

ACCORDION CLUB

(APRIL) MARCH 2004

The Accordion: San Francisco's Official Instrument

President's Message

It has been a busy first quarter of the year, and all indications are that the action will be non-stop. Our April meeting features international accordion



performer **Tony Lovello**. Be prepared for some bellows fireworks.

Fellow member **George Chavez** just got back from the Texas Accordion Association' annual convention, and reports it was a worthwhile trip. Over 300 accordion lovers attended this year, and George states that there are some great young players coming up. He was particularly impressed by their accordion ensemble, and the performance of orchestral music – "Sounded like a full, symphony orchestra," George remarked.

The March meeting was another great event. We began with **The San Francisco Accordion Club Ensemble**, 13 musicians, playing special accordion arrangements of some classics, and folk music by Joe Smiell who also conducted the orchestra.

Joe Smiell then donned his accordion, and together with his five-piece band, played some of the liveliest music ever heard, all Polish (Continued on next page)

HE'S BACK !!!
Don't miss
TONY LOVELLO !!!
Thursday, April 8
7:00 p.m. Moose Lodge
Daly City



NEXT MEETING: THURSDAY 8 APRIL
7:00 P.M. MOOSE LODGE DALY CITY
Featuring the One and Only TONY LOVELLO!
ALSO the ACE Ensemble and the Di Bono Family!

folk music. **Joe Smiell Junior** plays clarinet (he loves lots of sixteenth notes, Papa Joe disclosed), **Roger Torrey** on trumpet, **Kevin McCarthy** on drums, and Billy Robinson on bass (sousaphone). Joe later related that he and son "Joe Junior" traveled to Poland some years earlier, and found this original music. He also told me that they were arrested and put in jail, while the Polish Secret Police (KGB types) decided whether they were spies or not. A rousing polka closed an exciting first half of the meeting.

You purchased \$150.00 worth of tickets for the drawing, and lucky **Ken Nimmo** was the winner. Ken graciously donated the money back to our Scholarship Fund. Thank you Ken, and everyone who supported the drawing. **Frances and Dominic** provided their usual tasty buffet during the break.

The second half of the program featured Seattle accordionist, **Murl Allen Sanders**, who plays everything from Cajun to classics. His singing voice reminded me at times of Michael Feinstein, The Manhattan Transfer, and Jimmy Smith. He even played the harmonica - what a versatile showman, and accomplished accordionist. He played and sang many of his own compositions, which he calls "Zyfusico," some great American standards, and his own Concerto for Accordion and Orchestra, "An Italian Wedding Turned Ominous." This piece was recently performed by the Seattle Symphony. Congratulations, Murl! A week after the meeting Murl sent me a nice note thanking us for inviting him to our Club, "The pleasure was all ours!"

New member, **Jim Murdoch**, "Jimbo The Clown", performed for our February meeting, and joined the Club the same night. Jim is great for children's parties, (415) 752-8048 .

I hope we see more of Club founder **Dominic Palmisano** at future meetings. Maybe Dominic will treat us to some of his fine playing one of these evenings???

The **San Francisco Accordion Chamber Ensemble** (of which I am a member) presented its Spring concert on March 28. It was a wonderful musical afternoon, and was well received by the over 120 people in the audience. I want thank the five members of our Club who came, and supported the ensemble at this concert. I hope this support will grow, and more of our members will be there in the future.

I look forward to seeing you all at the Club on April 8. Please enjoy a beverage from the bar at the Moose Lodge, they need our business.

Peter Di Bono

REAL MUSIC IS LIVE !!!



ACE Ensemble Concert Redwood City 3-28-04

Some impressions of Joe Smiell's Workshop

Joe Smiell presented a workshop on March 20. It was free to Club members, and lunch was provided by the club. Without question, this was the best three hours I have ever spent trying to enhance my knowledge of music. Joe's handouts were so easy that everyone was able to play them by sight, but they were packed with exciting musical concepts. The first page of the handouts explained three musical ideas that were so obvious and simple, but were previously unknown to me. I never would have discovered them on my own. The 16 people who attended came away with some real knowledge of how music is played, or ought to be played. Thanks, Joe.

