

# June, 2024

Sunday, June 16, 2024

**Gary Blair with guest Robin Hyland**

Chetcuti Community Room — Millbrae, CA

2:00 pm - 5:00 pm PDT

SFAC Members will receive **ZOOM** link via email



**Gary Blair** is an internationally renowned accordionist who has performed at many of the world's largest accordion festivals around the world. A former UK Accordion Champion, Gary has appeared on television and radio worldwide.

In 2003 he was awarded the title of "Honoured Friend of the Accordion" by the *Confédération Internationale des Accor-déonistes* (CIA).

In 2004, he was invited to leave an imprint of his hands in the "album of Gold" of veteran accordionists at the *Museo della Impronta dei Grandi della Firsamonica* (Museum of imprints of the "Greats" of the accordion) in Recoaro Terme, Italy, alongside such fellow artists as Anthony Galla-Rini, Friedrich Lipps, Art Van Damme and Frank Marocco. Gary is frequently a guest performer at venues such as *Accordionist and Teachers Guild* conventions, the *Las Vegas International Accordion Convention* and many local festivals such as Cotati, Leavenworth and Silver Falls. If Gary is not busy enough teaching and performing, he is also the Musical Director of the *Jimmy Blair Accordion Orchestra*, founded by his father, and his own band *The Gary Blair Ceilidh Band*. For more information on Gary and his current activities, please visit [Gary Blair's Facebook Page](#).

Performing alongside Gary will be fellow accordionist **Robin Hyland**.

Gary and Robin have been performing together for a number of years now. It first started when Robin contacted Gary for lessons. It didn't take Gary long to realise Robin had a gift for playing 2nd Accordion and he invited him to join the Gary Blair Ceilidh Band as 2nd Accordion player. They have previously performed together at the Carrefour Mondial De l'Accordéon in 2017, The Eastbourne Accordion Festival, and at the Premio Internazionale Fisarmonica in Castelfidardo, Italy. This year, they will again be performing at the Eastbourne Accordion festival and at the Leavenworth International Accordion Celebration in Washington state.



Please welcome **Gary and Robin** to the SFAC for this special performance on Father's Day, June 16th!

The meeting will start with a Jam Session, and Gary and Robin will begin performing at approximately 3:30.

# Celebrating Mom Musically

By Ken Schwartz

Our May meeting coincided with Mother’s Day, and what a treat was in store for those who attended, both in person and via the Zoom stream.

The jam band, capably led by Joseph Martin, was large, with no fewer than 10 participants! Practice is paying off; the group is improving with each get-together as it tackles new songs, rhythms and keys. Many thanks to Robert and Elaine Cooperstein for creating our terrific jam books, which enable these wonderful jam sessions.

Having lost our cherished member **Lou Jacklich** a little over a week ago, not surprisingly we reminisced on his life and how we had all learned from



this master accordionist and teacher who had had over 1000 students, all treated as if they were aspiring professional musicians. Joseph created and displayed a beautiful banner, which was to have celebrated Lou’s upcoming 96<sup>th</sup> birthday in August. During the intermission, we celebrated Lou’s life with reminiscences. I noted how much we had been inspired by Lou through his music, wisdom, and generosity; and how much we had all learned from him, including those of us who hadn’t been students. **Scott Anderson**, a long-time student of 25 years, noted Lou had had a long, fulfilling life and that it was a privilege to have known him. Lou valued and generously supported the Club, desiring that it successfully continue its mission.

In honor of his wife, originally from the Philippines, **Scott Anderson** performed the lovely song *Dahil Sa Iyo (Because of You)*. Beautifully performed by Scott on his magnificent accordion, the song was written by Mike Velarde in 1938 and made Imelda Marcos famous. Scott followed with an equally lovely rendition of *Bésame Mucho*. Everyone enjoyed it. Ken noted how well Scott had learned from his mentor, Mr. Jacklich, who would have been so pleased with Scott’s performance.



**Joseph Martin**, another of Mr. Jacklich’s students, performed a lovely *Ciao, Ciao Palermo Waltz* (composed by Frank Marocco); followed by *Adios, Au Revoir, Auf Wiedersehen* (George Cates), which Joseph performed on Mike Zampicini’s 140 bass Excelsior. Some may remember this fun song, which was featured weekly as the closing credits theme song for the popular Lawrence Welk TV show. I recall this song fondly!

