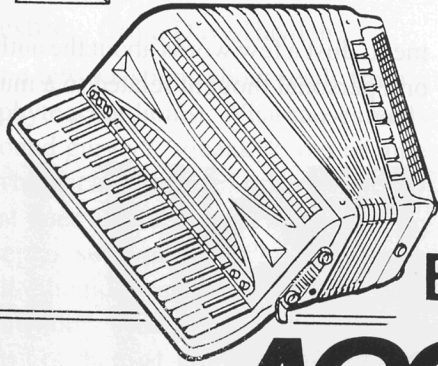


Newsletter of the

SAN FRANCISCO CALIFORNIA U.S.A.



BAY AREA

# ACCORDION CLUB

AUGUST, 1995

## AUGUST GENERAL MEETING

by Denny Huff

August's meeting focused on quality, as opposed to quantity. There were only four "acts", but each was a treat.

First up was **Mark Ramian**, who had modified his accordion so that he didn't need to have it strapped to his back. The bellows operation was cleverly hidden from audience view, and **Mark** played from a seated position behind the instrument. **MC Domenic Saso** promised "accordion chords", and **Mark** delivered, beginning with *Sanguie Zigano*. While he complained of occasionally having a "stuck finger", the audience didn't appear to notice. Other selections included *Fiscarmonica Allegra*, *Hungarian Dance #5*, *Danza Oriental*, *Dantesque Polca*, and *Parigi Muzette*. We all enjoyed the music, but I'm not sure his accordion modifications will catch on. Maybe if the keyboard were vertical.....Thanks, **Mark**, for some quality variety in our program.

Next up was a fun duet we've not seen previously.

And we apparently have **Mary-Alice Eldon** to thank for encouraging these players to share their music with the club. **Joe Simoni** and **John Linda** did a gangbusters job of pumping some Italian and traditional favorites to an enthusiastic audience. They started it off with *La Spagnola*, then we all got caught up in the spirit and sang along to *Oh Marie*, *Bye Bye Blackbird*, *You Are My Sunshine*, and *Five Foot Two*, then *Just Because*, and *Beer Barrel*. The more they played, the more they

cont. on p. 2



Jorgen Sundqvist

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS

**August 26th and 27th**, Sat. and Sunday, 10 to 7. Cotati Accordion Festival. Featuring Dick Contino, Leo Aquino, Jorgen Sundqvist, Kenny Kotwitz, many BAAC members, a big Jam Tent, workshops, and lots more! Gate fee; bring accordion for a big discount!

**September 6th, Wed.** BAAC Board Meeting, 7:30 PM at Val Kieser's, 3437 Crane Way, Oakland. Phone Val at 510-531-4836 for directions. Light refreshments served beginning at 6 P. Guests welcome.

**Sept. 10th-16th**, Button Box Camp. Call Joe Smiell, (510)832-6938.

**September 11th, Monday.** BAAC General Meeting. Note date shift due to Labor Day holiday! Donworth Hall, 22nd and Eucalyptus, S.F., just north of Stonestown Shopping Ctr. 7PM. Featuring Frank Panacci and several other of your favorite players.

**September 12th, Tuesday.** Fun Band Practice. House of Parties.

**October 2nd., Monday.** BAAC General Meeting featuring special Guest Artist Chuck Berger.

A. Restrepo . 94

*August General Meeting, cont.*

enjoyed it, and the better they got. This is a duet that we really want to see again!

**Peter Di Bono** closed out the first half



*Mark Ramian*

of the evening with his usual excellent performance. (It should be mentioned that he did get an assist from several audience members who jumped in with bandages for a bleeding little finger.) He noted that he was a little nervous up on the stage, which I personally found very encouraging, but one couldn't tell from his performance. *Begin the Beguine*



*Joe Simoni, John Linda*

never sounded better. Additionally, he treated us to some delightful work, and inspiration, with the left hand as he played *You Must Believe in Spring*. Other selections included a French musette number and a big, splashy medley from *My Fair Lady*. But I think his best accomplishment for the month was in passing the Cotati slot following Dick Contino to **Marian Kelly**. Way to go, **Peter!**

