



NEWSLETTER OF THE

SAN FRANCISCO

BAY AREA ACCORDION CLUB

Editors: Marian Kelly

Dominic Palmisano

## FEBRUARY MEETING

President **Lou Soper**, called the meeting to order then immediately turned the proceedings over to Program Chairman **Domenic Saso**. The first performance was by **Clyde Forsman**, who enthusiastically played a Swedish tune with the English translation of "All the Pretty Girls Hambo" and a German schottische, "Bummel Petrus," which is a story of St. Peter showing the younger feminine arrivals around the Pearly Gate.

**Jim Ragel** and his wonderful, easy style, followed with a German song, "Irenurum" and a not-so German version of "Lady Be Good," which he spiced with a great vocal.

Next **Algis Ratnikas** entertained everyone with a spirited, upbeat rendition of the familiar "Parade of the Wooden Soldiers," then played a delightful Lithuanian polka.

Well done, gentlemen!

At this point, **Lou** asked the new members and guests to stand and introduce themselves.

Then **Frank Montoro** told us that he had added up the names of members who have performed since our inception, assuming that the same few people play every month. He was surprised to find that 50 different

members have played for us, really quite a respectable number! **Frank** also urged members to contribute to our small but growing Music Library.

**Tom Torriglia** sold T-shirts in the back of the room to help Those Dam Accordions! raise funds for their upcoming trip to Lithuania. **Tom** detailed for us all the appearances in the next months involving one or more members of T.D.A.

**Lou** announced the next Executive Board meeting on February 10, 1992. Members may attend, but they are to telephone **Frank Montoro** first.

MORE MUSIC!! **Reno Pucci** entertained us on a wonderful old accordion. What a challenge, for him, as the instrument had no straps! That didn't affect **Reno's** playing one bit. He handled "If You Knew Susie," "Dinah," "Sheik of

Araby," and "Rose Room" as if he played like this all the time.

**Peter DiBono** then changed the mood with two gorgeous and technically demanding classical selections, "Prelude" by Dimitri Shostakovich and Domenico Scarlatti's "Pastorel." And, of course, he made them look easy. He followed up with a delightful jazzy rendition of "On A Clear Day."

Finally, **Marian Kelly** knocked our socks off with unpracticed renditions of "Britannia," "Dicitencello Vuie," "Maple Leaf Rag," "Chicken Polka," and "Torna a Surriento." The appreciative though sockless crowd dispersed in a satisfied mood, looking forward to our next meeting, Monday, March 2nd.

*Carol Benetti*



## NOMINATIONS AND ELECTION

Our MAY, 1992 general meeting will feature elections by written ballot for all Officer and Board positions. We will follow nomination and election procedures as detailed in Article VIII of the BAAC Bylaws and which are summarized below:

1. Nominations: A Nominating Committee shall be formed, consisting of two members from the current Executive Board and three

# Profile of VINCE CIRELLI



Vince Cirelli is very special guy, partly because he is one of the few remaining accordion craftsmen in this country. Accordion manufacture, mostly by hand and with love, used to be a thriving business in San Francisco, but today, the it has become a lost art except for a very few skilled craftsmen. Vince Cirelli is one of the elite group of craftsmen known as accordion makers.

He started playing accordion when he was ten years old. At twelve, he was hired as an errand and shop boy by Gordon Piatanesi's father, Gary, and by his uncle Faust at Colombo Accordions located at 122 Columbus Avenue. By age 14, Vince was playing accordion for parties teaming up with a saxophonist. It was during his days at Galileo High that Vince decided to build his own accordion. He began by building an accordion shell as a project in wood-working class. Upon graduation from Galileo in 1939, he went to work for Colombo on a full time basis. There, under the watchful eyes of the Piatanesis, he learned the art of accordion making.

Then the War interrupted his life.

Vince joined the U.S. Coast Guard in 1941 and was sent to Ketchikan, Alaska. It didn't take him long to locate an accordion in the area, and he went on to entertain at USOs and the nearby Army base. He heard that the Coast Guard was organizing a marching band, so he applied, not as an accordionist, but as a saxophonist. Having some knowledge of the sax from his high school experience, he faked his way into the band. He knew he had a lot of catchup to do so he practiced at every chance.

