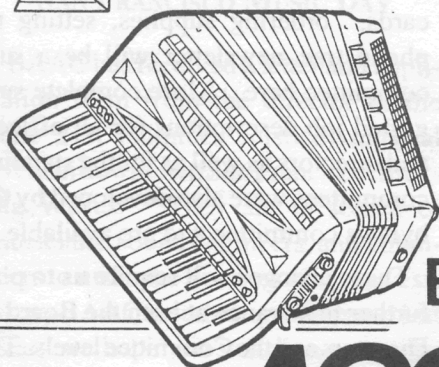


Newsletter of the

SAN FRANCISCO CALIFORNIA U.S.A.



BAY AREA ACCORDION CLUB

MARCH, 1997

March General Meeting

by Denny Huff

The meeting started out with **Marian Kelly** doing her version of **Domenic Saso**, who was unable to attend. He does a fine job as MC, and we miss his smiling face when he's gone — not that **Marian** didn't do a first rate job! President **Bob Berta** jump-started the meeting by wishing us all a "Good Evening" and then mentioned that there was an effort underway to petition the Post Office to issue a **Charles Magnante** postage stamp. A petition to accomplish that was circulated during the break. **Bob** was looking for players at the upcoming Norwegian Day, and he also distributed a questionnaire regarding seminars and workshops in conjunction with the monthly meetings. That will be a tough one, I would guess, so it's good to get some member input regarding scheduling.

No big surprises on the evening's lineup as we all

came prepared to hear a bonafide world-class accordionist, **Veikko Ahvenainen**. If you can spell his name without looking at one of his recordings, I salute you. But we can all recognize his music without a problem. As a side note, I bought one of his CD's and donated it to our local Coffee Shop in Los Gatos, and now as I walk down the sidewalk I quickly recognize his playing from several stores

distant!! Increasing accordion awareness in the local community. They must like the CD because I heard it at least three times already this past week.

Veikko began with comments on his long association with the Bay Area, with **John Molinari Sr.**, and with the **Molinari** family. That association began in 1962 (I graduated from college that

cont. p. 5



Veikko Ahvenainen

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

April 2nd, 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.

April 7th., Monday. BAAC General Meeting. Featuring Bart Beninco, Don Nurisso, Ken Chambers, Bob Delgado, Frank Montoro, and the trio of Lee Woodall, Tony Di Bono and Jim Firpo. Come and vote on our updated by-laws. Donworth Hall, 22nd & Eucalyptus, S.F., just north of Stonestown Shopping Center. 7 P.M.

April 8th, Tuesday. Composers', Inc. features music for solo accordion, performed by Peter Soave. Green Room of the Veterans' Building, 401 Van Ness, S. F. 8 PM.

April 22nd, Tuesday. Sev Garcia, soloist, with the Tulare Symphony League, Visalia, 10AM. Call (209) 8781-2911

cont. p. 6

Why We've Messed With Your Bylaws.....

Dear Members:

Much of this issue of your newsletter concerns our proposed new bylaws, which your Board approved at its most recent meeting. Granted that bylaws are not a sexy subject, but they're very important to us, so please read and consider these changes carefully. There are many proposed changes, containing a lot of new ideas. You will be asked to vote on these changes at our April meeting. Our current bylaws require two thirds approval following publication of proposed changes in our newsletter.

Our old bylaws have served us since we were a brand new club of twenty brave souls. Now that our numbers have increased many-fold, it is time to ask again the questions "Who are we?" and "Where are we going?" as well as the follow-up question, "How do we get there?"

The bylaws of a club serve as the road map for answering those questions. They define a club's purpose, then set up some initial structure by which the purpose(s) can be achieved. Officers and board members make club decisions based on the *broad* guidance of the bylaws. (Bylaws are not meant to be too detailed or specific, as they should be difficult to change. Therefore, they do not address, in general, issues which are *procedural*; the board and the membership is expected to evolve procedural rules and regulations as needed.)

