

April, 2017

♪ ♪ **SFAC Accordion Circle!** ♪ ♪

**Sunday, April 23 (4th Sunday due to holiday)**  
Chetcuti Community Room, Millbrae, CA  
2:00 pm—4:00 pm

Hello Accordion Friends,

The *SFAC Accordion Circle* meeting this month lands on the **4th Sunday, April 23** from 2-4pm in **Millbrae's Chetcuti Community Room**. We welcome **Jana Maas** to host a workshop — think "group lesson" — and if you ever dream about taking lessons, this is a fun and cost-effective way to try it.

Jana started lessons on the accordion at the age of 7 and continued her accordion studies for 15 years. Through her teens and into adulthood, she performed for various organizations and special occasions up and down California's central valley. Jana majored in music education, using accordion as her major instrument, earning her degree and her teaching



credential. She taught instrumental and classroom music in public schools for 30 years, retiring in 2016. She has attended numerous accordion events and has given workshops at several including, *Frank Marocco Camp*, the *ATG International Convention* and the *Silicon Valley Accordion Society*. She is also a frequent guest performer at festivals and accordion clubs on the West Coast, playing many of her own compositions and arrangements.

At April's meeting, Jana will present her workshop, "Tips and Tricks for a Better Performance." Jana will share her best tips and tricks for clean, expressive playing through bellowing suggestions, fingering techniques, creating fills and more. Bring your accordion to the meeting for this hands-on workshop, as well as our usual and fun Jam Band session!

We will have plenty of jam books available but you should plan to bring your own accordion and music



stand to join in where you are able. All levels are welcome! Hope to see you there!

**Again please note** that our April 23rd meeting will be held on the **4th Sunday** of the month, at our new location - the **Chetcuti Community Room**, 450 Poplar Ave., Millbrae, CA.

♪ ♪ **Review of March Meeting** ♪ ♪

By Barbara Bruxvoort

Our March meeting was the first in the bright and welcoming **Chetcuti Community Room** in Millbrae



across the plaza from the Millbrae Public Library. There were many parking places and it was very easy to find as all one had to do was follow the sound of accordion music—**Mike Zampecini** stood outside and played us in, starting

up the meeting with *The Clarinet Polka*.

Mike introduced his student, **Siyuan Donnelly**, who started his set with *Repsz Band March*. Siyuan is seven years old and began playing the accordion when his kindergarten music teacher taught all the students in class to play the accordion together.

Siyuan followed up with *Barbara Polka* and *Waltz of the Flowers*. These



Continued next page...

## ♪♪ March Meeting Review (cont'd.) ♪♪



songs filled the cheerful room. *Parade of the Clowns* came next, in an arrangement by Mike Zampecini's father, Joe Zampecini. Siyuan was persuaded to play a few more songs and favored us with a song from *Swan Lake*. For his last song (this was the third or so "last song" due to popular demand!) Siyuan was joined by his teacher, Mike for a lively duet reprise of **Barbara Polka**. I hope we have many more encores from Siyuan.

Mike then took the stage singing *Fly Me to the Moon*. In honor of St. Patrick's Day, he moved into *When Irish Eyes are Smiling* and an Irish jig. He played us into the break with *The Sunny Side of the Street*.



We had a great break with coffee donated by Starbucks of Millbrae Square and yummy snacks.

**Gail Campanella**, our featured performer,

treated us to a wonderful set of music. She kicked off the set with *Sparkling* by Mindie Cere and then *Meglia Stasera* by Henry Mancini for the *Pink Panther* movies (Arranged by Frank Marocco). With *Moment in Marseille* and *Waneta's Waltz* by Mike Alongi & Raul Reynoso, Gail laid down the solid rhythm and floated the embellishments over the top in a lovely way. She transitioned



into *Papi S'Amuse* by Armand Lasagne & Jean Marc Torchy and then had much fun with the *Wrong Note Polka* by Angelo di Pippo; when she asked Siyuan to put his finger up whenever he heard a wrong note, we enjoyed watching their playful exchange.