**Tseli Wu** performed a trio of songs terrifically. She started with *Millions of Scarlet Roses*, in honor of Mother’s Day, followed by *Ricardo* (in memory of Lou Jacklich), and finally, *Style Musette* (Andre Verchuren). Tseli plays with a soothing, relaxed style, complemented with wonderful musette tone from her Pignini Preludio cherrywood accordion.



**Ken Schwartz** next performed *The Man I Love* (George Gershwin, Charles Magnante arrangement) followed by *Under Paris Skies* (Frank Marocco arrangement). Next were our two virtuosos.

**Mike Zampicini** reminisced about Lou Jacklich. As a young 10-year-old Mike first became acquainted with Mr. Jacklich because his photograph was featured on the cover of one of Joseph Zampicini’s publications, Joseph being Mike’s father. Given the vast extent of Mike’s repertoire, we were fortunate enough to get another Lawrence Welk tune, the bouncy opening theme from the show, *Bubbles in the Wine*, composed by Welk and [Frank Loesser](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frank_Loesser) - yet another song I so fondly recall from 7PM Saturday evenings during my student



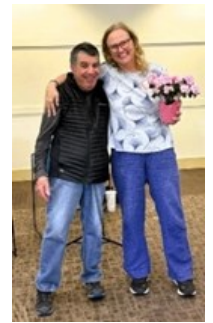
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June, 2024

## Celebrating Mom Musically

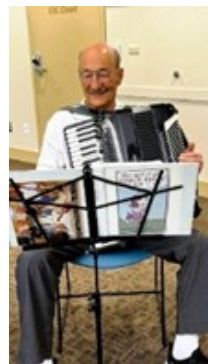
days! Next, Mike performed one of Lou Jacklich’s favorite songs, *Holiday for Strings*. Mike had opened the sheet music for this day’s program and beautifully “winged it,” with page turning assistance from Ron Borelli. Some will recall that this innovative composition was the theme song for the Red Skelton television show (as guessed correctly by **Pamela Tom**, who also noted the composer was David Rose). Mike closed with a wonderful rendition of *Jealousy* (*Jalousie*, Vera Bloom and Jacob Gade).



**Ron Borelli**, who hadn’t been to a Club meeting for quite some time, was most impressed with the musicianship. He complemented the players for their great musical selections and their refreshing performances. Ron borrowed Mike Zampiceni’s Excelsior to perform 2 pieces on the spot, a very unique, jazzy arrangement of *Poinciana*; followed by his terrific arrangement of *El Cumbanchero*. Both were performed flawlessly with Ron’s mastery of jazz. Thank you, Ron, for this impromptu performance. Ron will be our featured performer this upcoming September, so we’ll have yet another opportunity to appreciate his virtuosity.



Finally, Ken presented Rosemary Busher with a flowering azalea plant, for all that she does to enable these meetings and the operations of the Club! Today was special in many ways. We miss Mr. Jacklich. And on this Mothers’ Day, we hope the moms enjoyed this day’s special musical program!



## SFAC Accordion Pros at Cotati

The Cotati Accordion Festival, which may be the most unique annual accordion festival of its kind, takes place Friday to Sunday, August 16-18. Catch SFAC veteran accordion pros Ron Borelli (left) on Saturday 9:45 – 10:00 AM; and Mike Zampiceni on Sunday 10:30 – 11:05 AM. See the full schedule on the Internet at: [cotatifest.com](http://cotatifest.com).



**Ron Borelli**

August 17, 9:45-10:00am



**Mike Zampiceni**

August 18, 10:30-11:05am

*The San Francisco Accordion Club is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt charitable organization whose purpose is to enhance, promote and stimulate an appreciation for the accordion within the membership and throughout the general public. Donations are tax-deductible and gratefully accepted by using the **Donate** button at [www.sfaccordionclub.com](http://www.sfaccordionclub.com)*

# Remembering Lou Jacklich: Master Accordionist and Teacher, 1928-2024

*Pamela Tom, Accordionist and Kenneth E. Schwartz, President of The San Francisco Accordion Club*



Photo Credit: Colette Ogata

Northern California's cherished accordion maestro, Lou Jacklich, passed away peacefully on World Accordion Day, May 6, 2024, after a brief illness. He would have been 96 years old in August.