A committee chaired by Marian Kelly with considerable encouragement from Gwyn Lister has spent many hours asking those questions and thinking through possible answers. Some of the important changes which that committee has recommended include: requiring that we function with several standing committees, eliminating the Financial Secretary position and substituting a Finance Committee, eliminating one Board position (resulting in 8 rather than the current 10 board members),

changing our fiscal year, increasing the terms of officers and board members.

A few reasons for proposed changes follow:

Current fiscal year (7/1 to 6/30), puts the entire change of command along with plans for the upcoming year into the summer, when people often are not around. Makes the transition very difficult and long. Changing the fiscal year also changes the date at which dues are payable (to September) and the dates when nominations and elections are held.

The Financial Secretary will no longer be a necessary position with the addition of both a Finance and a Membership Committee. Our operating procedures have never allowed for appropriate financial checks and balances (since the Treasurer's and Financial Secretary's jobs were completely separate, and since the Board has not requested more from the Treasurer than balances). The Finance Committee will absorb the Financial Secretary's job plus some of the Treasurer's tasks; the result should be tighter controls of our funds and a better informed Board and membership. Part of the mission of the Finance Committee will be greater emphasis on our Club's non-profit status, on what is required from us for that status, and how it is beneficial to the membership.

In addition to the Finance and Membership Committees, we propose to establish Program, Promotion and Administration Committees. The Program Committee will plan the programs for our general meetings, will open and close our meeting place and coordinate setting up chairs, etc; the Promotion Committee will gather information about possible avenues for promoting club activities, will develop press packages, and will work closely with any club group sponsoring an event; the Administration Committee will handle the everyday details (which our presidents have heretofore done most of)...phone calls, queries, send notes or

cards, ordering supplies, setting up phone tree..newsletter will be a sub-committee here. More complete suggested job descriptions for all officers and directors as well as for the standing committees were also developed by the bylaws committee and are available.

These changes will require us to plan further in advance at both the Board of Directors and the Committee levels. The Board will no longer handle details of events, as has happened for years, but will be free to provide a broader overview of how our Club should function and what we should undertake. Up until now, many tasks have been taken care of by willing, hard-working members who had not been asked to do them, and who are often not recognized for having taken care of those tasks. If we follow this plan, responsibility for specific jobs should be much clearer. Further, we will be able to involve more members without requiring a great time commitment by spreading the work around more than we do now.

As you read, you will note two types of changes from the old bylaws, substantive and formatting. The substantive changes, such as those mentioned above, are indicated by the italicized portions of the text. The formatting or wording changes are not italicized, since no change of policy will result.

If you have concerns or questions about anything which you have read, we strongly encourage you to phone Marian (415) 854-1896 or any of the board members (numbers on p.6). Copies of these proposed changes will *not* be available at the April meeting, so you may want to bring your newsletter along. The vote will be either for or against the entire package: you will not be able to vote on individual changes, although you are encouraged to express your opinion in advance.

M Kelly

Suggested New Bylaws BAY AREA ACCORION CLUB

ARTICLE I. Name

This organization shall be called The Bay Area Accordion Club.

ARTICLE II. Purpose

1. *To enhance, promote and stimulate awareness and appreciation of the accordion, its versatility and its sounds within the membership and to the general public.*

ARTICLE III Membership

1. Membership is open to any individual expressing interest in the accordion and wishing to join. The only qualification for regular membership is the payment of annual dues as established by the Board of Directors.

2. No dues need be paid by the two other categories of membership:

a. Honorary members: persons who the Club feels have made a significant contribution to the accordion field. Honorary members are selected by a majority vote of the membership.

b. Junior Members: student accordianists under 18 years of age who perform before the Club.

3. All members receive the monthly newsletter. All members may vote on Club matters, the manner of voting to be decided by the Board of Directors.