**Jorgen Sundeqvist** has become an old friend at this point. He's played at club meetings, participated in the Galla-Rini Accordion Camp, done concerts and will appear at Cotati. So it was a real pleasure to have him back with us for a few hours. He played in the outstanding manner we expected from our favorite Galla-Rini protegé, with an excellent selection of challenging musical numbers. Those who hadn't heard him previously first sat up straight to see better, then stood up to applaud his amazing musicianship. But I think what I liked best about his performance was his personal commentary and anecdotes. From 1911 events involving Galla-Rini, Frosini and Pietro Diero to a discussion of 11/16's timing for a Bulgarian Folk Dance, **Jorgen** provided an interesting background for each selection which enhanced its enjoy-

ment. Just a few words about the author or a personal thought related to a musi-



*Peter Di Bono*

cal selection seems to greatly improve the presentation. Selections included *La Cumparsita*, *The Sound of Music*, *Rachmaninoff's Italian Polka*, and the aforementioned Bulgarian dance with 11 beats to the measured played in about 2 seconds. He finished with an original version of Chabrier's *Espana* which had the audience back on its feet for the second or third time. Thank you, Jorgen, for sharing your valuable time with us — we'll see you at Cotati.

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### More Accordion Internet Wisdom

Question: (from Dave Hayden)

Just a few questions about reeds from a neophyte accordionist. What causes reeds to sound gurgly? squeaky? out of tune with higher air pressure? otherwise icky? What does a competent repairperson do to repair such problems? What does (well, should..) an incompetent person like me do? And finally, what kinds of reeds are there (I glimpsed mention of brass and steel reeds — any others?), and how does the quality vary? How does the price vary?

Answer: (from somebody we know, Bob Berta)

Weird sounding reeds can be from:

- out of tune...you can usually detect this if you push and pull on the same note and the note sounds different. This is because there are different reeds sounding on the push and pull stroke and if one is out of tune in relation to the other you will hear it. When doing this test try to select the reeds that are single reeds and not combinations of reeds...for instance a clarinet or piccolo reed. Usually the high reeds are more susceptible to out of tune and dust induced problems than low reeds.
- dust in the reeds. You can sometimes clean this out by pushing hard on the bellows. If not it may require going into the reeds which is done by pulling the bellows pins and pulling the accordion away from the bellows. The pins are pushed in and can be removed by grabbing their heads with a pair of pliers and gently pulling at the same time as twisting. When you put the pins back in use the same technique and NEVER hammer them back in...you could crack something. Note the length of the pins. There are usually two pins of a different length than the others that need to go back in the same spot. Once inside you can take a piece of paper to clean between the reed tongue and the reed plate. Don't touch the

metal parts with your fingers since your perspiration can cause rust on the reeds and this will cause additional out of tune conditions.

- missing leathers on the reeds. This you can check for but is best left to an expert to repair.
- cracked reeds or reeds broken loose from the beeswax. Again this is a repair for the experts.

Differences in reeds is first in the finishing of them. You could have standard reeds, hand finished or hand made with the hand made ones of better quality. Reeds are generally rated in levels with #1 at the bottom and #9 at the top for piano accordions. It is not likely you would find any brass reeds in an accordion...steel is used in the reeds and swedish blue steel is the highest quality generally. The advantage of a hand made reed of the higher quality is tone and also the ability to leak less air. This is most noticeable when playing a finer accordion as you won't have to move the bellows as much for the same volume as a lower quality one. A better accordion also has all the reeds "speaking" at the same time. When the master switch is played and the volume is low you will hear all of the reeds at the same time rather than a high reed first and a low reed a millisecond later.

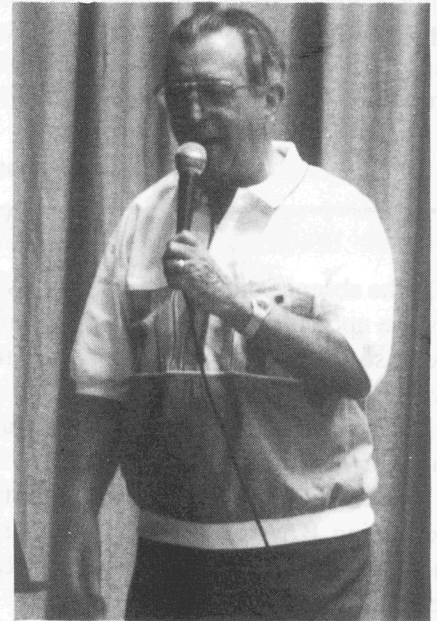
-If you have any major problems with the accordion it is best left to an expert. An amateur can do very expensive damage to an accordion.

