placed a note inviting visitors to the Bay Area to visit our club, and we have picked up a couple more local members who read that message.

Access the accordion group from the net with the address "accordion@cs.cmu.edu."

New Members

Stella Allison, Damascus, MD
 George Alves, San Jose, CA
 Rose Marie Bacon, San Mateo, CA
 Hans Bakke, Portola Valley, CA
 Jeff Baldwin, San Jose, CA
 Stephen Baron, Chicopee, MA
 Nancy De Stefanis,
 San Francisco, CA
 Donald Gilbrook, Danville, CA
 Carl Hoeckner, Danville, CA
 Yvonne Huhtala, Fremont, CA
 Prudence Kerr, San Rafael, CA
 Greg Urban, Berkeley, CA

Welcome to all of you!



October 24, 1994

Recently I had the pleasure of participating in a memorial concert in Amsterdam, Holland for the well known Dutch accordionist, Johnny Meyer, who passed away in 1993. I met Johnny on one of my trips to Amsterdam in 1974.

The concert was held on Oct. 2nd with a variety of Dutch accordion ensembles and a one-hour video of his life and music. Appearing with me were four musicians who performed with me at the North Sea Jazz Festival some time ago.

Johnny's friends and fans contributed to have a life-sized accordion carved from a large block of stone and mounted on his burial place. Enclosed is a photo of me placing a floral memorial at the grave site.

My wife Dorothy accompanied me as a guest of the organizing committee. We both enjoyed being with the Dutch people and meeting many accordion enthusiasts.

As a point of interest, Rhino Records of Los Angeles is issuing a CD and cassette in January, 1995 titled: "Legends of the Accordion" on which I have a selection.

My best regards to all of the members of the club.

Sincerely,
 Art Van Damme



Art Van Damme

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The *Bay Area Accordion Club Newsletter* is published monthly .

Editor Marian Kelly
Editorial Assistant Denny Huff
Contributing Writers Bob Berta, Denny Huff
Photography Bob Berta
Distribution Glenn McClelland

Send all newsletter-related communications to:

Marian Kelly
31 Aliso Way
Portola Valley, CA 94028

Deadline for each issue is the *second* Monday of the month.


discovery printing! (415) 967-3777 Sunnyvale, CA



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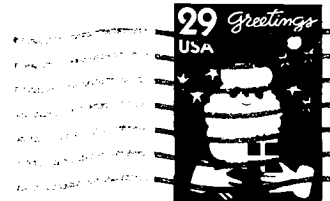
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NEXT MEETING: MONDAY
Dec. 5, 1994
7:00 PM

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