The Coast Guard band played drills and concerts for the servicemen in the area and somehow Vince found an opportunity to work in the accordion. He became a featured soloist between band selections at the concerts. People loved the accordion sound and he still remembers responding to encore after encore.

After the War, Vince went on train tours across the United States entertaining passengers. Feeling it was time to settle down, he returned to Colombo and his chosen craft in 1946, and he

completed the accordion he had begun building in high school.

Vince went on his own in 1948 and his first customer was John Pezzolo. Since then, Vince has built or repaired accordions for just about everyone who ever played the instrument. He has built eight accordions with his own name. His customers have come from all over the U.S. and foreign countries. He still receives many thank you notes from satisfied customers. Gene Miller and Pietro Deiro were two who held him in high regard for his craftsmanship. He worked for all the famous accordion manufacturers in San Francisco at one time or another - - Guerrini, Colombo, Pacific, etc. He was the authorized rep for Excelsior for 25 years. He maintains a shop at 200 Valley Dr., Unit 44, Brisbane, 415-467-2208.

Vince keeps busy patching up our instruments while maintaining his playing and teaching. He is presently restoring three vintage instruments with the care and the love of the craftsman that he is.

by *Frank Montoro*

## Nominations, cont from p. 1

members from the general membership, for a total of five. The latter three will be selected at our MARCH general meeting. Therefore, we ask any of you interested in serving on this committee to be in attendance at our next meeting.

2. The Nominating Committee will present its recommendations at the

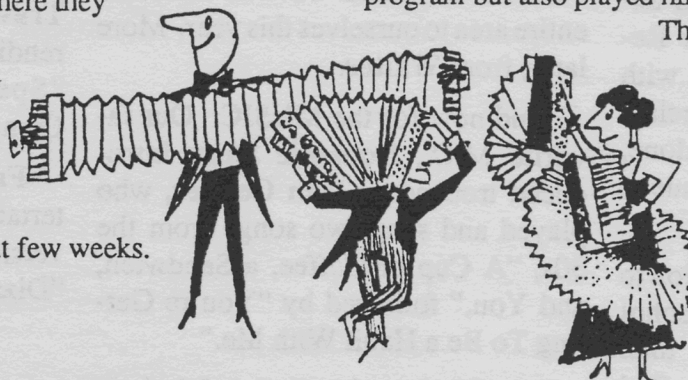
APRIL general meeting. At that time, they will recommend one candidate for each of the ten positions available (five officers and five board members). Further nominations from the floor shall be accepted at this meeting, and *only* at this meeting. Names of all nominees will be published in the April edition of this newsletter.

3. Elections: A ballot will be given to each paid-up BAAC member attending the MAY general meeting, and the election will be held at that meeting. A nominee receiving the majority of votes shall be elected to office.



## HAVE ACCORDIONS, WILL TRAVEL

Members of B.A.A.C. have been donating their services to the San Francisco Public Schools this fall. Working in teams of two musicians, they have been presenting programs of accordion music to introduce the instruments to students who may not be familiar with its sound. They have received a fine response from the students at all the schools where they have played. Letters of appreciation have been received from students, teachers, and principals. The teams have performed at five schools so far with four more planned in the next few weeks.



We wish to thank the following members for their participation in this fine program: Marian Kelly, Joe Smiell, Peter DiBono, Domenic Saso, Reno Pucci, Walter Traverso, and Rusty Bartoli.

by *Frank Montoro*

Editor's note: Frank Montoro not only organized this program but also played himself at many of the schools.

Thank you, Frank, for carrying out so faithfully and responsibly one of the primary goals of this organization!

## Revisions To Our Bylaws

At our March meeting the general membership will consider changes to our Bylaws, proposed by the Bylaws Revision Committee, Jim Holiday, Evelyn Baulch, and Frank Montoro, and by the Executive Board. Additions are shown in parentheses (); items to be deleted are lined through.

### Article III

Membership, Privileges: The following privileges apply to active members and their spouses/partners:  
1. May attend all B.A.A.C. events without paying fees that may apply to non-members.