Peter Di Bono

How To Make Music! I cannot resist the temptation of expressing my feelings about the last music workshop given by Joe Smiell at the San Francisco Accordion Club. It was really fantastic; in a couple of hours I learned a lot of things that cannot be explained in written form.

Anybody can play notes, but Joe does not teach how to play notes; he teaches "How to make music." The techniques, dynamics and expression that Joe explained are what really make the music. With this experience I will not practice accordion anymore, but I will try to *make music*.

Thank you very much, Joe, for sharing with us your knowledge. You are a really fine "Master teacher of how to make music." I hope in the future we will have more music workshops with you so that we can improve our knowledge of how to make music.

With my deepest appreciation, *Telmo Echeverria*

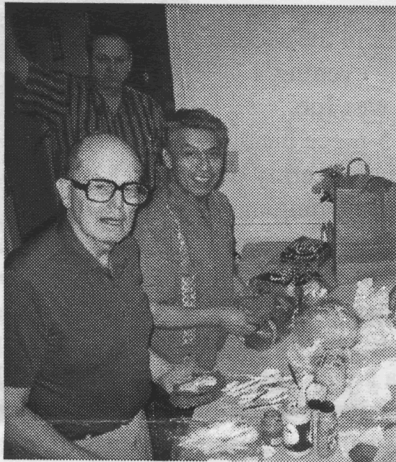
It was certainly the most productive workshop I have ever attended. I've never seen 3 hours go by so fast. I was spellbound the whole time! Let's have lots more of these workshops!

Val Kieser

(See photos on next page)



*Photos from Joe Smiell's Workshop
 (Above) composite of group (Joe, where are YOU??)
 (Below, left) Jim Holliday, Frank Schlotter, Telmo Echeverria enjoy lunch; (Below, right) Bob Pisani, Telmo Echeverria, George Chavez and Ernst Angst in total concentration*



Word Has It . . .

. . . that the **Petaluma Historical Library & Museum**, 20 Fourth St. in Petaluma will exhibit all accordions and button boxes from June 19 through June 27, and will display antique accordions and button boxes from June 19 through August 31. The **"Celebrate the Accordion"** kick-off will take place on Saturday, June 19 from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. The **"Celebrate the Accordion Day"** will be Saturday, June 26 at Putnam Plaza, the Petaluma Historical Library & Museum, and the Farmer's Market at Walnut Park. Thanks to **Tom Cordoni** for organizing the event.

. . . that faithful SFAC and SVAS member **George Alves** is recovering nicely from a recent operation. So glad everything's on track, George! We'll look forward to seeing you real soon!

. . . That the **Accordion Club of the Redwoods'** "Spring Fling" dinner dance was the best ever! Congratulations, ACR, on a well organized, fabulous event.

. . . that the **ACE Ensemble** gave its best concert ever on Sunday, March 28 in Redwood City. They played a tremendous variety of music, including pieces by Von Blon, Johann Strauss, J.S. Bach, Vivaldi, Gluck, Von Suppè, Haydn, Victor Herbert, and Joe Smiell himself. The program included some marches and folk selections (Polish and Russian), and even a polka, all beautifully arranged for accordion orchestra by Joe Smiell.

ENTERTAINMENT

TONY LOVELLO

Tony Lovello, often called the "Liberace of the Accordion" because of his exciting showmanship and humor, puts out a fun-fest, well-paced accordion spectacular that you don't want to miss!

Lovello is a talented musician who possesses the star quality of a master accordionist. During his concerts, he connects with the audience through the warmth of his personality and passion of his music. The audience experiences a variety of mood changes projected by Lovello's arrangements. He has been known to stir memories with the passion in his music...

could be a tear down the cheek... or an uncontrollable desire to get up and kick your heels!

His wide assortment of music appeals to all and his style can capture the attention of everyone.

