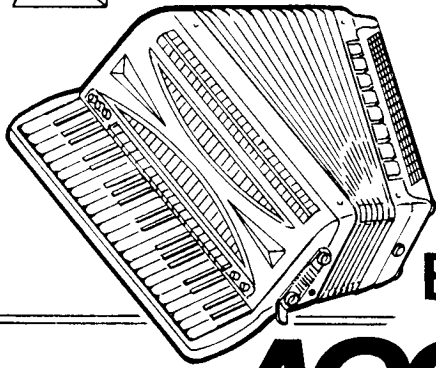


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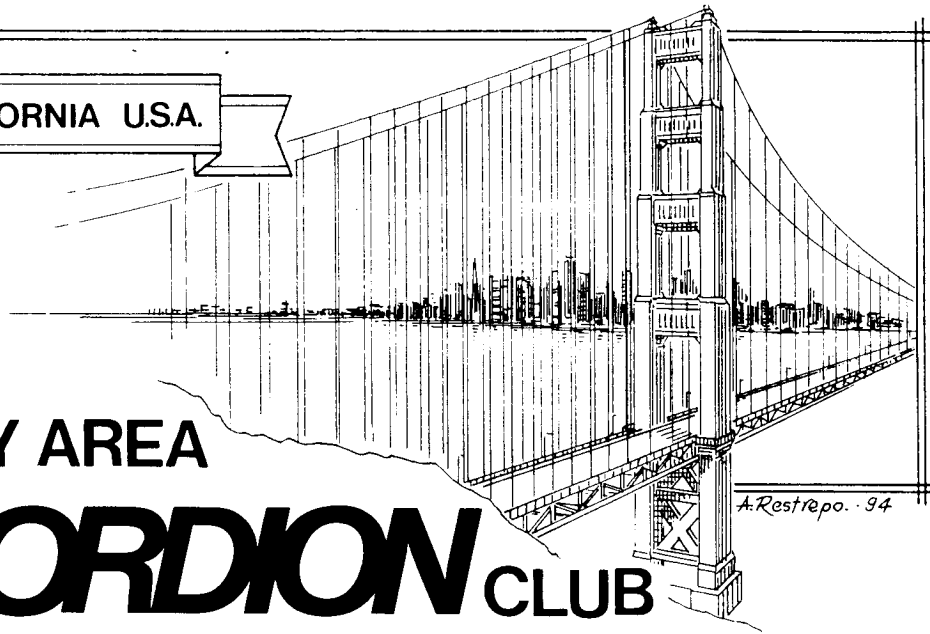
SAN FRANCISCO CALIFORNIA U.S.A.



BAY AREA

ACCORDION CLUB

DECEMBER, 1996



December General Meeting

by Dennis Huff

Every now and then I think of the House of Parties. (For the benefit of new members this was the old club meeting venue.) We were crowded in, the acoustics were bad, the ceiling was low (so was the rent), and the neighborhood was considered by some to be gamey, but it always had a cozy feeling for the Christmas meetingmaybe it was the *Christmas Cheer* available from the bar in the back, but I always remember the House of Parties at Christmas. This year we had to battle a 49'ers Monday night game and the recent demise of several accordion friends to get ourselves into the holiday mood. **Rick Bez** helped with Christmas carols (is he the new **Lou Soper**??)

and Santa made his annual visit to launch us into December and the Holiday Season. But still I thought of the House of Parties.

Bob Berta corralled us and brought the meeting to order. Mostly he commented on the passing of **Jim Boggio**, **George Meier** and **Dorothy Van Damme**, and we observed a moment of silence in remembrance. Concerned friends of **Jim's** are raising funds to place a statue of **Jim** in the park at Cotati! He would certainly approve — and I'm glad that he returned to the Cotati stage before leaving us. **Bob** played segments of a tape which contained different examples of **Jim's** musical and entertainment achievements. The tape is for sale if you're interested, and proceeds will go toward **Jim's** memorial statue.

cont. p. 3

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

January 6th, Monday. BAAC General Meeting. Performers will include Mike Zampiceni, Norma Parsons, Marian Kelly with Steve Mobia -playing Steve's original accordion composition, and Jackie Jones' Trio. Donworth Hall, 22nd & Eucalyptus, S.F., just north of Stonestown Shopping Center. 7 P.

Jan 8th, Wed. BAAC Board Meeting, 7:30 PM at Ed Massolo's, 612 Lassen, So. S.F. Guests welcome. Call Ed at (415)589-8409 for directions.