4. Members shall be terminated for reason(s) of non-payment of dues, resignation, or by two-thirds vote of the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE IV Fees, Dues, and Assessments

1. *The fiscal year/membership year shall be from October 1 to September 30.*

2. Annual dues and event fees, if any, shall be set by the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE V Meetings

1. *General meetings shall be held on the first Monday of each month unless otherwise ordered by the Board of Directors.*

2. *Regular Board meetings shall be scheduled and held.*

3. The rules contained in Roberts Rules of Order, Revised, shall govern the general conduct of both the General and the Board meetings.

ARTICLE VI Officers

1. Officers: The officers shall be *President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer.*

2. Term of Office: The term of office shall be *two years.*

3. President: It shall be the duty of the President to guide the members toward fulfillment of the general Club goals, to become familiar with the "duties of the presiding officer of an assembly" found in Robert's Rules of Order, to preside over all meetings of the Board of Directors using parliamentary procedure, to enforce the observance of the bylaws.

4. Vice President: The Vice President shall assist the President in any way the President may direct, and, in the absence of the President, shall preside and perform all acts incumbent on the President. *The Vice President shall chair a standing committee.*

5. Secretary: The Secretary shall keep a complete record of all proceedings of Club and Board of Directors meetings, and give notice of all meetings and other functions. *The Secretary shall prepare, with the President, the agenda for Board Meetings, including any items which have been previously unresolved and any future items for which discussion should be initiated.*

6. Treasurer: The Treasurer shall receive and disburse BAAC monies, *co-ordinating with the Finance Committee* and keeping an accurate account of all receipts and disbursements. *He/she shall compile reports for the Board of Directors and/or for the membership according to directions from the Board.*

ARTICLE VII Board of Directors.

1. The Board of Directors shall consist of the elected officers and four (4) directors at large, of which the elected officers shall comprise the Executive Committee.

2. The Board of Directors shall have the following duties:

- a. Meet at the call of the President.
- b. Fill all vacancies occurring between elections.
- c. Confirm all committees except the Nominating Committee
- d. Be empowered to approve necessary expenses of the Club.
- e. Pass on routine business and recommend any major changes in policies, procedures, or financial affairs for the consideration of the membership.
- f. *Each director-at-large shall chair a standing committee, shall recruit its members, and*

Proposed Bylaws, cont.

shall make regular committee reports to the Board of Directors.

3. An ex-president automatically becomes available as a non-voting consultant to the Board of Directors for a period of one year.

ARTICLE VIII Standing Committees

The following standing (ongoing) Committees shall be established: Membership, Finance, Promotion, Program/Entertainment, Administration. Additional standing committees may be added by approval of the Board of Directors. Special (ad hoc) committees may be appointed to carry out specific tasks not designated here.

ARTICLE IX Directors at large:

The Directors at large shall consist of four (4) members and serve for a term of two years.

ARTICLE X Nominations and Elections

1. Nominations: The Nominating Committee shall consist of five (5) members, of which three (3) will be from the membership at large, and two (2) shall be from the Board of Directors, one of whom will serve as chairperson.

2. The Nominating Committee shall forward its recommendations at the August meeting for officers and for directors at large. Further nominations from the floor, if any, shall be accepted at this meeting. Names of nominees shall be published in the August newsletter.

3. Elections: The election will be held at the September meeting of each year. A nominee receiving the majority of votes of members present at that meeting shall be elected to office.

ARTICLE XI Amendments to Bylaws

Proposals to amend the Bylaws shall be presented in writing to any member of the Board of Directors. Upon approval of the majority of the Board of Directors, the proposed amendment shall be published in the newsletter and voted upon by the members. A two-thirds vote of members present at the specified meeting will be required for approval.

ARTICLE XII Property

Any property acquired with Bay Area Accordion Club funds shall become the property of the Bay Area Accordion Club.

ARTICLE XIII 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 Board of Directors.

Mark Your Calendars, from p. 1.

May 3& 4, Sat. & Sun. Norway Day at Fort Mason Center.

May 17th & 18th. Grand opening of Lark in the Morning Fisherman's Wharf location. BAAC members play on the 18th from noon to 1P.