### Article VI

Term of Office: The term of office shall be one year. (No officer shall serve more than two consecutive terms). ~~In the event of a vacancy due to resignation, the Board of Directors shall appoint a replacement to fill the unexpired term~~

Secretary: The Secretary shall keep a complete record of all proceedings of the Club and Board of Directors, maintain a roster of members and their places of residence, answer all communications addressed to the Club, and give notice of all meetings and other functions.

Financial Secretary: ..shall collect dues, fees, do-

nations, and keep an accurate record of such receipts, (and shall maintain a roster of members and their places of residence).

### Article VIII

Board of Directors: ~~1. General Powers: The executive power and management of the organization shall be vested in the Board of Directors.~~

~~2. Meetings: The Board of Directors shall meet at least two (2) times a year.~~

~~3. All elected officers shall be ex-officio members of the Board. (The Board of Directors shall consist of five (5) members and serve for a term of one year. No Director shall serve more than two consecutive years.)~~

### Throughout:

Substitute throughout the document the words "Executive Board" for the words "Board of Directors" except in Article VIII.

### Addition

Add new article: Article XII, Dissolution of the Organization:

Upon the dissolution of the Club, any assets shall be donated to a non-profit organization with the approval of the Executive Board.

# January, 1992 General Meeting

The first meeting of the new year, run by our President, **Lou Soper**, was a little short on attendance, but decidedly long on good music and comraderie.

Several items of business were transacted. On a sad note, **Lou** announced the resignation of our Recording Secretary, **Rae Lembi**, with much regret. We greatly appreciate the wonderful job you have done, **Rae**, and we hope we will continue to see your cheery smile regularly.

We have found a fine resolution to our concerns about serving alcohol during our meetings. Rather than purchasing, hauling, and trying to find members to serve our own liquor, we have contracted with **Diane**, who with her husband is the owner of the House of Parties, to be our bartender. We will no longer bear the physical and financial responsibility of and liability for serving alcohol.

**Walter Traverso** announced our Second Annual Picnic, to be held at the Elks Club in Palo Alto on the first Sunday in June. We've made two obvious improvements over last year's arrangements in that we are avoiding Father's Day, and we will have the entire area to ourselves this year. More later, from **Walter**.

And now for the MUSIC. Our favorite M.C., **Domenic Saso**, introduced troubadour **Dan Cooper**, who played and sang two songs from the 30s, "A Cup of Coffee, a Sandwich, and You," followed by "You're Getting To Be a Habit With Me."

Then followed a delightful duet, **John Padegana** playing the mandolin, and **Jim Firpo** on accordion. They played lovely renditions of "Whispering," "Chamarita," and "Tico Tico."

**Reno Di Bono** demonstrated his Elka accordion with a computer. What

amazing sounds came from his high-tech instrument!! **Reno** sang along, really creating a one-man orchestra. He fascinated everyone; prepare to be invited back, **Reno**.

Following intermission, **Walter Traverso** entertained us with terrific renditions of "Cocktails for Two," "Spanish Eyes," and "La Compagnola."

**Frank Panacci** closed out our entertainment with typically wonderful versions of "El Relicario," "Czardas," "Dizzy Fingers," and "Hot Points."

*Carol Benetti*

## BAAC BOARD MEETING

FEBRUARY 10th, 1992

- The Treasurer reported a balance of \$3928 in the checking account and \$1172 in the Performance Fund

- The Newsletter Editors regret their inability to publish a January edition of the BAAC Page due to lack of material. They urge the membership to make the newsletter their voice by submitting pertinent information or articles.

- Time for Picnic plans. The date is Sunday, June 7, 1992. We need raffle donations from the membership. We will write to Anthony Galla-Rini, inviting him to be our guest, and the board authorized expenditure to cover his travel and a stipend.

- "The Golden Age of the Accordion" by Flynn and Davison, will be removed from circulation as part of our

library at the request of the author.

- We have obtained advice from a CPA re IRS filing for non-profit status. That project is on hold for the moment until we can learn how other similar clubs handle this issue.

- The Board decided to keep BAAC dues at \$20/year, from July 1 to June 30, no matter when an individual pays them.

- The By-Law Committee has recommended some changes, and the Board added a few more at this meeting. Please refer to the article elsewhere in this newsletter detailing those changes.

- Dominic Palmisano and Walter Traverso were selected to be the core of our nominating committee for upcoming elections.