Gail has a lively and sincere musical character. She plays with technical mastery and goes beyond to make the pieces a true expression of what she wants to share with the audience. It is completely charming. She shared with us *Octobler Rondo* by Stas Venglevski, *The Doll Dance* by Nacio Herb Brown (Arr. Galla-Rini), *My Mandolin* by Louis Del Monte,



*La Rosita Tango* by Paul Dupont (Arr. Magnante), *Waltz Allegro* by Charles Magnante, *Turkish Rondo* – Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart from the *Piano Sonata No. 11 in A-major*, and ended her set with the fireworks of the *Flight of the Bumblebee* by Rimsky-Korsakov.

We were not willing to let her go so easily, so she played as an encore, *La Motocicletta* by Anton Zordan. And wait, we still did not want to say goodbye. Some of us persuaded (begged?) Gail to play





## ♪♪ March 2017 meeting review ♪♪

*Cavaquinho* by E. Nazareth (Arr. Marocco), which she did from memory, to the delight of all.

If you weren't there, or if you were and want to re-live it all, you'll need Gail's new CD, "Discovery" which is available on CD Baby at <https://www.cdbaby.com/cd/gailcampanella>.

The meeting concluded with a session of casual tunes with the Jam Band.

Next month (April) bring your accordion for the workshop, and come early

enough to have lunch in Millbrae. Our Millbrae location scouts report that there is so much to do next to the Millbrae location. Plenty of places to have lunch or a snack before the meeting: the Little Whale Café; Baskin Robbins; Starbucks; Paris Baguette (I had a delicious chef salad and a macaron there before the meeting); Jamba Juice; Big Mouth Burgers; Bagel Street Café and more! Plus, you can do a few errands afterwards, if you wish, as it is so convenient to Trader Joe's, Walgreens, Safeway, and Office Depot!

Also, note that the new location is very close to the Millbrae BART/Caltrain station: just under one mile which is close enough for a low-fare cab ride or an easy pickup by a friend attending the meeting.



Meeting photos by Steve Mobia

[and Robert Cooperstein]

### Guess Who?



Here he is as a five-year-old lad with accordion. This a longtime Bay Area resident started out on the east coast, then moved west with his parents. Today he can be found teaching music, performing gigs, and is a nature and car enthusiast. He has degrees from San Jose State in music, and has had a career as a technical writer for Silicon Valley firms. You may have heard him sing a song or two while playing accordion at our monthly gathering. Do you recognize this professional accordionist?

(Answer on page 11)



March meeting coffee kindly donated by

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Help keep our meeting space clean! Wipe up food or drink spills and recycle all trash.  
**THANK YOU!**



**WORDS OF WISDOM: Wynton's 12 Ways to Practice**  
(Wynton Marsalis, 1996)

AS A BOY GROWING UP IN NEW ORLEANS, I remember my father, Ellis, a pianist, and his friends talking about "sheddin'." When they got together, they'd say, "Man, you need to go shed," or "I've been sheddin' hard." When I was around 11, I realized that sheddin' meant getting to the woodshed – practicing. By the age of 16, I understood what the shed was really about – hard, concentrated work. When my brother Branford and I auditioned for our high school band, the instructor, who knew my father, was excited about Ellis' sons coming to the band. But my audition was so pitiful he said, "Are you sure you're Ellis' son?"

At the time, his comment didn't bother me because I was more interested in basketball than band. Over the next several years, however, I began practicing seriously. Practice is essential to learning music – and anything else, for that matter. I like to say that the time spent practicing is the true sign of virtue in a musician. When you practice, it means you are willing to sacrifice to sound good.

Even if practice is so important, kids find it very hard to do because there are so many distractions. That's why I always encourage them to practice and explain how to do it. I've developed what I call "Wynton's 12 Ways to Practice." These will work for almost every activity – from music to schoolwork to sports.

**1. Seek out instruction:** Find an experienced teacher who knows what you should be doing. A good teacher will help you understand the purpose of practicing and can teach you ways to make practicing easier and more productive.