Repairs and tuning costs ballpark are:

Complete tune both sides	\$300 to \$500
Spot Tune treble	\$200
Rewax all reeds	\$300
Replace all valve pads per side	\$250

Generally an accordion that is 30 years old or so and has never been maintained would need at the minimum the complete tune. Rewaxing reeds may be required if

the accordion is of this vintage and the wax is drying out and is necessary to prevent them from breaking loose after the tune up (highly recommended if the accordion is this old...you might get away with it but if it breaks loose you will need to go back and redo the tuning and pay more bucks). Valve pads would need replacing if your accordion was made in Italy about 30 years ago since they had a problem with the glue used to hold the pads on the backing plates. The glue gradually leaks through the leather and makes the keys stick to the plate. This is obvious if your accordion keys stick occasionally or when it has been sitting for a while.



*Our Very Favorite MC Hard at Work!*

We wish to acknowledge contributions recently received from:

**Mike Marotta**  
**Val Kieser**  
**Thank You!!!**

## *PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE*

*by Bob Berta*

Thought I would take a couple of minutes out from feeding and changing my new son's diapers to thank all for the fine welcome accorded to our special guest Jorgen Sundequist by the members of our club. A special thanks to Marian Kelly for the gracious loan of her home for a special potluck dinner party, the night before the meeting, to honor Jorgen. About 25 club members had a good time greeting Jorgen and discussing our favorite subject, accordions (and the food was fantastic).

Also a special thanks to Val Kieser for providing accommodations for Jorgen and acting as chauffeur. Val brought Jorgen to and from the airport and hosted him for

three nights. She says she had a wonderful time because Jorgen is such an affable guest. Jorgen's concert was wonderful and the membership was in awe of his incredible technique. I am looking forward to seeing him perform at Cotati.

Of course the person most responsible for our concert was Joe Petosa of Petosa accordions who is sponsoring Jorgen on a tour across the US. Thanks Joe!

We hope to have more special guests at upcoming meetings. Chuck Berger, MIDI accordionist, will be visiting us in October as will an accordion orchestra from Sweden.

If you have any thoughts about what you would like to see at upcoming events or meetings please feel free to give any board member a call to discuss it. You are also welcome to attend any board meeting if you have ideas, complaints, or just want to see what goes on behind the scenes.

Nineteen ninety-six will be the national Year of the Accordion. You will be seeing several references to this in upcoming newsletters and events. You can help provide an increased awareness of the accordion by telling others about this special recognition of the accordion whenever you have a chance.

### **July Board Meeting Synopsis**

- In the absence of our esteemed Treasurer, the Board amended his proposed budget for the upcoming year before approving it. Projected income is \$12,880; projected expense \$12,670. Without scheduled fund raisers, the project of purchasing a sound system was tabled.
- Frank Schlotter will handle the nuts and bolts of BAAC's booth at Cotati this year. In that role, he is in search of persons who will man the booth for a 2-hour shift.
- Frank Schlotter read the audit report which he and Bob Smith had compiled after examining BAAC's books. The pair made several important recommendations, including a request for improved check documentation. Call either of the auditors for details.
- Marian Kelly reported on the American Accordionists' Association Festival in Houston. She apparently gave our Club considerable visibility there by moderating the Summit Meetings. One main result of these discussions was that the group has proclaimed 1996 as The Year of the Accordion! A second result is a decision to fund a one-year promotional campaign for the accordion, to be coordinated by Faithe Deffner. Since all accordion-related groups in the country are being asked to make a financial contribution to the promotional effort, the Board voted to send \$100.
- Plans for hosting Jorgen Sundeqvist were discussed.
- The issue of our meeting location was tabled until we hear specific objections to our present location coupled with a researched suggestion for a better spot.
- Jim Boggio has offered to hold a Cajun workshop. We will ask him to make a proposal.
- Frank Montoro passed around a sheet showing responses to the questionnaire on the dues form.
- Frank Panacci requests that people leave Donworth Hall after the meeting has been concluded so that he can close up. Our rental agreement says we will be out at 9:30.