Lou Jacklich, affectionately known as "Mr. Jacklich", "Maestro Jacklich", or just plain "Lou," was an extraordinarily talented accordionist whose musical career spanned a remarkable 80 years. He remained a vibrant performer and teacher to the end! A virtuoso and innovator from a young age, he had his union card at 16 years old as a vaudeville performer. He starred with and led numerous bands, recorded as an artist for Capitol Records, founded his own accordion school (the Lou Jacklich School of Music), co-owned a music publishing company (**Lou-Rich**), and was one of the first accordionists to master the new electronic accordions in 1960. A distinguished teacher, performer and contributor to the accordion community, Lou was recognized nationwide with multiple meritorious lifetime achievement awards:

- ◆ Lifetime Achievement Award, San Francisco Accordion Club (2014)
- ◆ Honorary Director, Cotati Accordion Festival (2016)
- ◆ Art Van Damme Education Award, Las Vegas International Accordion Convention (2016)
- ◆ Certificate of recognition honoring Lou Jacklich's accordion achievements and leadership, California State Senator Bob Wieckowski, District 10 (2017)
- ◆ Accordion American Hall of Fame, Federation of American Musicians, Singers and Performing Artists, Inc. (2019)
- ◆ Accordion World Hall of Fame, Federation of American Musicians, Singers and Performing Artists, Inc. (2019)
- ◆ \$500 Student Scholarship in honor of Lou Jacklich, sponsored by San Francisco Accordion Club (2023)
- ◆ Mobile Accordion Classroom Honoree, Innovative Accordion Music Productions (2023)

Mr. Jacklich was a valued mentor, teacher, and member of the San Francisco Accordion Club. He led the Club's jam sessions, always instructing, of course. His many wonderful performances before the club were testimony to his mastery of the instrument, and his duets with his students were riveting!

The Maestro performed at accordion clubs throughout California. One of his last recorded performances was January 2023 at the Silicon Valley Accordion Society, where he was a frequent invited guest artist. His performances were based on his own arrangements, often with a jazz interpretation. Ernie Felice inspired Jacklich's jazz style, as exemplified by *I'm in the Mood for Love* and *Fly Me to the Moon*, made available on YouTube by "accordionpam" ([youtu.be/TRnakLu55eM](https://youtu.be/TRnakLu55eM)). His [YouTube site](https://www.youtube.com/@loujacklich1040/videos) includes a wider range of his artistic arrangements ([www.youtube.com/@loujacklich1040/videos](https://www.youtube.com/@loujacklich1040/videos)).

Mr. Jacklich's extended family included over 1400 former students. Teaching was the joy of his life! In fact, his last formal teaching lesson was 3 weeks before he passed. Details of Lou Jacklich's career and audio samples of his innovative style on the electronic accordion are on the Music For Accordion [web site](https://www.musicforaccordion.com/eTracks/inform/jacklich/index.htm) ([www.musicforaccordion.com/eTracks/inform/jacklich/index.htm](https://www.musicforaccordion.com/eTracks/inform/jacklich/index.htm)).

Lou touched so many lives during his time with us. He will be deeply missed. May you rest in peace, Lou Jacklich!



# Students Remember Lou Jacklich, Teacher and Friend

Compiled by Pamela Tom

Many of Lou Jacklich's students have had key roles in serving as performers and volunteer leaders in the SFAC and accordion community. Elaine Cooperstein (newsletter editor) and Randy Hicks (web editor and bookkeeper) are long term SFAC board members. Joseph Martin and Colette Ogata (also Silicon Valley Accordion Society president) have alternated leading the SFAC Jam Band which Lou led in recent years. Many of his students also participated in the Jam Band: Monica Ambalal, Scott Anderson, Elaine Cooperstein, Jennis Lee, Steve Marshall, Tibor Sarkany, and Pamela Tom (who is also an SFAC news reporter). Below, some of Lou's students share their stories and experiences studying with him.

**Colette Ogata:** Casey and I knew Lou for 41 years. Lou placed a newspaper ad for auditions to join an Accordion Band. There were about 23 of us in the International Adult Accordion Band and we played for about 3 years all over the Bay Area, at malls, fairs and many convalescent homes. During the holidays, we always ended up at someone's home playing and visiting until very late. Lou selflessly taught us our parts and helped shape us into quite a nice group of players. He was strict, but he taught us how to count, express, and look up at the band leader often so we would stay together ... such wonderful times. Throughout the years, Lou shared his unwavering love for the accordion with his many students, and he taught us well. I especially loved that whenever his students decided to go somewhere, near or far, Lou always came with us. I am very grateful Lou has been and always will be a very big part of my life. We students will all miss him dearly.