May 23 - 25, Fontana Button Accordion Festival & Contest. (all accordion varieties welcome). Call (909) 793-4040.

June 21st. Making Waves event in downtown San Francisco.

June 29th, Sunday. BAAC Picnic. We're back to the Palo Alto Elks Club this year, in response to popular demand. Save the date!

July 13-19 and Sep 14 - 20: JoeSmiell's Button Box Camp at Norden. Call (510) 832-6938 for info.

July 9 to 13th, American Accordionists' Association Festival, Sheraton City Center Hotel, Washington, D.C. Call (800)-526-7495 for special \$78 room rate. Call (516) 746-3100 for Festival Information.

August 4th, Monday. BAAC General Meeting featuring Jorgen Sundqvist.

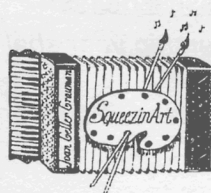
August 23 & 24, Sat/Sun. Cotati Accordion Festival.

Sept. 8th, Monday. BAAC General Meeting featuring Vyatcheslav Semyonov (bayan) and his wife Natasha (domra), with Robert Sattler.

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

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Accordions

March General Meeting, cont.

year!) and was quickly followed by a joint tour of Europe. His first number tonight was a *Finnish Festival March*, and I was struck (again) by the rich bass notes coming from his Russian-made bayan accordion, which was specially made for and



presented to **Veikko** by master Russian accordion maker, **Uri Voldovich**. **Veikko** related that his friend had passed away shortly after giving him the instrument in 1981. He next surprised us with an "old Texas number," *Ghost Riders in the Sky*, the first of several humorous pieces that we heard during the evening. While

Veikko hardly ever smiles when he's playing, he intersperses his songs with personal and frequently very funny stories which compliment his performance. And his playing absolutely magnetizes an

audience. He continued with *Winter* from Vivaldi's Four Seasons, during which he did one of his celebrated "two millimeter" bellows shakes. How does he do that?? Next was a wonderful Finnish number, *On the Highest Branch*, a song of a young boy's feeling during summer in Finland. *At Night*

on an Arctic Mountain warmed the hearts of atonal music fans and was a pleasant piece for those who don't normally follow atonal music. **Ken Chambers** joined **Veikko** for a number in C Minor by Bach, and I think we all have to salute **Ken's** ability (and courage) to play with such an accomplished partner. Then **Veikko** played *Wind and Storm*, the last piece before intermission.

More background on **Veikko's** accordion. He received it in 1981, as mentioned, but wanted to practice before doing a concert with it, so he returned to Moscow in 1982 (one of many tours there) to play the bayan. The concert was done in a television music hall to an audience of 500, with over one million viewing on the TV screen. A cultural step up from most US television fare. **Voldovich** was considered to be the Stradivarius of accordion makers, and he worked three years on the instrument, which he told **Veikko** was his last and his best, and most important, made for a friend.

Sheila Gullmes won the raffle, but we were all winners as we raced for the dessert table and pigged out on cookies, pies, cakes, and other assorted goodies. A big Accordion Thanks to everyone who slaved over a hot oven all day — or who made that last minute dash to Safeway.

Veikko next broke out his trusty Giulietti, and entertained us with mostly lighter fare. We all strained to overcome the inconsiderate noise from the rear of the hall, as **Veikko** played *Spring is Coming*, followed by several polkas. Finn, Italian, Finnish-American (with elements of John Phillip Sousa) and the world famous *KFC Polka*. **Veikko** broke his serious playing demeanor for the *KFC Polka* and the audience joined his festive mood. Then *Grenada* was followed by a medley of **John Molinari** favorites, all by **Pietro Frosini**. *Olive Blossoms* and *Jolly Caballero* were in there somewhere along with three other pieces. **Ken Chambers** was called back up for yet another polka, this one about a little village whose name I won't attempt to reproduce. But **Joe Smiell** is right (isn't he always?) when he says that every hamlet, village, lake and brook in Europe has its own appropriate song. Always the world traveler, **Veikko** has performed in China, and he related another humorous story about a Chinese polka, reputed to have been played as much as 5000 years ago. It sounded suspiciously like a Finnish polka, but **Veikko** diplomatically conceded the point to his Chinese hosts. After the narration, he treated us to the real "*Chinese Polka*."