MK

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# IMPRESSIONS

by Eino Huhtala

Currently, many signs apparent throughout the land indicate that a regeneration of the accordion and its music has begun in this country. Former players are bringing their instruments out and are practicing again. Youngsters, hearing good accordion music for the first time, are fascinated and interested in it. Festivals and concerts are becoming popular in many areas and entertainers are more in demand.

While rejoicing over this positive trend, lets turn back the pages of history to the beginning of the century, to perceive how the lives of two virtuosos influenced and promoted the former surge of accordion popularity in this country between 1880 and 1950.

Biographical sketches of these two men give a fantastically parallel trail from their place of origin to the culmination of their professional careers in the US.

These two men, born 3 years apart, had the same given name. Each received his first accordion and teacher or instruction at an early age. Both sought and received advanced musical education. Both, upon entry to America, went directly to San Francisco, then to New York, and to careers in vaudeville, recording companies, and radio — compare these short biographical sketches which follow.

First, Pietro Giulfrida, later Frosini, the name chosen for his professional career, was born in Catania, Sicily, on August 9, 1885. His father, Michael Angelo Giulfrida, acquired a four-bass, eleven-key accordion for Pietro when he was six, and became his first teacher. When Pietro was age nine, his father purchased a chromatic accordion from the manufacturer Rosario Porto, whose son Salvatore, a fine accordionist, impressed Pietro with his tremolo effect, or bellows shake.

Pietro later developed and popularized it, and it became part of his musical expression. He attended the music conservatory in Catania to study harmony and theory, as well as the cornet and the organ. Following this, he played as first cornetist for the British Navy at Malta. At age 20, he came to the United States, and settled down in California to play to accordion, later to move to New York as a vaudeville headliner which led to gramophone recordings and radio. Around 1908, he began serious composing for the accordion, and is known by his great array of accordion compositions and recordings.

Pietro Diero was born in 1888, in Salto, Italy. As a youth, he showed exceptional love for music, and an inclination towards the accordion. At age 15, he was an accomplished player. Arriving in this country at age 18, he undertook the study of piano, but also persevered with the accordion and its music under very able teachers. It was Pietro's suggestion that a piano keyboard be fitted to the accordion, which he named the piano accordion. He presented it to the public in 1909 at the Washington Square Theater in San Francisco.

In 1912, he secured an engagement at the Winter Garden Theatre in New York. After an extended contract, he was invited to play for the Victor Record Company. Extensive tours of the United States brought him to the Panama Exposition in San Francisco. He also gave concerts at the San Francisco Accordion Club, the only one of its kind at that time. Vaudeville, radio, and composing for the accordion and accordion music all added to the successful career of this master.

Editor's note: While he was in San Francisco in 1916 for the Panama Exposition mentioned above, Diero wrote a march called "San Francisco Souvenir March" and dedicated it to the San Francisco Accordion Club. You may not have heard of the piece, because it has not previously been published. However, it is now available, courtesy of Don Balestrieri at Music Graphics Press in San Diego. "San Francisco Souvenir March" will be available at BAAC's booth at this year's Cotati Festival. A most unusual piece of San Francisco accordion history!!! Be sure to check it out.

### Contact Phone #s for Officers and Board Members:

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Treas.	Algis Ratnikas	(415) 587-9910
Record.Sect.	Val Kieser	(510) 531-4836
Finan. Sect.	Frank Montoro	(415) 574-4757
	Mary-Alice Eldon	(415) 366-7819
	Marian Kelly	(415) 854-1896
	Frank Panacci	(415) 731-1039
	Frank Schlotter	(510) 339-8657
	Bob Smith	(415) 856-9321



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## Galla-Rini Camp 1995

Silver Falls State Park Conference Center, Oregon

23 - 28 July, 1995

by Val Kieser

Each year we think it can't get any better than this, and yet each year it does! Camp was fantastic, with the largest group ever (48 players). The Maestro's Ensemble truly sounded like a full symphony orchestra, and I think we did pretty well considering that we had only four days to practice. The Grand Finale was the Hallelujah Chorus from Handel's Messiah.