**Monica Ambalal:** Lou Jacklich performed in the early San Francisco theatres as he was contracted out by his agent to work various nightclubs and restaurants in the area. The following dialogue is included in my UC Santa Cruz doctoral dissertation's field work:

**Lou:** "I played in a place on 20th and Mission. It was called the Hollywood Club. That was way back in the 40s. That would be one. We were there for a couple of months. There was a mess of clubs."

**Monica:** "About how old were you?"

**Lou:** "About nineteen. It was a nightclub with entertainment and there were three girls that were the Andrew Sisters, or sang like the Andrew Sisters, and there was a comedian on the show and sometimes we had a magician. We had three acts and the stage was above the public, it was like as high as that thing [Lou points to a shelf about five feet tall] that was the stage and the public was down here, and the smoke was from up there to down here you couldn't see the public sometimes. The smoke from cigarettes was that bad."

**Monica:** "How many sets per day?"

**Lou:** "We played four hours and we had 45 on and 15 off is how it went. That was the union specifications at that time. The Local 6. I had clarinet, bass or a drum (with me). Sometimes we used a drum because we had dancers. The drum was a better background for the dancers. But the singers, we didn't want a drum, we wanted a bass for the singers."

I am fortunate for this evidence from Lou as he represents a handful of the last gigging accordion players in the Bay Area that transitioned from the heyday of vaudeville to the jazz and nightclub scene of the 1950s. As documented in his experience, the clubs were numerous, and he was an active member of the historical musician's union in San Francisco. For my study, his performances in these venues are significant in that his descriptions of spaces, patrons, and setlists strengthen the idea of how quickly neighborhoods in San Francisco changed and where accordion was and was not in demand by the 1960s and 1970s.

**Rich Faria:** I started taking lessons from Lou Jacklich in 1962. In those days, Lou was a tough teacher; my sister came out

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## Lou Jacklich, Teacher & Friend

of her lesson crying many times. In the late sixties he developed a love of biking and started a bike club that I participated in for a few years. I quit taking lessons around 1974, but I always stayed in touch. I often visited him while he was the strolling accordionist at the beer garden in the Alameda County Fair, or Lou's regular gig at the Prime Rib Inn restaurant in San Lorenzo with fellow teacher Wayne Siligo who played guitar. Lou and Wayne got the gig without any real practice together. And yet they meshed together very quickly and sounded awesome. I would also visit Lou at the antique clothing store of his wife, Phyllis. He was always busy helping out at the store. I would often see Lou riding his bike on the shoreline heading to the San Leandro marina over the years.



By far the most fun I've ever had with Lou was when I picked up the accordion again and resumed lessons with him after nearly 40 years of not playing. I often commented about how different the teacher-student relationship was from when I was a child. As a child student you just pretty much shut up and did what you were told. As an adult student I had lots and lots of questions. But, it was always Lou's sense of humor that kept me smiling and always will. In all capacities, Lou lived life to the fullest. What a great role model for all of us to follow.

**Jane Tripi:** Sometimes my lessons were a real challenge because my technique is not so good with arthritic bent fingers. So, I prefer facing the challenges of improv on familiar tunes. He liked to trick me by changing keys and changing rhythms, but that was fun for me. The hardest for me was when Lou would play a tune I had heard, and I had to find the notes and the key. The only way that worked for me was to find the chord and then find the tune. These were not 3-chord tunes. These tunes would go into unexpected chords, but it was still a challenge and fun.



**Scott Anderson:** Lou spent his whole life playing and teaching our beloved accordion. He entered the musicians' union as a teenager (going on the road to play vaudeville) and got his first regular gig at the Stumble Down Inn, at the tender age of 17. Too young to drink, but old enough to play. Lou lived by example, maintaining his formal bearing and timeless style. Lou taught lessons in music by actively playing, and by sharing stories of his own musical experiences.