**2. Write out a schedule:** A schedule helps you organize your time. Be sure to allow time to review the fundamentals because they are the foundation of all the complicated things that come later. If you are practicing basketball, for example, be sure to put time in your schedule to practice free throws.

**3. Set goals:** Like a schedule, goals help you organize your time and chart your progress. Goals also act as a challenge: something to strive for in a specific period of time. If a certain task turns out to be really difficult, relax your goals: practice doesn't have to be painful to achieve results.

**4. Concentrate:** You can do more in 10 minutes of focused practice than in an hour of sighing and moaning. This means no video games, no television, no radio, just sitting still and working. Start by concentrating for a few minutes at a time and work up to longer periods gradually. Concentrated effort takes practice too, especially for young people.

**5. Relax and practice slowly:** Take your time; don't rush through things. Whenever you set out to learn something new – practicing scales, multiplication tables, verb tenses in Spanish – you need to start slowly and build up speed.

**6. Practice hard things longer:** Don't be afraid of confronting your inadequacies; spend more time practicing what you can't do. Adjust your schedule to reflect your strengths and weaknesses. Don't spend too much time doing what comes easily. Successful practice means coming face to face with your shortcomings. Don't be discouraged; you'll get it eventually.

**7. Practice with expression:** Every day you walk around making yourself into "you," so do everything with the proper attitude. Put all of yourself into participating and try to do your best, no matter how insignificant the task may seem. Express your "style" through how you do what you do.

**8. Learn from your mistakes:** None of us are perfect, but don't be too hard on yourself. If you drop a touchdown pass, or strike out to end the game, it's not the end of the world. Pick yourself up, analyze what went wrong and keep going. Most people work in groups or as part of teams. If you focus on your contributions to the overall effort, your personal mistakes won't seem so terrible.

**9. Don't show off:** It's hard to resist showing off when you can do something well. In high school, I learned a breathing technique so I could play a continuous trumpet solo for 10 minutes without stopping for a breath. But my father told me, "Son, those who play for applause, that's all they get." When you get caught up in doing the tricky stuff, you're just cheating yourself and your audience.

**10. Think for yourself:** Your success or failure at anything ultimately depends on your ability to solve problems, so don't become a robot. Think about Dick Fosbury, who invented the Fosbury Flop for the high jump. Everyone used to run up to the bar and jump over it forwards. Then Fosbury came along and jumped over the bar backwards, because he could go higher that way. Thinking for yourself helps develop your powers of judgment. Sometimes you may judge wrong and pay the price; but when you judge right you reap the rewards.

**11. Be optimistic:** How you feel about the world expresses who you are. When you are optimistic, things are either wonderful or becoming wonderful. Optimism helps you get over your mistakes and go on to do better. It also gives you endurance because having a positive attitude makes you feel that something great is always about to happen.

**12. Look for connections:** No matter what you practice, you'll find that practicing itself relates to everything else. It takes practice to learn a language, cook good meals or get along well with people. If you develop the discipline it takes to become good at something, that discipline will help you in whatever else you do. It's important to understand that kind of connection. The more you discover the relationships between things that at first seem different, the larger your world becomes. In other words, the woodshed can open up a whole world of possibilities.

# The Accordion King

By Allan Schwartz

I have heard it said "accordion is in decline". There is a one word answer to that dirge: "Colombia".

If you were near the Caribbean coast of Colombia right now you could travel the small towns and open spaces of this rural farmland. You might see verdant greenery and beautiful waterways; taste chicken and cassava; witness women laundering against a river rock; be among burros, horses and South American cowboys; and everywhere hear accordion music.

And if you were in the town of Valledupar, Colombia in April you might not only find the sun producing another short sleeve shirt day, but have the chance to attend the Vallenato Accordion Festival.

Vallenato (vay-ah-nah-toe) is a form of Columbian folk music. It is a rhythmic, poor man's root music; blending European, African and Latin influences. Vallenato is not only a regional obsession, not just a national love, but its popularity sometimes extends to places like Venezuela and Mexico. Vallenato is an award category in the Latin Grammys.