The addition of Jorgen Sundeqvist to answer all our questions and give workshops and private lessons was an excellent decision. Besides learning Jorgen's practice and memorization tips, we were also treated to many examples of his exquisite musicianship. He also took apart two accordions (one of which was his own) to show us how the reeds work, both in the bass and the treble. He also showed us how his own accordion differs from most, in that his has more keys in the right hand, plus he has a switch for the left hand that changes his bass buttons back and forth between stradella and free-bass. His accordion also is capable of a much stronger, concert sound than most accordions.

Both Tony Galla-Rini and Jorgen regaled us with countless fascinating and sometimes hilarious anecdotes. Both are natural entertainers.

Our BAAC "contingent" performed twice: once on the newly-added "Dance Night," when we played Joe Smiell's arrangement of *Syncopated Clock* and a three-part rendition of *Dark Eyes*, arranged, of all things, in 4/4 time! Then, on "Concert Night," we played a four-part band arrangement of *Melody of Love*. Joe had helped us work on all of these before we left for camp. Without his

## New Members

Yikes!! I see that I haven't run a list of new members since last February! That was a big mistake, because there are a lot of you! We want to issue to each of you a hearty welcome. Additionally, let me beg your pardon if I have left your name off the list below. Let me know, and I'll run it next time (which will *not* be six months from now).

Peter Adler, Berkeley  
 Ed Albert, Placerville  
 Fred Anderson, San Francisco  
 John Anderson, Salinas  
 Alice Aman, Colorado Springs, CO  
 Ernie Beck, San Francisco  
 Roy Belli, Mill Valley  
 Rick Bez, Colfax  
 Ken Chambers, Santa Rosa  
 Noel Anthony Cimino, San Anselmo  
 Al Colby, Sacramento  
 Michael Corino, Larkspur  
 Chuck Cost, Scotts Valley  
 John Covarilli, San Leandro  
 Rene DeLaBriandais, Lafayette  
 Marie Dolcini, San Francisco  
 Joe Domitrowich, Sunnyvale  
 Anthony Intintoli, Vallejo  
 George & Heather Johnson, Woodland  
 Helen Johnson, Walnut Creek  
 Jackie Jones, San Francisco  
 Emmett Klemm, Richmond  
 Sheng Mei Yu Kuang, San Francisco  
 Don Larson, Los Gatos  
 Odile Lavault, Berkeley

Marlene Leach, San Francisco  
 Frank Lima, San Jose  
 John Lister, Corte Madera  
 Herb Lundin, Santa Clara  
 Bruno Marmi, San Francisco  
 Maggie Martin, Petaluma  
 Tom McGough, Columbus, IN  
 Charles Mertes, San Francisco  
 Darryl Missall, Antioch  
 Anthony Muschi, San Francisco  
 Louis Muschi, San Francisco  
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 B B Simmons, Berkeley  
 Bob Souza, El Cerrito  
 Ralph Treebs, Stockton  
 Steve Trucco, Stockton  
 Paul Wagner, Sunnyvale  
 Neil Wahlgren, San Ramon  
 Sharon Walters, San Francisco  
 Ron Zucca, Fremont

A hearty, if belated, welcome to all of you! Thank you for your interest in our Club. Please help us make it a better club by offering your comments or suggestions. Names and phone numbers of Board members are elsewhere in this newsletter for your use.

generous help, I don't know how we could have done it!

As every year, the food was outstanding, the friendships warm, and spirits high! Every one of us who can possible make it will be back again next year.

If you would like to join the San Francisco Bay Area Accordion Club, please send a check for \$20 payable to BAAC to our Financial Secretary, Frank Montoro, 1448 Tarrytown, San Mateo, CA. 94402. You will receive a newsletter monthly from July '95 through June '96. We welcome all interested persons!