One of Lou's stories, for example, described showing up for a concert, and being introduced to an audience, only to realize that he had forgotten to bring an accordion. He played piano, pulling off the gig with aplomb. Some of Lou's other timeless stories include "breaking down in a car wearing lederhosen (quite the image, changing a tire) and "playing at a nudist colony" (declining to disrobe to prevent compression injuries), successfully "straddling separated cruise ships" wearing his accordion in the SF Bay...because he got on the wrong harbor cruise ship in the first place. The list goes on.

The common theme was the need to be ready for anything. Lou's *First Rule of Strolling* was, "Don't be annoying." Who can argue with that? Lou treated his students as aspiring professionals. I feel privileged to have known and studied with him for a quarter of a century. Rest in Peace, Maestro Lou Jacklich.

**David Lanyon:** When I think of Lou, I remember my Musical Father from when he was at the back of the "ballroom" at my first accordion festival in Long Beach, CA. I was 8 years old, nervous as h--l. I had just gotten bumped from third to perform to first. I got all ready to play and froze. I looked for him and we made eye contact and he gently nodded and that was all I needed. I competed with Lou's arrangement of *Boogie Woogie Swing* and came home with a trophy. Along with that, whenever I needed something, or had a musical question about anything, he was always there.

He was the consummate accordionist. He set the standard of how to do it and how to do it properly. A number of times in my life the opportunity came up to learn or do something that would have been time consuming to do or accomplish. Thanks to Lou, I'd rather practice my accordion. I like to believe I speak for all us who



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## Lou Jacklich, Teacher & Friend

were able to learn from him and hear him play, that we were very inspired, privileged, and blessed to know him and hear him play.

**Randy Hicks:** Lou was not what I would call a "cookie cutter" teacher whose only approach to teaching was through strict adherence to the accordion method favored by the teacher (Sedlon, Palmer Hughes, etc.). Lou would dig deeper to find out what interested his students - what type of music they liked and pieces they hoped to play, and then incorporate that understanding into their lessons, while not abandoning the learning progression laid out in the accordion method. Lou was flexible in meeting you where you were in terms of prior musical education and skills. I came to Lou as a conservatory graduate with a minor in Piano and Organ, pushing the limits of "middle age." Lou respected that and while not cutting me any slack on learning the left hand, and the "mechanics" of the accordion, I often felt like my hour with Lou was more of a collaboration with a respected colleague than a "lesson" in the traditional sense.

Lou's years of experience performing and teaching made him a very wise man, and the thing I appreciated most was Lou's flexibility and ability to keep you interested in what you were learning and in playing the accordion. Lou understood that as an adult student taking lessons solely for the purpose of challenging myself and enjoyment, there were pieces or skills I had no interest in learning and when it came up, we would agree on alternative pieces. Lou was a master of all genres, and his knowledge of the repertoire was immense. Lou also knew how to challenge you or better put, how to get you to challenge yourself. Lou could easily identify the boundaries of one's comfort zone, and I appreciate that he would challenge me and taught me that there were things I could do and pieces I could play that I would never have imagined possible or been tempted to try. I think because of the mutual respect that Lou harbored for his students and the support and encouragement he gave each of us is evidenced by the number of loyal and caring students that have kept up with Lou, beyond the confines of the studio. You started as a student, and soon became a friend.

**Joseph Martin:** About a year and a half ago, I started taking accordion lessons with Lou Jacklich. When I first met him, I asked him about lessons, he said that he did teach, but he did not take just any student. He said I would have to see him first and he would determine if I was a good candidate to be one of his students. This surprised me. I went to his house, played for him, and he said that "only if I practiced", then I could continue to take lessons. Lou was "that" serious about teaching and not wasting his time. This was good because he was so incredibly talented, that anything I could learn from him, I would be grateful for.



Lou didn't just teach music, or accordion music. He taught you about life. He had so many stories from his experiences on the road. Each one was a gem. He never lost his ability to care and be passionate about music and learning to play. I always felt that Lou cared about me as a person, as a student, and as a musician. He was not an easy teacher, but he was the best at what he did and I'm so glad that I had time with him. I'll carry Lou in my heart for the rest of my days.



**Pamela Tom:** I started taking lessons from Mr. Jacklich in 2011. He struck me as very "old school" as a teacher. He liked being called "Mr. Jacklich." He would call me to confirm a lesson and say, "This is Mr. Jacklich." So...I never called him by his first name, although other students did and he didn't mind. About half of his students called him, "Mr. Jacklich." He was gifted, soft-spoken, kind and a friend.