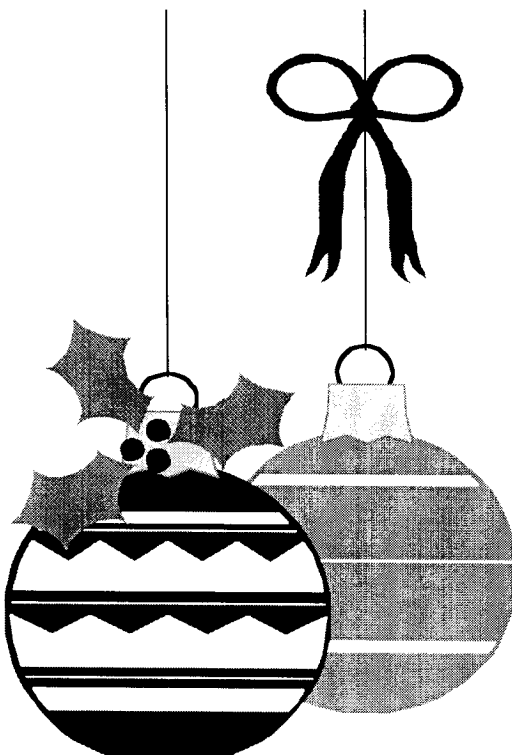
January 13th, Monday. BAAC Accordion Band (Fun Band) practice. House of Parties. Call Domenic Saso, (415) 587-7557.

January 22nd, Wednesday 7:00 PM. BAAC Ensemble Practice, House of Parties. Call Joe, 510-832-6938.

March 3rd, Monday. Meeting will feature our old friend, Veikko Ahvenainen.

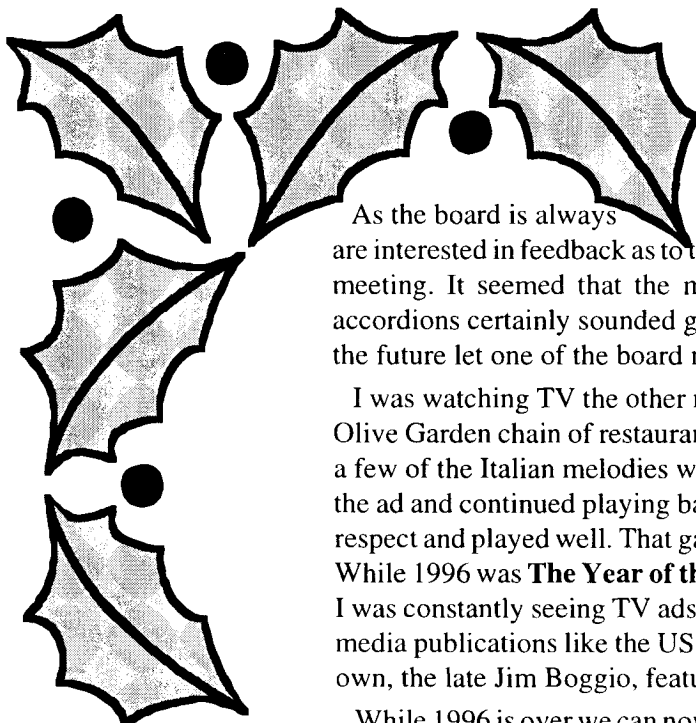
April 6th, Sunday. Quartetto Gelato at Herbst Theater. Q.G. is NPR's Debut Artist of the Year. This quartet features accordion along with strings, and they play a wide array of styles..from gypsy through folk to operatic arias and classical. Don't miss! 2P (415) 398-6449

Please send Calendar Information to Your Editor, using the address on the last page. Thank you.



President's Message

by Bob Berta



As the board is always looking for new and fun ways for our members to participate we are interested in feedback as to the group Christmas accordion tune "jam" we had at our December meeting. It seemed that the members enjoyed playing enmasse and the sound of all those accordions certainly sounded great. If you would like to have some more of that type of thing in the future let one of the board members know.

I was watching TV the other night and was pleasantly surprised to see an advertisement for the Olive Garden chain of restaurants. It featured a fine accordionist who also sang (great voice also) a few of the Italian melodies we are so familiar with. The accordionist was seen several times in the ad and continued playing back of the voice-over. It was nice to see the accordion treated with respect and played well. That gave me pause to reflect on all that we accomplished in the last year. While 1996 was **The Year of the Accordion** nationally, it seemed to take a new life on of its own. I was constantly seeing TV ads featuring accordion and noticing accordion mentioned in several media publications like the USA Today article and New York Magazine. We also had one of our own, the late Jim Boggio, featured in a major music magazine (Keyboard Magazine).