Being in high demand is not new to Tony. His earlier fame includes being a former member of "The Three Suns" and making appearances all over the world performing with the best such as Frank Sinatra, Debbie Reynolds, Dinah Shore, Milton Berle, Eddie Cantor, Pat Boone, Jimmy Durante and Roy Clark.

Tony Lovello is certainly a crowd pleaser! He keeps a pace that would exhaust everyone in the audience. You won't want to miss this master perform.



TONY LOVELLO
 The "Liberace" of the Accordion

Formerly of "The Three Suns"
 (The renown hits of "Twilight Time" and "Peg Of My Heart")

DON'T MISS OUT APRIL 8, 2004

March Meeting: Some Wonderful Surprises

Following our President Peter Di Bono's announcements, our modest but enthusiastic **SFAC Ensemble**, under the direction of **Joe Smiell**, put on a really nice performance with only a few rehearsals. These are people who for the most part do not have much opportunity to play in parts with a group, but who are interested in learning to make beautiful



*The SFAC Ensemble
Conducted by Joe Smiell*

music, correctly and musically performed, whether in a group or singly—and Joe is the perfect teacher. The group played *Irish Air (Danny Boy)*, *Dance of the Happy Spirits* from the opera *Orpheus* by Gluck; and a medley of German dances, all arranged for accordion orchestra by Joe Smiell.

What can be said about Murl Allen Sanders?

From the start he showed what a master of the bellows he is, playing and singing with both precision and feeling, many of the great pieces we all love, plus some great ones new to us. He walked in playing a sensitive and beautiful *Tennessee Waltz*, followed by many standards and styles, from Gershwin



Murl Allen Sanders

to Cajun to blues and accordion classics. It's impossible to name all the pieces he played, but they included *Embraceable You*, the theme from *The Godfather*, a tarantella, some great Irish music, *Cheek to Cheek*, *Stairway to Paradise*, *Today*, and

many, many others. Murl has coined a word for a special music style of his: "Zyfusico," which can be found on his recent album, "Can You Dance To It?"

Murl, we thank you! Come back again—you were a real hit!

After intermission the drawing took place, and the lucky winner was **Ken Nimmo**, who very graciously donated the money back to the club. Thanks, Ken! That's real class!

Starring in the second half of the evening's program was Joe Smiell's 5-piece band, playing a great array of Polish pieces, ranging from Oberek (a national dance) to Krakowiak



Murl with Rosemary Armanino

(another national dance), to polka, to tango Polish style. This is not your average polka band. These expert musicians play with both precision and feeling. Joe is an expert in ethnic music, and all his arrangements are authentic.

Joe told some amusing stories along the way, as he also described the different Polish styles. One story was about Joe's younger brother who played



Joe Smiell's Band

violin; people stuffed tips into the instrument, and when it was time to get the money out, the coins came out fine, but getting the bills out was a problem, and their father had to make up a special contraption to remove the pegs and get the money out and replace the pegs. Another story, describing one

of the pieces they played, had to do with an old gray horse who worked all day long and all he got was water, while the farmers got the strong, home-made stuff at the end of the day! Well, the way Joe told the stories they were hilarious.

The musicians—every one of them a true master of his instrument—including Joseph Smiell (Jr.) on clarinet, Kevin McCarthy on drums, Roger Torrey on trumpet, Billy Robinson on bass.

RS and VTK



A STATUE HAS NEVER YET BEEN SET UP IN HONOR OF A CRITIC.

Jan Sibelius



MY BEST WORK IS A HOME FOR DESTITUTE MUSICIANS THAT I HAVE ENDOWED IN MILAN.

Giuseppe Verdi

Welcome New Members

Jim Murdoch of San Francisco, who put on a terrific accordion/clown act for us in February

Morena Day, also of San Francisco, a new and enthusiastic student of Sharon Walters Greyhosky.

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From SFAC Member William DeMichelis

“You got to be careful if you don’t know where you’re going, because you might not get there.”