One day, early in the months of my lessons I told him that I "can't do a measure" which had a challenging rhythm combination where the right and left hand have different beats. Oh my gosh, did I get the unforgettable lecture! He informed me that he doesn't allow his students to use the word, "can't". It's not in his vocabulary. After he explained the measure, note by note and beat by beat, the concept was clarified. Not only did I learn the complicated sequence of the measure, I learned never to use the word "can't" in front of Mr. Jacklich ever again. I took lessons to learn how to read music, play the accordion professionally, and teach. I recently had a 3-hr gig

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## Lou Jacklich, Teacher & Friend

and asked about breaks. His advice was to do 45 min on and 15 min off, because not everyone likes accordion music.

Little did I know when I started with Mr. Jacklich, that he was the genius who arranged a counter boogie rhythm bass on the left hand while playing the conventional treble side part to Zez Confrey's 1921 ragtime piece, *Kitten on the Keys* which is complicated enough as written with the highly syncopated treble. Mr. Jacklich significantly increased the level of difficulty in this virtuoso number by unifying two asynchronous beats into a jaw-dropping rhythmically complex melody that only a virtuoso could imitate. You can [hear his 1960 arrangement](https://archive.org/details/lp_lou-jacklich-plays_lou-jacklich/disc1/01.05.+Kitten+On+The+Keys.mp3) with the Lovell Organ attachment (note the recognizable 4 note theme to "Dragnet" in his boogie combination) at [https://archive.org/details/lp\\_lou-jacklich-plays\\_lou-jacklich/disc1/01.05.+Kitten+On+The+Keys.mp3](https://archive.org/details/lp_lou-jacklich-plays_lou-jacklich/disc1/01.05.+Kitten+On+The+Keys.mp3)

Almost 60 years later, you can see a [YouTube video of him](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vmccg5jmOWw) elegantly performing on an acoustic accordion during Evening Concerto at the Las Vegas Accordion Convention: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vmccg5jmOWw>.

**Elaine Cooperstein:** In 2011, I was moving my (unplayed) hand-me-down accordion from one house to another and decided that *this time* it would not just sit in the back of a closet until the next move! What incredible luck for me to find Mr. Jacklich and become his student for more than a decade to follow. As with so many of his students, we became friends as well. Those "accordion lessons" were that and so much more: lessons on technique, music theory, life, and the history and culture of 20th Century American music. Mr. Jacklich's talent, knowledge, and dedication will live on through the hundreds of students whose lives he touched. He is and will be missed.

**Robert Cooperstein:** Although I don't play the accordion, I do consider myself to have been a student of Mr. Jacklich, his preferred appellation as I just learned in Pamela's remembrance. Lou and I never talked much about the accordion, and in fact he seemed to enjoy talking with me more about my life than his. He sure had enough adulation and love coming his way from the accordion milieu, but our friendship developed about more generic daily life situations and experiences. He wanted to know about the gym I was going to 3 times a week near his home, about the chiropractic college where I taught and how *my students* treated me, how this guy from the Bronx had wound up in California in the first place. And I was agog at how matter-of-factly this raconteur communicated life's lessons through his thumbnail sketches of future boxing greats, harmonica legends, gangsters, nefarious music agents, eccentric club owners, and yes, ladies of the night that all intersected his universe at different times and places, as if all this was meant to be. He described how he and his dad had created a classic car by combining the back and front ends of two different cars, as if that is what regular people did. Yes, we called him Maestro, and rightfully so, but this great man was humble, not consumed by his own image. Now that I am retired, I have a lot of time to think about my own career as a chiropractic practitioner, educator, and researcher. It is so great stepping back from that world. Lou, wherever you are, thanks for instructing me in humility, because I needed to work on that.



Mr. Jacklich & 10 students at the March 2016 SFAC meeting



Members of the "Jacklich School of Music Family" belated birthday celebration at House of Prime Rib in San Francisco, October 2021



*Una Bella Giornata! (A Beautiful Day!)*  
**Festa Coloniale Italiana Accordion Festival**

Sunday, June 3, 2024

Ken Schwartz, Rosemary Busher, and Joseph Martin

It was once again one of those picture-perfect days in The City to enjoy Italian cuisine, culture, and, of course, accordion music! The **Festa Coloniale Italiana Accordion Festival** was sponsored by The San Francisco Italian Athletic Club Foundation (SFIAC) at Washington Square in North Beach. This was our 2nd year participating in this event, by invitation of the SFIAC. Once again, we had a great time spreading accordion love.