He was given a standing ovation and played an encore number, with, of course, another story. Bottom line was that he simultaneously played *Dixie* with his left hand and *The Battle Hymn of the Republic* with his right. Try that for a warm-up exercise!

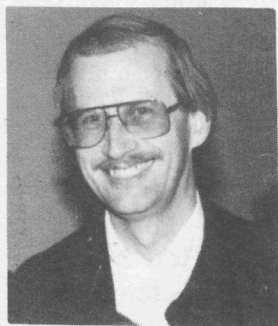
It's great to be a member of the Bay Area Accordion Club.



Veikko Aivenainen, Ken Chambers

President's Message

by Bob Berta



The Bay Area Accordion Club is always looking for positive ways to increase its services to the members. While it is sufficient for many to continue with the fine monthly meetings that give our local members and guests a chance to entertain us we need to look for new and fresh ideas to keep the club viable. In addition we are a 501C tax exempt organization that must do a lot more than provide entertainment to members or we risk the wrath of the tax people. We must provide a good to the public at large....not just the members to maintain our status. While we have participated in several events

like the Cotati Accordion Festival, Making Waves, SF Accordion Festival, Italian day at Jack London Square in Oakland, and so on we must continue to find ways to provide increased exposure of accordion music to the public .

The club is currently dealing with the loss of our "House Of Parties" which is being sold. Two of our accordion ensembles met there and now must deal with finding a new home for practice. Finding a good inexpensive place is proving to be very troublesome. This made me realize again how wonderful it is that we have the Donworth Hall for our monthly meetings. Thanks to the efforts of Frank Panacci we are able to continue using the hall and we owe him a lot. Please ensure that we continue to be welcomed at the hall by taking good care of the facility. Frank and Ed Massolo need all the help they can get in setting up and taking down the chairs and tables at each meeting. For those of you who always are there to help....a big thanks.

The board constantly gets comments both pro and con on the various activities of the club. We encourage these comments but we really appreciate those who offer to help on the various activities. Remember that there are not paid positions in the club. It is easy to offer suggestions but those who volunteer to lighten the load are really doing a great service. If you really feel strongly about something or want to take a bigger part in the various activities the board encourages you to attend the monthly board meeting. The board meetings are open to all members of the club.

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Peter Di Bono (415) 753-1502
Ed Massolo (415) 589-8409
Herb Meier (415) 364-5398
Frank Schlotter (510) 339-8657

March Board Meeting

Synopsis

- Treasurer reports a total of \$8,209. in our combined accounts.
- Results of survey taken at our March General Meeting: almost everyone favored a care and maintenance workshop. No one wanted it scheduled on a separate day. About half would like a workshop on overcoming stage fright.
- With a few minor changes, the Board voted to accept the new bylaws proposed by the bylaws committee, to show them to the membership by including them in the March newsletter, and to take a vote on their acceptance at our April meeting.

MAKING WAVES

SAN FRANCISCO MUSIC DAY

BAAC has received a letter and application form from the director of the June 21st (summer solstice) musical event in downtown San Francisco, Making Waves. They are in search of musicians, sound engineers, and volunteers to make the Festival a big success. Many BAAC members participated last year; we hope you will sign up again.

The tradition of celebrating the arrival of summer with a public musical festival originated in France in 1983 with the establishment of the Fête de la Musique every June 21st. Eighty countries around the world celebrate it as well, but so far San Francisco is the only US city that joins the world in this joyful spirit.

Although they are unable to pay participating musicians (since no fees are charged), Making Waves wants to benefit the artists this year by publishing contact phone/fax/email numbers in the program, creating a resource directory. The program will be available on the day of the Festival, but it will also be published in the Bay Guardian and in the San Francisco Weekly. Additionally, they encourage musicians to have tapes and CD's available on the day of the event.