Yogi Berra

Accordion Fingering Versus Piano Fingering

By Robert L. Smith

Everyone's hands are different, so I invite you to take the following test. Play each measure of Figure 1 on the piano (or other horizontal keyboard) and record the level of difficulty of playing each measure. Each measure is to be played in strict legato style, where the first note is to be released just as the following note begins. Use exactly the fingering specified. Then repeat the exact same exercise on the piano accordion. I suggest the following levels of difficulty:

- 1: Easy
- 2: A little difficult
- 3: Somewhat difficult
- 4: Very difficult
- 5: Impossible

You can then compare the results to see if you find a significant difference between the two keyboards. I found that, for all cases except the first measure, the degree of difficulty was higher on the accordion than for the piano. My conclusion is that the best fingering for the piano is not necessarily the best fingering for the accordion.

My book, *Fingering for the Accordion*, shows standard piano fingering and a number of alternative fingerings for the accordion, using various scales, arpeggios, intervals and chords. That seems to be rather dry and unappealing. The reason it is useful is that all music is made up of such pieces, so that if we can improve our fingering for the scales and such, we can then apply the results to the pieces we like to play.

I will give an example that I recently discovered.

Most of us learned to play "Nola" in our youth. Now Nola has a "bridge" that is fairly difficult to play. That is, it is difficult when we use the fingering suggested in the most common accordion arrangement of Nola, arranged and fingered by Pietro Deiro. Figure 2 shows the fingering given by Deiro. I have played it that way for over 50 years, and I still find it very difficult to play it smoothly, as indicated by the slur line above the two measures.

The main problem lies in the descending arpeggio (the arpeggio of a D-Major 6th chord) when the thumb is on the note D, and the A is to be played using the 4th finger. Now that is clearly not impossible to play, but it is quite difficult to play both quickly and smoothly in legato style. Your hands may well be better designed for that sequence, but if not, you may wish to consider an alternative, such as that suggested in Figure 2. The first difference that I suggest is to (*gasp!*) use the thumb on the C# on the third note of the second measure. That is not truly necessary, but tends to improve my accuracy of playing the remainder of the measure. (I know the old rule, but rules were made to be broken). The important change is to start the high B with the 5th finger, and use each descending finger in turn until the thumb plays the B in the final triplet. It is very easy to cross over the thumb with the 3rd finger to play the next A.

The 2nd finger on the F# leaves the thumb ready to play the D which starts the next measure (not shown here). I think that this is a small but substantial improvement. Please give this a try, and let me know if you agree or disagree.

Bob Smith

Figure 1: A Fingering Test

(Continued on next page)

Nola fragment



Figure 2: The “bridge” from “Nola.” Fingering by Pietro Deiro

Nola fragment



Figure 3: The “bridge” from “Nola.” Alternative fingering.

Your Executive Board Met . . .

. . . on Tuesday, March 9.

* We have, as of March 1, a total of \$19,925.90 in all bank accounts combined (including large donations specifically for the ACE Ensemble).

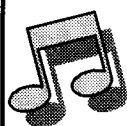
* Approximately 250 newsletters are mailed out each month. This includes not only paid members, but courtesy exchange of newsletters with other clubs, honorary members and lifetime members, who do not pay dues.

* We are planning more workshops.

* A menu and a musical program for the picnic July 10 are in the planning stages.

* The newsletter henceforth will carry a prominent notice on the front page, saying “San Francisco’s Official Instrument.”

* The amplifier that was broken at the February meeting has been repaired, thanks to Dick Schiller who had a friend at Channel 9 make the repairs.