While 1996 is over we can now build on that success and continue to push for even greater public rediscovery of the accordion. If you have any ideas for promoting the accordion the board would love to hear from you.

And in a Similar Vein.....

December 15, 1996

Dear Editor:

With the year drawing to a close, it's time to consider goals for the future. New Year's resolutions, so to speak. I thought I'd make a few suggestions. How about:

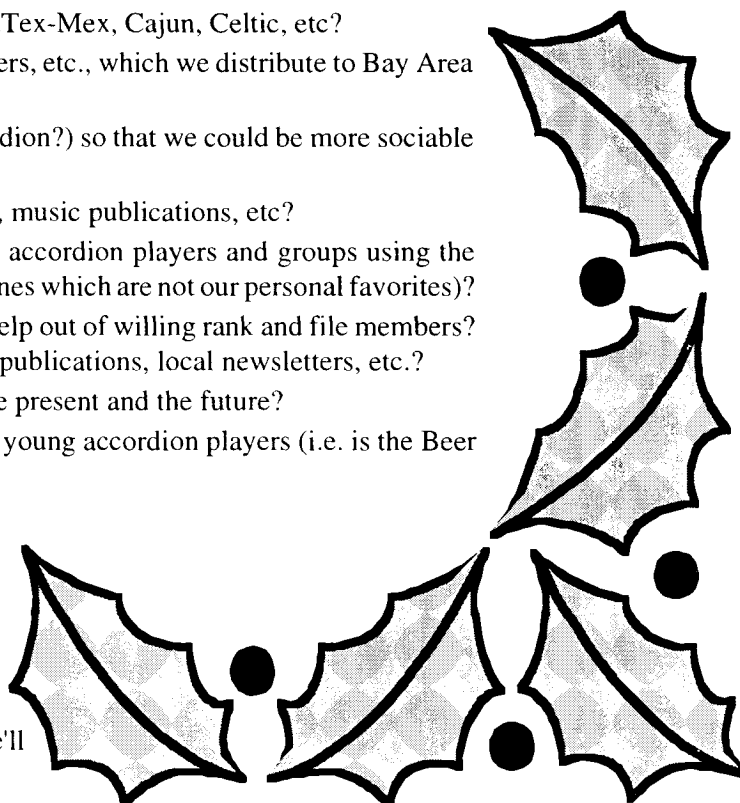
- hearing some playing styles we don't normally listen to...Tex-Mex, Cajun, Celtic, etc?
- a brief pamphlet on the accordion, BAAC, available teachers, etc., which we distribute to Bay Area Music stores or other appropriate locations?
- a special "New Member" stick-on badge (bright red accordion?) so that we could be more sociable to folks at their first (or second) meeting?
- a promotional mailing list of music shops, music schools, music publications, etc?
- a listing of major, professional (Bay Area? California?) accordion players and groups using the accordion, by music style, including all types of music (even ones which are not our personal favorites)?
- some specific volunteer projects to assist in getting more help out of willing rank and file members? How about writing articles for local publications — musical publications, local newsletters, etc.?
- a Golden Age of the Accordion-like book focusing on the present and the future?
- a treatise on what kind of music should be taught to new, young accordion players (i.e. is the Beer Barrel Polka still appropriate? — and don't get me wrong,

I love the song)?

- everyone submits their suggestions for future goals which will promote the accordion outside of our specific, local (mostly social) situation?

Denny Huff

Now that's a great challenge. How about it, members? We'll print them all! (Ed.)



December General Meeting, cont.

First up was the Fun Band. And didn't **Domenic Saso**, our Master of Ceremonies and Fun Band Conductor, look splendid in his official Conductor regalia? Assisted ably by **Tom Cordoni** for several of the offerings. Who could resist their first selection, *When Irish Eyes are Smiling*? Probably most heavy metal fans, but certainly not me. Other numbers included *Oh Marie* (am I the only one who remembers Luigi Bascomb?), *When the Saints Go Marching In*, *One Day in Spring*, *California Here I Come*, and *Midnight in Moscow*. Will you guys (and gals) be playing for any Giants games this year?? The Fun Band meets monthly to practice and just have fun. They're always looking for new talent, so give them a call if you'd like to hone your musical skills and mingle with fellow accordion aficionados.