What could be more perfect than an abundance of pizza, pasta, beverages, and continuous accordion performances throughout the day? Our Club was there with a booth and exhibit that featured our poster, an assortment of full-sized and smaller accordions (thank you, Joseph, for making your beautiful accordion available for demos!), live “accordionists”, and over 30 pieces of other display items, including historical photographs.



The SFAC exhibit was extremely well attended, so much so that we were non-stop throughout the entire day. We estimate at least 100 people visited our booth, perhaps more. Rosemary coached many adorable youngsters (and moms & dads) for a quick introduction to their first ever squeeze - we hope it won't be their last!

Ken and Joseph performed duets at our display. Ken did a street performance with a festival attendee (Jay, based in Salt Lake City), which was well-received. Young SFAC member Colin Kennedy stopped by with his mom Natasha and played a tune on the Club’s vintage Guerrini accordion. Ken and Joseph joined others on-stage for the *It’s Amore* play-along with Steve Albini, Tom Torriglia, Mike Trucco, Cory Pesaturo, and others. Steve Albini emceed and gave the Club a terrific shout-out, introducing Club President Ken Schwartz. He encouraged the audience to visit our booth to learn more about the accordion and its role in San Francisco culture, and to look up our Club and have “great fun” attending one of our monthly meetings at the Chetcuti Center in Millbrae. Thanks Steve!



This year’s Festa was highly successful, with the largest crowds to date in the history of the festival. The SFIAC organizers are already working on next year’s edition. We hope you’ll be able to join us there in 2025! *Ciao!*



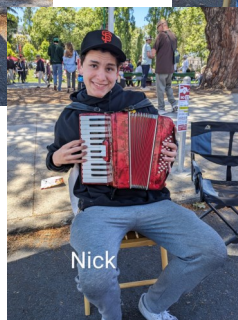
Rubin



Avery



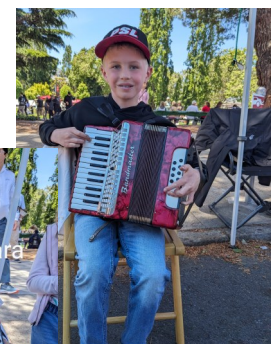
Jana



Nick



Klara



## SFAC COMING EVENTS

*Mark Your Calendars!*

**July 21, 2024** - SFAC Club Picnic, San Mateo, Beresford Park



## June President's Report

Ken Schwartz



Please join us for a very special Father's Day program, which will feature internationally acclaimed Scottish accordionist **Gary Blair** (left) and his associate **Robin Hyland**. Gary was the UK accordion champion twice, and Second Accordion player Robin is also extraordinarily talented. We are so honored to have them; they will be headliners at the Leavenworth Accordion Festival the weekend following our event. You can enjoy them at our June meeting or travel to Washington State ...

It's Father's Day, so what could be a nicer way to celebrate DAD than with a wonderful musical afternoon.

Please plan to attend this event in-Person! Let's show our support for the Club with a room filled with happy faces for this special event.

Ken



## ACCORDION INSTRUCTION

### East Bay

- ◆ Joel Weber [www.joelseastbayaccordionlessons.weebly.com/](http://www.joelseastbayaccordionlessons.weebly.com/)
- ◆ Mike Zampiceni\* [www.mikezamp.com](http://www.mikezamp.com)
- ◆ Anand Joseph\* 614-329-9384 (beginner students)

### Peninsula/South Bay

- ◆ Joe Simoni\* [jsimoni2000@gmail.com](mailto:jsimoni2000@gmail.com), 650-867-1122
- ◆ Mike Zampiceni\* [www.mikezamp.com](http://www.mikezamp.com)
- ◆ Anand Joseph\* 614-329-9384 (beginner students)

### Outside the Bay Area

- ◆ Gail Campanella\* [GailCampanella@gmail.com](mailto:GailCampanella@gmail.com) 805-895-0457 (Santa Barbara)
- ◆ Bonnie Birch\* [www.bonniebirch.com](http://www.bonniebirch.com) (Seattle)
- ◆ Pamela Tom\* [accordionpam@gmail.com](mailto:accordionpam@gmail.com) (Davis)
- ◆ Lorna Anderson\* 910-215-5757 (Pinehurst, NC)

\* = remote lessons (ZOOM, Facetime, Skype) available



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## CAN I TEACH MYSELF TO PLAY THE ACCORDION? BY LAURA NILAND

Over the years, I have met several individuals who have tried to teach themselves to play the accordion. Some were fairly good at it, others were struggling at every attempt. The variables that determine this success are... well... *various*. To the degree that success can be attained? That is a whole different story.