*A MAN CAN FIND OUT MORE ABOUT
HIMSELF AND HIS POWER OF INNER
THINKING THROUGH HIS REACTION TO
MUSIC THAN ALL THE FREUDS OR
JUNGS THAT HAVE EVER LIVED
COULD TELL HIM.*

Albert S. Williams

OUR SINCERE THANKS

. . . to those who have generously donated to the Club or the Scholarship Fund in 2004. To date, your Editor has learned of the following:

Ed Zaro

Janet Landauer

Clyde Forsman

Johan and Sheila Gullmes

Joe Smiell

LynnEwing

[This list will be cumulative throughout the year. If your name slipped by and did not reach the Editor, please contact Val Kieser (510) 531-4836]

SFAC MEMBERSHIP

\$25 per year for individual;

\$30 per year for a family

Mail check to B.A.A.C.

P.O. Box 318175

San Francisco, CA 94131-8175

Ad Policy

A member may place one four-line ad for one month free of charge; after that the charge is \$5.00 per issue; a business-card-size ad will cost \$5.00 per issue or \$50.00 per year; a quarter-page ad will cost \$10.00; a half-page ad will cost \$20.00; and a full-page ad will t \$35.00. A flyer advertising an event may be included in one issue for \$20. The cost for ads placed by non-members will be twice the above-quoted prices.

Upcoming Events

April 17-19 8:00 p.m.

Dance Party with live music by Anders and Agneta from Sweden (accordion & fiddle)
Admission \$10

For info call Jeanne (408) 929-5602
Or Jim (650) 323-2256

Workshops also available

Monday, April 19 7:30 p.m.

Swedish Folk Music with
Anders and Agneta from Norrbotten, Sweden
At the Espresso Garden Café,
814 S. Bascom Ave., San Jose
Admission \$15.00

For tickets call Espresso Garden
(408) 298-0808

Sunday, May 2 4:30 p.m.
Art Van Damme Quintet

Bach Dynamite House and Dancing Society
Miramar Beach, Half Moon Bay
Doors open at 3:00 p.m. so come early for a
good seat. Tickets are \$26.

For more info call the Society (650) 726-4143.

May 28-30

Fontana Button Box Jamboree

Email vidergar@hotmail.com or
Call (909) 422-1994

Saturday, June 5 1:00—7:00 p.m.

13th Annual San Francisco Accordion Festival
Plus dancing to a Zydeco band from 7:00-10:00

The Cannery at Fisherman's Wharf
2801 Leavenworth St. (415) 771-3112

Admission free

June 6-10

Rose City Accordion Club Silver Falls Camp

Call Geoff Levear (503) 452-4517

June 15-20

Leavenworth Accordion Celebration

Contact Leavenworth Chamber of Commerce
P.O. Box 327, Leavenworth, WA 98826
(509) 548-5807 info@leavenworth.org
www.leavenworth.org

June 13-16

**Las Vegas International Accordion
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Art Van
Damme!!

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Directors for 2003-2004

Ron Borelli

(650) 574-5707 rborelli@aol.com

Vince Cirelli (415) 467-2208

James Firpo (415) 648-3674

Joe Smiell (510) 832-6938

Scott Williamson (408) 553-7519

Newsletter Editor: Valerie T. Kieser

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Accordion Teacher Listings

San Francisco/North Peninsula

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accordion@comcast.net

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Moose Club, Colma/Daly City
(510) 841-6745

Sharon Walters

All levels (415) 621-8284

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**(Additional teacher listings available at
www.boazaccordions.com)**

Come and join in ...

San Francisco Accordion Club

Meets 7 p.m. the second Thursday of the month
Moose Lodge, 7535 Mission St. Daly City/Colma
For information call Val (510) 531-4836
Website: www.sfaccordionclub.org

East Bay Accordion Circle

Meets the THIRD TUESDAY of the month 7:30 p.m.
1540 Scenic Ave., Berkeley. Bring your accordion!
For information call (510) 548-2822

Accordion Club of the Redwoods

Meets 7:30 p.m. the third Monday of the month
Hermann Sons Hall, 860 Western, Petaluma
For information call Harry (707) 838-2859

Golden State Accordion Club

Meets 7 PM the second Tuesday of the month
At Pietro's #2, 679 Merchant St. in *Vacaville*
And 7 PM the fourth Wednesday
at Shepherders Inn, 11275 Folsom Blvd.
in *Rancho Cordova*
For information call (707) 864-2359