In days gone by, lacking speedy communication, troubadours would travel from town to town singing news to families and others. This transmission of legends and stories is at the core of Vallenato. Eventually, the local troubadours were influenced by European traditions and settled on the accordion as their main method of communication.



Excluding vocals, there are three main instruments in Vallenato: accordions from Europe, drums from Africa and guacharaca. Guacharaca is a percussion instrument usually made out of the cane-like trunk of a small palm tree. The guacharaca itself consists of a tube with ridges carved into its outer surface with part of its interior hollowed, perhaps making it look like a tiny, notched canoe. Drums are played by hand, like a conga or timbale. Usually, drumsticks are not used.

The accordions played are primarily red but may have other colors, such as gold. They are almost always button accordions of German origin, usually three line Hohners, and they may have special Vallenato tuning. They look to be about twelve pounds and tend to have no registers.

I have never seen these players reading music. The sound is

upbeat, with the accordion playing over the drums and guacharaca. When playing, the accordionists stand. Bellows techniques, which I think would be hard to reproduce with the larger accordions we tend towards, are common. The bellows tend to be pulled in sharp, punctuating motions. Vallenato accordionists can start at a very young age.



In the Legends Festival, players compete for the title of Rey Vallenato (Vallenato Accordion King). Speed, precision, authenticity and interpretation are judged by a panel of Vallenato accordion experts. This four day festival draws large, enthusiastic crowds. There is competition in four accordion categories, culminating with the naming of the Accordion King. There are awards for juvenile and senior accordionists.

This is not a stand-alone event. The Cradle of Accordions Festival (*Festival Cuna de Acordeones*) in the neighboring town of Villanueva, Department of La Guarija, is another example of the vibrant local scene.

The Valledupar Festival is a celebration of national pride. You can come to root for your town or personal favorite. It is a great honor for a family to have an accordionist. The competitions can be intense, and are very meaningful, but for the most part they play for fun and the Festival looks like a lot of fun to attend.

In Vallenato, alternating with the accordion solos are lyrics and singing. In my opinion no language sounds better in song than Spanish, provided you are not bilingual. At least for me sometimes it is better to not understand what is being said.

Some Vallenato songs are very emotional, if not maudlin. Tortured love is a favored theme. Here are some fairly typical Vallenato lyrics:

"I love you more than life itself  
because without your love I'd die.  
You own the key to my heart."  
And it can go from there.

*Continued next page...*



Sometimes the singers cannot sing, or at least you wish they would not. And it is not unknown for them to talk too much. But all told, this is wonderful music I cannot recommend highly enough.

There are different kinds and tempos of Vallenato, much like tango. One of the most colorful is the piquería vallenata in which the competitors play on the accordion and improvise verses challenging and berating their opponents. Although seemingly taken in good spirit, these are boastful songs about besting the competitors and giving them a licking.

Vallenato has its own classic songs and players. Leandro Diaz may be the most famous. There are seemingly countless others. One classic Vallenato song is *La Gota Fria*, a 1938 composition by Emiliano Zuleta which describes actual events from a vallenato accordion competition in not particularly modest terms.

Jorge Onate, born near Valledupar, has twenty five gold discs, seven platinum discs and six double platinum. Three of his albums were made with young Columbian accordionist Christian Camilo Pena, who was crowned king of the Valledupar festival at age 21. Alfredo Gutierrez is a Columbian accordionist who won the festival three times. I saw on YouTube that *Vallenatos Romanticos Mix Vol. 1* had over 13 million views

There is so much enjoyment to exploring Vallenato accordion music. I suggest you start with "The Accordion Kings", which you can download for a couple of dollars from the Smithsonian Channel. It is a slightly over one hour documentary on the scene. Also, *The First Female Accordion Player to Win the Vallenato Kings Festival* is a great YouTube choice.