If you have already had years of music training, perhaps on piano or other instruments, then you have an advantage, particularly if you can read music. If you have purchased a "How to" book or even a Method book Part I to introduce the keyboard, the bass and how to use the bellows, then you are also moving in the right direction. However, this progress can be slow and fraught with errors as you try to execute your skills effectively on your own. The accordion has a lot going on mechanically and physically that must be mastered. Making the same errors over and over again only engrains "bad habits" that have to be un-done later. This can put you behind in your learning curve as you have to un-learn the bad and re-learn the correct methods .



I have met several competent accordionists, who started by teaching themselves (they had prior expertise in music on other instruments) but every one of those eventually found an accordion teacher to help them along the way. There are exceptions out there, but they are truly exceptional as individuals learners. Let's also remember, that some think they can play well because they have taught themselves, but they lack many appropriate skills to be effective players and they do not exhibit "musicality". That word "musicality" means performing music effectively with proper expression, feeling, and emotion that transcends the act of just playing the notes so that the accordionist masters the execution of the instrument's complexities.

Struggling to play a new instrument can take hours, days, and years on your own. Support groups like clubs or other people who already play the instrument of your desire, all have their place, but more as an emotional support mechanism than a "teaching tool".



Accordion clubs provide the experiences of playing together, learning new music at an easier level and graduating to more challenging material, but don't forget the experienced training of an effective accordion teacher. There really isn't a replacement for personal instruction by a professional accordionist when it comes to learning how to play this instrument. Don't give up your group learning from your accordion friends, but think about finding a teacher to help you with your musical growth. This can happen in person or with online instruction, but give it a try.

I started by teaching myself to play the accordion at the early age of 9. My only experience in reading music was through elementary school training in music classes that would happen maybe once a week for the usual curricula of public education. I taught myself to play by ear and had one book to use as a guide, very remedial, but that was a start. In order to attain a higher level of progress, I later received weekly instruction from my accordion teacher. My frustrations lessened and my performance improved rapidly. It was a blessing.

Whether you are a child or an adult, there really is no substitute for an effective mentor and instructor. Instruction lasts a lifetime and those skills help you continue to improve your performance and achieve your goals. There is so much enjoyment in learning. There is no age barrier to improving your skills. Consider finding an instructor for your needs. You will be glad and so will your audience.



San Francisco Accordion Club

Newsletter

c/o Cooperstein

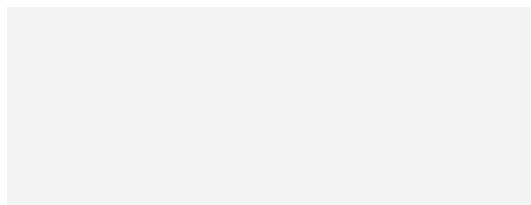
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*Upcoming SFAC meetings: **June 16** Gary Blair (UK) - Live, In-Person at the Chetcuti Center!*

***July 21** SFAC Club Picnic - San Mateo, Beresford Park (watch newsletter for details)*

***August 16-18** Cotati Accordion Festival - La Plaza Park, Cotati, CA ([www.cotatifest.com](http://www.cotatifest.com))*

**SFAC Accordions Live!**

***Gary Blair***

***With guest Robin Hyland***

**Sunday, June 16, 2:00 pm**



**Millbrae Chetcuti Community Room**

**Civic Center Plaza/Library Plaza**

**450 Poplar Avenue, Millbrae, CA**

**SFAC Monthly Meetings:**

**Plenty of free parking in Library lot**

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**Close to public transit**

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SFAC members will receive ZOOM link via email

Watch your email for details, or contact

[info@sfaccordionclub.com](mailto:info@sfaccordionclub.com)

There's no substitute for live music! Please plan to attend this event in person: \$10 suggested donation at the door, 18 years and under free with parent. Doors open at 2:00 pm. The Event will also be simulcast via ZOOM, if staffing permits. ZOOM Access for Club members only.

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