Rick Bez offered a brief verbal and musical tribute to **Jim Boggio**, who will be greatly missed. Speaking of **Jim**, it always amazed me to watch **Jim's** fingers when he played — they jumped all over the place but never missed a note. I tend to hit the adjoining note on occasion, and I like to blame it on having "short, stubby fingers." Wrong! **Jim's** playing always reminded me that it was my playing, not my fingers. In one way or another he was and will remain an inspiration to all of us.

Rick's imitation of **Lou Soper's** Christmas Caroling session was next. And, promoter that he is, **Rick** didn't miss a chance to plug his new Christmas album. (Hope you got yours.) Numbers which you could hear on the album if you missed the meeting included *Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer*, *Frosty the Snowman*, *Jingle Bells* (of course), *Santa Claus is Comin' to Town*, *Jingle Bell Rock* and *Parade of the Wooden Soldiers*. My vote for most fun would go to *Jingle Ball Rock*.

Next a new tradition was coined as 39 accordion-clad members and a solo drummer front and centered for the play-

ing of *Silent Night*. Pretty darn good! (Look Ma, no practice!) With their bodies pumped full of endorphins and adrenaline, the newly founded group continued with *Rudolph* and *Jingle Bells*. The inevitable playing of the *Beer Barrel Polka* was not to be avoided, and enthusiastic applause followed the session.

Those same endorphins must have made our big Christmas cake, provided by BAAC's elves, taste even better than usual, because during the intermission following our group effort, that lovely cake disappeared quickly. But cutting, serving and eating it helped intermission last a bit longer than usual, which everyone seemed to appreciate. Then it was on with the meeting.

I'll have to confess to having lost track of the official names for our different performing groups. They appear to be evolving, and the only thing I'm sure of is that **Val Kieser** seems to be in all of them. The next group to play was the group which I once recognized as the San Francisco Accordion Ensemble. The composition has changed for various reasons,

including the recent passing of John Molinari, and Monday's members were **Joe Smiell, Jr.**, **Peter Di Bono**, **Marian Kelly**, and **Don Nurisso** with, of course, conductor **Joe Smiell**. Had **Joe** not mentioned it, I wouldn't have known that they were partially sight reading, because they sounded good — which I would always expect from these players. This group (plus **Ron Borelli**) also played at **John Molinari's** funeral service in case you were not able to attend. They played a Mozart *Minuet* before being augmented by a group of players wearing official, bright red Santa hats. The reinforcing players were a combination of **Mary Alice Eldon's** "Chamber Group" plus members of the Accordion Camp contingent — and maybe a few more. The combined group proceeded to play *Syncopated Clock*, by Leroy Anderson. Other numbers included Anderson's *Sleigh Ride* and a polka written by **Joe Smiell** — we'll call it *Joe's Polka*. It all sounded very orchestral for a "bunch of accordions."

Due to a camera malfunction which distracted me, I didn't get the names of



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Bob Delgado (510) 656- 5125

Dec. Gen'l Meeting, cont.

all the players in the combined group. And since I don't want to risk overlooking anyone, I'm going to refrain from listing names. If you want your individual Name in the newsletter, you'll just have to play again.

Due to that same camera malfunction, we were unable to obtain many photos of this meeting. All the more reason for you to play again....to have your Picture in the newsletter.

The Last Word on Jim Boggio

An amusing multi-paragraph obituary to Jim was published in the Nov. 21st San Francisco Chronicle. Here are excerpts:

A memorial gathering will be held in Petaluma on Sunday for Jim Boggio, master accordionist, the self-proclaimed "King of the Stomach Steinway" and the co-founder of the beloved and maligned Cotati Accordion Festival. Mr. Boggio, 56, died November 5th of heart failure in his Rohnert Park home.

Mr. Boggio, a remarkable musician who could play three instruments at once and play while asleep, was funny, loud and as large as the beer barrel in the polkas he was too often called on to perform.

He loved the accordion, and he loved battling the nerdy reputation that the accordion acquired — courtesy of TV bandleader Lawrence Welk.

"I do not want to throw rocks at Lawrence," Mr. Boggio said in a 1992 interview. "I'm truly sorry Lawrence died. But he placed a stigma on this instrument that has taken us 20 years to overcome.

Mr. Boggio overcame it with energy, style and virtuosity, performing zydeco, jazz, Cajun and even the occasional polka with a flair that earned him the title of "Ruler of the Waistline Wurlitzer."

A native of Illinois, Mr. Boggio attended San Francisco State University and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. In the '50s and '60s, Mr. Boggio played in the house bands in the showrooms of large Las Vegas and Reno hotels.