*Our Sincere Thanks* to those who generously donate to the Club. With each new membership year (Oct. 1-Sept. 30) we start a cumulative list of donors. If you have donated and your name doesn't appear here, please contact Elaine (elainedc@sbcglobal.net or 510-921-9323) and let her know. We greatly appreciate your support and we want to be sure you are recognized. We gratefully acknowledge donations from: Chris & Tor Arild, Evelyn Baulch, Karol Blackaby, Ron Borelli, David Braun, Dr. & Mrs. Anthony Bruno, Gail Campanella, Xavier de la Prade, William Demichelis, Lynn & Gail Ewing, Marja Gullmes, Bruce Kirschner, Franco Lucchesi, Mr. Mike Marotta, James & Lee Ann Monfredini, Anna Nicora, Kenneth Nimmo, Gisele Oakes, Paul Pasquali, Douglas & Kay Patterson, Joseph Petosa, Diana & Bruce Prurucker, Vinny Rinaldi, Alexander Roitman, Ed Salvador, Don & Mary Savant, Leslie Selfridge, Hilbert & Hilde Werner, Barbara Winter, & Mike Zampiceni. **Thank you, all!**

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Mike Zampiceni  
 eclecticguy@comcast.net  
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Helping with the monthly music programs is a great way to meet new people and make the program run smoothly. We welcome people to help emcee the program, take photos or write a lively report about the music program. You don't need experience—just a willingness to help while you have fun with the group.

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Local accordionist, **Pamela Tom**, returns to **Atria Covell Garden** on **Saturday, April 29, 2017, 7 PM** with a versatile musical program of American and international rhythmic flashback favorites. Ms. Tom's hour-long program includes crowd pleasing rhythmic, toe tapping tunes. She has performed on numerous occasions at the Davis Farmers Market and national accordion events. Atria Covell Gardens is hosting Ms. Tom's performance at **1111 Alvarado Ave., Davis, CA**. The public is invited.

SFAC members are invited to list Greater Bay Area performances in our monthly newsletter. Send print-ready information, 100 words or less, at least 6 weeks in advance, to newsletter coordinator Rosemary Busher ([rosemary@busher.org](mailto:rosemary@busher.org)). Size and detail of notice will depend upon space available in the issue.

*Marriage is like playing the accordion. It looks easy until you try it.*



## North American Accordion Collaborative

**BIG NEWS FOLKS!** A newly formed organization with national/ international outreach has been formed to promote the accordion. Officers of this organization include Karen Lee and Frank Petrilli. [www.theNAAC.org](http://www.theNAAC.org)

**WHAT IS the NAAC?** North American Accordion Collaborative The NAAC officially announced that it is now actively seeking members and that membership is free. The non-profit corporation (informally referred to as "The NAAC" – pronounced "the knack") was formed by representatives from across the continent to focus on building opportunities for all accordionists.

The needs of the membership drive the immediate and long term direction and programs of the group. The driving force behind The NAAC is the collaboration of the members. Although the organization operates in the cloud, the programs aim to be adaptable to accordionists' local environments.

Existing programs focus on meeting three identified needs. 1 - Help meet the need for access to instruments; 2 - Meet the need for performance exposure for accordionists; 3 - Develop a wide range of performance and teaching opportunities for accordionists from abroad and locally. The NAAC has plans underway to support these needs, including:

- ◆ Conduct a used instrument drive to support music education in the Los Angeles area;
- ◆ Establish an on-line platform for compiling members' videos and recordings, whether soloists or group members and no matter what genre; and
- ◆ Further interaction with international accordion artists. The NACC has joined with the *International Accordion Initiative*. The first multiperformer accordion concert is planned for April in the Philadelphia area. The President of the organization, Dallas Vietty, stated, "The entire Board of Directors is excited to be involved with this opportunity to build strong relationships and connections between accordionists across the continent. We also look forward to working collaboratively with other organizations in the accordion, music education, and entertainment worlds. We invite each and every one of you to check out our website at <http://theNAAC.org> and hope that you will join us in this collaborative effort!" (Submitted by Karen Lee)