Northern California Accordion Society

Meets 7 PM the third Thursday of the month
Polish American Community Hall
327 Main Street, Roseville
Info: Call Vince Cukar (916) 791-3041

Good Time Accordion Club

Meets 7 p.m. the second Wednesday
of the month
Community Center
1055 Escalon Avenue, Escalon
For information call (209) 545-3603

South Bay Accordion Jam

Third Sunday of the month 2:00 p.m.
Location of meeting varies; for info call
Victor Corsiglia (408) 554-6275 or
Bill Tapogna (408) 984-5290.

Silicon Valley Accordion Society

Meets on the first Sunday of the Month
2:00 p.m. at Harry's Hofbrau Restaurant
390 Saratoga Ave., San Jose
(between 280 and Stevens Creek Blvd.)
For Info Phone (408) 270-5003
Website: www.SVASociety.com

SFAC Ensemble Practice

Second and Fourth Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m.
Moose Lodge
7535 Mission St., Colma/Daly City

Call first!: Frank Montoro (650) 574-4757

SFAC Band Practice

First and Third Wednesday 7:00 p.m.
Moose Lodge

7535 Mission St., Colma/Daly City

Call first!: Frank Schlotter (510) 339-1163

Who Is Playing Where

Reno Di Bono and the Blue Moon Trio
play for dancing every second Friday
of the month

at Montavalle in Scotts Valley, CA
8:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.

April 23 with "I Gondolieri," Italian music for
Sacred Heart Prep. School, Atherton;

May 2 with "I Gondolieri," Italian music for Huntington-Coreo
Benefit Bocce Ball Tournament, noon-4 p.m.,
565 University Ave., Los Gatos

May 15 with "I Gondolieri," Italian music for Saratoga Public
Schools Silent Auction, at Villa Ragusa, South 2nd. St,
downtown Campbell, 6:30—8:30 p.m.

For info call Reno (408) 252-3808

**Joe Domitrowich and the
Alpiners USA**

Every Sunday evening
5 to 9 p.m. at Tyrolean Inn
9600 Highway 9 in Ben Lomond
(831) 336-5188

May 22 8:00-11:00 p.m. Edelweiss Haus,
702 Main St., Northampton, PA

May 23 4-8 p.m. at

Timmer's Grove, Pt. Phillips, PA
June 6 & August 1, 2:00-6:00 p.m.

Oakland Nature Friends,

3115 Butters Drive, Oakland

For more info call Joe (408) 255-1259

The Internationals Teske's Germania,
255 N. First St., San Jose; call (408) 292-0291

Steve Balich Sr. and his Band

April 7, 9, 21, 28 at Santa Rosa Senior Center,
Finley Hall, 1—4 p.m.

April 25 at Our Lady of Grace Bocci Ball Tournament,
3:00-6:00 p.m.

April 29 through May 15: Polka Cruise
through the Panama Canal

Info: Call Steve Balich (707) 874-3494

Mike Zampiceni plays

on Saturday nights

At Di Cicco's Italian Restaurant
2509 Bascom Ave., San Jose

And on Friday nights at Bellagio,
33 S. Central Ave. in Campbell (408) 370-7705.

For reservations call (408) 377-5850

William DeMichelis plays on

Friday and Saturday nights

At the Elbe German and
European restaurant

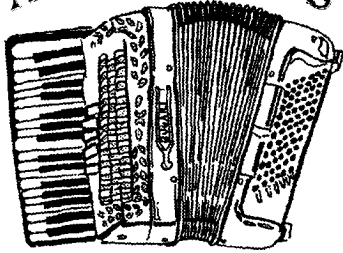
117 University Avenue, Palo Alto

Call (650) 321-3319

or visit www.elbe-restaurant.com



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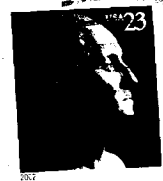


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