## DEDICATED TO THE ACCORDION

by Bob Smith

I recently attended the Galla-Rini Accordion Camp at Silver Falls, Oregon. I saw many of the friends I had met the previous year. Among them was the lovely and energetic Gloria Ensign from Spring Valley, CA. Gloria told me a story about herself which touched me deeply and showed her dedication to the accordion.

Many years ago Gloria accidentally slammed a sliding glass door on the smaller knuckle of the middle finger of her right hand. The end of that finger soon started leaning toward her index finger. She could push it back into position for a while, but as the years passed, it was harder and harder to move. She finally had to learn to compensate for the offset finger. In 1991 she went to a doctor who told her that the knuckle had calcified in the crooked position and there was no joint left. The joint could be straightened, but would still be immobile. She did have the choice of the angle that the last joint made with the rest of the finger.

Normally, people choose to have the joint straight so that it appears normal. To her doctor's surprise, Gloria asked the doctor to make the joint at the angle she would have while playing the accordion! Nails (or rods) were inserted in her finger to hold it in place for two months. After that, the nails were removed and she trained her finger to be just as fast as the others.

When you watch Gloria play the accordion, you can tell how much she loves it — from her bright sparkling eyes down to her toe-tapping feet.

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## Letter to the Membership

by Mary-Alice Eldon,

Your BAAC Board sends a thank you to all who renewed their membership and gave suggestions for improving our Club. With your support we can turn some of these ideas into actuality. First of all, one after my own heart, encourage more accordion playing. As the cab driver said when the tourist asked him how to get to Carnegie Hall, "Practice, practice, practice!" Many of you want music workshops to sharpen your skills and receive tips from the pros. Some want a true beginners' band to enable those starting out to gain confidence at group playing. We have two events in the planning stages for workshops. With all of us practicing hard, we hope to attract talented teachers to lead us.

A few would like to return to the Elks' Club for the picnic. What we are debating now is the cost, which is more than twice as much as the Swiss Park site. Some of you voted for a better sound system for meetings and special events. Some were even willing to contribute specifically for this. If there are any angels willing to finance this, please come forward. We do have a group of dance enthusiasts in our midst who would love some ballroom and ethnic dancing at some of the meetings. Plans are in the works, folks!

There is a strong need by many attendees to have the meeting start and end on schedule, with a specific twenty-minute intermission. We do need to respect each other's needs. Some of us are "retired" and some are just "tired" and have to get up early. The Hall is rented until 9:30 PM. After that, one can go to Lyons to continue partying, if time is of no object.

Many of you continue to press for hearing more world-class accordionists, as well as giving all the members who are willing an opportunity to perform. This is your assignment, dear reader. We need you to help us contact the famous ones you know about, and we also need you to come forward solo, or with duets, trios,

quartets, etc., and play for us. And certainly we need you to cheer all our performers as you do so beautifully at every meeting.

The Dessert Potluck Meeting was a huge success and should be an annual event. Please continue to give your suggestions for more theme meetings. Recorded music occasionally at intermissions, or before the meeting gets underway is suggested. If you have a favorite accordion tape that you would like to share, please contact us.

Everyone likes our interesting and excellent newsletter. You can expand its effectiveness by your participation. Contribute articles, news about the accordion or music. Some say that we should play at more civic events in the communities. Help us by bringing events to the Club's attention and playing when you can, increasing exposure for the accordion.

Some would like our meeting place to be further south or north or east. What can wonderfully happen is that we grow so big that there will be a SOUTH BAAC, a NORTH BAAC, and an EAST BAAC as well as the current WEST BAAC.

A few say that we are just perfect and should not change anything. However, we all know that life is change and that we might as well evolve into the best we can become as we promote accordion music.

One person suggested that women be encouraged to play at more than Ladies' Night. We do and they are. Everyone is encouraged to play. One person suggested "no dues". Not in this lifetime, unless you would like to host the meeting in your living room.

Again, thanks for your comments and the many offers to share the workload, including even praying for the success of the group. We all need each other's support. Remember, if you want to have a say in how BAAC operates, be sure to SAY it.

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NEXT MEETING: MONDAY  
September 11, 1995  
7:00 PM

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