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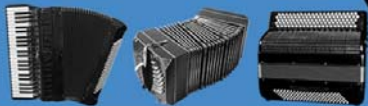
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[www.accordioncelebration.org](http://www.accordioncelebration.org)

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[www.ameraccord.com/festival.html](http://www.ameraccord.com/festival.html)

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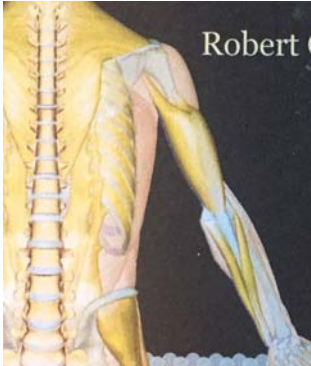
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Hermann Sons Hall, 860 Western, Petaluma  
Contact: Tony Mustaro, President (707) 318-0474  
[dcdacapo@gmail.com](mailto:dcdacapo@gmail.com)

### **Golden State Accordion Club (GSAC)**

[gsaccordionclub.netfirms.com](http://gsaccordionclub.netfirms.com)  
Contact: Jean Stevens, President (916) 872-8081  
[accordionriffs@gmail.com](mailto:accordionriffs@gmail.com)

*Vacaville Chapter*  
2nd Thursday at 6:30 pm.  
Pietro's No. 2,  
679 Merchant Street, Vacaville

*Humboldt Chapter*  
3rd Tuesday at 7pm.  
Humboldt Swiss Club  
5403 Tompkins Hill Road, Loleta

*Sacramento Chapter*  
4th Wednesday at 7 pm.  
Old Spaghetti Factory,  
12401 Folsom Blvd., Rancho Cordova

### **Good Time Accordion Club (GTAC)**

2nd Wednesday at 7 pm. Escalon Community Center  
1055 Escalon Ave, Escalon  
Contact: Ed Sciarini (209) 545-3603

### **Northern California Accordion Society (NCAS)**

1st Wednesday at 6:30 pm. Lutheran Church Hall,  
6365 Douglas Blvd, off Hwy 80, Granite Bay  
Contact: Jim Shoemaker (916) 443-0974

### **Silicon Valley Accordion Society (SVAS)**

1st Sunday at 1pm. Harry's Hofbrau,  
390 Saratoga Avenue (corner of Kiely), San Jose  
[www.svasociety.org](http://www.svasociety.org)  
\$5 for adults, no charge under 16

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Bring your accordion, other acoustic instrument, or your singing voice, and join the traditional jam session held during our 3rd-Sundays music program.

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The May 1 march in the street, Łukasinskię, Poland (1963)

**Guess Who? Answer (from page 3)**

**Mike Zampecini**, a true Bay Area Treasure! Also known as *Music Mike Z*, he is an ambassador of the instrument who was very well trained by his Dad, Joseph Zampiceni. Mike is highly regarded and well known by the accordion community. We are so lucky to have him in our midst at the San Francisco Accordion Club!



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Playing warm up or during the break for our Sunday music program is a great, casual way to share your talent and hone your performance skills. Our scheduled performers are drawn from professional players and groups, and from talented amateurs as well. Call us—we're happy to add you to the schedule to play a 10-15 minute set, or even just a couple of songs.  
 Contact:  
**Dominic Palmisano** (415) 587-4423 [accord47@gmail.com](mailto:accord47@gmail.com)  
 OR **Lynn Ewing** (650) 453-3391 [ewinglynn@gmail.com](mailto:ewinglynn@gmail.com)

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**Concerts, Competitions, Jam sessions, Workshops,  
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Chetcuti Room, Millbrae

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**Accordion Circle!**

*Workshop & Performance by Jana Maas  
Jam Band*

*Open Stage (all players welcome)*

\$6 (\$4 ages 12-18, Under 12 free)

2:00pm—4:00pm



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Join or renew with PayPal or credit card at:

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- ◆ \$35 per year for individual or household
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See March 2017 Newsletter for Directions & Map

**San Francisco Accordion Club Newsletter**

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