In the 1970s, as those bands became smaller and smaller, Mr. Boggio was often called upon to play more than one instrument at the same time. Colleagues recall with amazement his ability to play the trumpet with his right hand while playing the organ keyboard with his left and hand and the bass pedals of an organ with his feet.

"He was an absolutely phenomenal musician and just beginning to get the reputation he deserved," said Ernie Rideout, an editor of Keyboard Magazine.

In the late 1980s, Mr. Boggio co-founded the Cotati Accordion Festival, the premiere gathering of accordionists in the nation. The affair, which was held in the main plaza of the small Sonoma County town and which never took itself very seriously, was responsible for altering the wording on a popular bumper sticker from "Use an Accordion — Go to Jail" to "Use an Accordion — Go to Cotati."

A highlight of the festival was Mr. Boggio presiding over the "Lady-of Spain-a-ring," in which anyone with an accordion was invited on stage to play in unision the accordionists' anthem, "Lady of Spain." Hundreds would play together and laugh at themselves.

Mr. Boggio also performed at the annual San Francisco Accordion Festival at Fisherman's Wharf. He was known for his radio voice-over parts and for acting in commercials.

He played and sang with such groups as the Swamp Dogs, Alto Madness, David Grisman, and Dan Hicks and his Acoustic Warriors. With the Swamp Dogs, he was known for belting out an original tune called "Mojo Mama": "Mojo Mama! Tell me what you gonna do! Mojo Mama! I wanna make love to you!"

In recent years, he played old standards in the piano bar of the Flamingo Hotel in Santa Rosa, where he would occasionally fall asleep during a number. While snoring, and with his eyes closed, he would continue to play.

"Jim was just as good asleep as he was awake," said Blair Hardman, his friend and fellow Swamp Dog.

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A Brief Guide About Slow Practice

by Gary Dahl (with Spano Accordions, Kent WA)

I decided when I started teaching thirty-seven years ago that each student would be required to demonstrate "slow practice tempos" in selected sections of a piece assigned a week earlier. At first, these tempos are extremely slow, rather like slow-motion and gradually increase only when the skill level is ready. I have never regretted this decision, because it has produced many confident, satisfied accordionists.

What are the benefits of this kind of practice?

A. The student actually learns the piece **faster**, because the brain has the time to read the correct notes, time values, dynamics, etc.

B. Performance slips are greatly reduced. (A slip is not a mistake.) A mistake is playing the same wrong notes at every performance, while an occasional slip is human.

C. Slow practice eliminates practice mistakes. Why should we practice a mistake? Not too logical, is it?

D. Control, especially on fast rhythmic pieces is much more secure. This is especially true on long scale-like passages.

E. Because dynamics are exaggerated at slow practice, they retain their color at tempo.

F. Slow practice and many repetitions of short passages is essential to increase learning speed and eliminate mistakes.

There are many more points I could list, but these are the basics. Together with slow practice, there are many practice techniques to include; another article will explore this arena. Occasionally my students think I am some sort of wizard because I can tell immediately if they have not done their slow practice. If it is a new or fairly new piece, the fingers are searching everywhere for the notes. Slow practice will enable you to learn quickly while fast practice will produce very slow results and usually none at all. Slow practice is not particularly "fun", but it is part of the discipline we refer to when we talk about "studying the accordion." I tell my students I am not asking them to practice slowly because it is fun...it can be boring. You have to "bleed a little", "pay the price", to realize the exciting benefits. You can't learn the accordion in your sleep.

Lark In the Morning in San Francisco

Lark In the Morning, the large, diverse and immensely popular source for instruments which play folk music and for information about those instruments, is opening a branch in San Francisco near Fisherman's Wharf. They carry many types of accordions, concertinas, and button boxes and have expressed great interest in working closely with our club.

Some of the ways we can work with them include:

- Provide performers during their Grand Opening on 5/17 and 18.
- Advertise our Club at the opening and later.
- Find accordion teachers willing to teach in the store.
- They will help promote our concerts and events.
- Provide members who can do workshops at the store.

If you are interested in teaching there, call Mickey Zekley at 1-707-964-4826.

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Thank you for your interest in the Bay Area Accordion Club. We hold monthly meetings and schedule various accordion-related events, and we send this monthly newsletter to all members (currently 340). We encourage your continued interest and participation. Should you care to join us, membership is \$20/year. Make check payable to BAAC and send to 31 Aliso Way, Portola Valley, CA 94028

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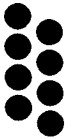
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NEXT MEETING: MONDAY
JANUARY 6, 1997
7:00 PM

Donworth Hall
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