If you did not participate last year but would like to do so this year, you may either contact Making Waves yourself at (415) 431-2221/431-9962, or you may go through BAAC. M. W. requests a press kit, a recording, some information, and publicity photos if you work directly with them. But they allow BAAC to recommend performers without those filtering requirements.

So please consider participating this year. If you are a solo, you will be asked to play for about 20 minutes; if a group, 40 minutes. You will be assigned to one of the stages set up along Market Street. The Festival runs from about 11AM until 6 or 7; if you have a time preference, please make that known.

Festival Honors a Peninsula Treasure

from the Carmel Pine Cone of March 6, 1997

As Mike Marotta approaches the sunset of his lifetime of performing, the tireless entertainer is happiest playing the accordion for his family and a few close friends.

"They really come to hear me," the 75-year old emphasized on a sunny afternoon last week at his Monterey home.

As the grand master of thousands of "gigs" reflected on his life of music, his features kept rhythm with every thought as if he were conducting a symphony.

"There aren't many guys still 'gigging' at my age," he said. "The hardest part is putting on my accordion."

That's easy to understand for a man who has spent the past seven decades weaving his love of music into countless hours of community service.

This weekend the 17th annual Dixieland Monterey "Swing N' Dixie '97" will honor Marotta for those efforts, as well as for his exceptional talent and contributions to music.

"I'm a little embarrassed," he said, noting that not many musicians play Dixieland on an accordion. "People usually snicker at a guy who plays an accordion. I guess I'm the little guy from Monterey who broke the barrier."

Monterey Mayor Dan Albert said Marotta's energy and enthusiasm translates into pure pleasure for everyone around. "Monterey loves Mike," Albert said. "He's a great musician and dedicated member of the community. He's also a rich resource of memories about the city's history. I can't remember when I haven't known Mike," he added.

It all started when Marotta was five years old.

His family came to Monterey in 1918 from Tunis, Africa, where numerous Sicilians had immigrated to work in the construction business. Mike's father was a bricklayer and an accomplished musician who played the accordion at friends' weddings and celebrations.

When Marotta turned five, his father gave him a set of drums. That was followed by piano and tap lessons. By the time he was 10, Mike had lost interest in

everything but his father's accordion.

"One day my father caught me playing his accordion," he said, recalling that a few weeks later he came home and found about 30 accordions in the living room.

"Take your pick," Marotta's father said.

"I like yours best," his son replied.

And Mike hasn't stopped playing it for 65 years.

"It's a magnificent instrument," he said reverently. "It has 1560 reeds, and that's just the beginning. It's an orchestra in itself. I play it like a horn while the bass player and drummer keep rhythm. I'm free to play all the licks."

.....(many paragraphs omitted for lack of space, unfortunately)

His musical journey led him to Hollywood, where he hooked up with a cowboy band that accompanied Roy Rogers, Riders of the Purple Sage, and Sons of the Pioneers.

During the years after WWII, Marotta married and started a family. He tried his hand at a variety of businesses, all the while playing his accordion.

For 11 years he worked with Freddy Nagle's band at the Hotel Del Monte, where the Navy Postgrad School is today. He also played at Del Monte Lodge on Friday and Saturday evenings for 26 years.

"Kings, queens, and presidents," Marotta said. "I played for all of them."

.....(more omitted)

Although Marotta has cut back to about six gigs a month, he hasn't slowed down. He just shifted his attention.

He spends his afternoons at the family's downtown Monterey office, or going to different Monterey County schools to teach youngsters about the inner workings of an accordion.

Most of you probably don't know Mike, but he has been a long-time BAAC member and supporter. We hope he'll make the drive to the Big City to join us for a meeting one of these days!

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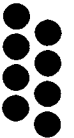


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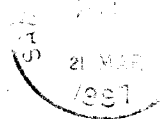
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