### COMING ATTRACTION!

Our MARCH General Meeting will feature

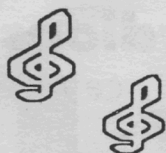
### THE LOU CASALNUOVO QUARTET

with  
**LOU** on accordion  
**Vince Catollica** on clarinet  
**Tom Beeson** on bass fiddle  
**Bob Dominez** on drums

**BE THERE!**

*Carol Benetti*





# THE ACCORDION

by Joe Spano

reprinted from Northwest Accordion News

**CONCERTINAS, BANDONEONS, DIATONIC BUTTON BOXES, CHROMATIC ACCORDIONS:** what's the difference? All these instruments are from the same family as the PIANO accordion, and construction features are very similar.

**CONCERTINA.** A hexagon shaped instrument with buttons on two sides held in the hands or on the lap. The Anglo concertina sounds a different tone on the push than on the pull of the bellows (push-pull type). The English concertina sounds the same tone on the pull and on the push. Both types sound single notes in both hands, having no preset chords. Most concertinas use one set of middle reeds. Larger professional types use two and three sets of reeds tuned with a vibrato.

**BANDONEON.** Although there are several versions of this instrument, basically it is four sided with buttons on two sides (push-pull type). Physical appearance is virtually the same as the larger professional type concertina, the difference being in the reed setup. The bandoneon basically uses two sets of reeds, one low set and one middle set, is tuned dry (no vibrato), and is commonly used in Latin orchestras. Other versions of the instrument are available in Latin countries.

**DIATONIC ACCORDION**  
This instrument, also known as push-pull or button box, is probably more closely related to the standard accordion than any of the others. Construction is the same as a 12 bass accordion, the primary difference being that it uses buttons in the right hand and it is

of the push-pull type. The right hand consists of 1 to 4 horizontal rows of buttons. Each row is a different key pitched in the cycle of fifths.

It is not unusual to own more than one diatonic accordion in order to play in various keys. The left hand consists of 2 to 4 sets of reeds. The instrument with 2 sets of reeds consists of 2 middle reeds tuned with a vibrato; the one with 3 sets of reeds consists of 3 middle sets of reeds tuned with a vibrato or 1 low set and 2 middle sets tuned with a vibrato. This instrument usually has switches in order to isolate the low reeds from the middle reeds when necessary. The Cajun diatonic is simply an accordion with one row (one key) in the right hand playing 2, 3, or 4 sets of reeds. The instruments just described are the most commonly used, tho there are variations on all these models.

**CHROMATIC BUTTON ACCORDION.** In simple terms the chromatic accordion is the same instrument as the PIANO accordion except that the right hand has 3 to 5 rows of buttons instead of piano keys. The chromatic accordion is widely used in Europe, with the PIANO accordion playing a minor role. The opposite is true in the U. S. There are basically two styles of fingering with minor variations of each. The C system is used primarily in Western Europe, and the B system in Eastern Europe.

The days of a little old man sitting in a corner making an accordion completely by hand have not existed for a century or two. Modern accordion manufacture involves 15 or more technicians who specialize in fabricating or installing the various parts of the accordion: i.e. the box maker, reed maker, tuner, bellow maker, bass mechanism adjuster, treble valve adjuster, celluloid installer, buffer, waxer and reed skin installer, etc. The box, keyboard, and reed blocks are made of wood; the bellows of cardboard, cloth, and leather. All accordions including professional models consist of several hundred metal parts fabricated by a specialty machine shop. If an attempt were made to fashion these parts by hand, the accordion would be one huge mess. Italy can boast of a monopoly on these specialists, as almost all accordions made in the western world are made in Italy. The Hohner Company of West Germany, the Zupan Company of Austria, Hagstrom of Sweden, and probably others are having accordions made in Italy. Some claim to make accordions in the US, but we haven't seen any evidence of that since the early 60s. Prior to that time, the bulk of American accordions were made in San Francisco, Chicago, and New York. The American made instrument went out of existence due to high prices and lack of skilled accordion technicians.

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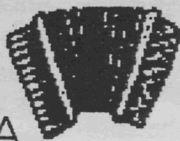
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NEXT MEETING: MONDAY  
MARCH 2, 1992  
7:00PM

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