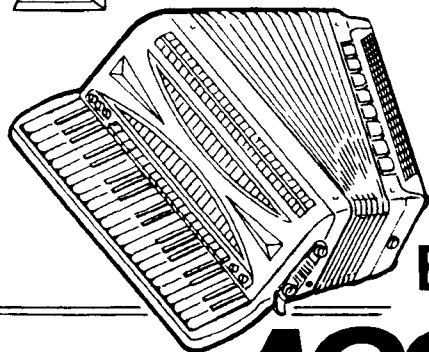


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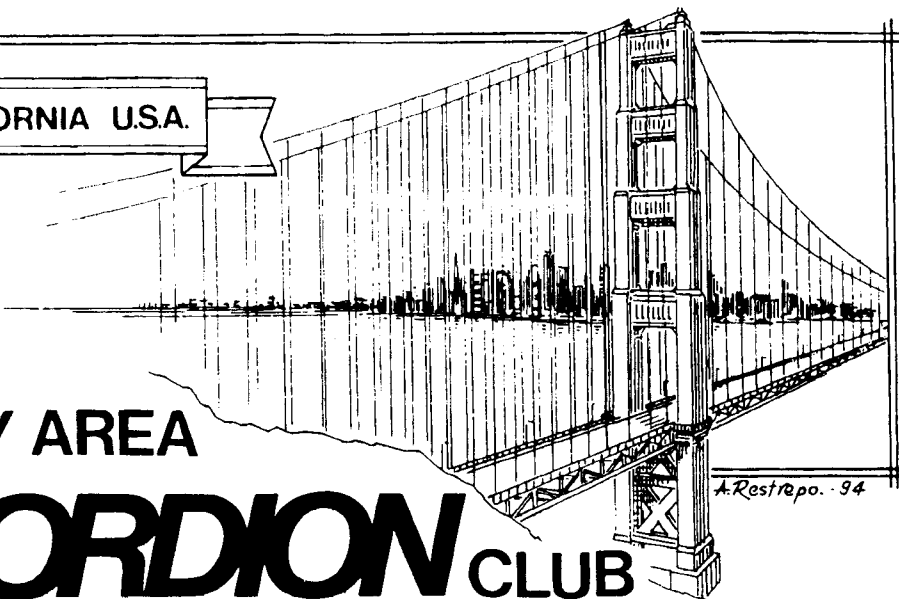
SAN FRANCISCO CALIFORNIA U.S.A.



BAY AREA

# ACCORDION CLUB

May, 1998



## President's Message

by Marian Kelly

### Dear Members and Friends,

There's enough happening in your friendly, old Bay Area Accordion Club that I hardly know where to begin. An awful lot of squeezin' goin' on, as it were.

For starters, we're planning a busy "Swap Night" in July. If you want to buy or sell an accordion or related accessories, be sure to attend our July 6th general meeting. In order to sell anything, you'll need to purchase a kind of "sales permit" for five dollars. It will be available at our June meeting, or, of course, you can purchase one when you arrive in July. (*Editors note...there is a copy in this newsletter...see page 5*). We had discussed charging a commission on sales that evening but rejected that idea because of the bookkeeping complexities. Nevertheless, it seemed reasonable to charge something, since we're providing the means for vendors to sell items easily. So, folks, if you have unused instruments sitting around your house, please consider that someone else might be delighted to play them, and bring them to our July meeting.

Another suggestion for unused instruments is that you *donate* them to the Bay Area Accordion Club. Since we are non-profit, we can provide you with a receipt showing an agreed-upon value for your donation, and you may deduct that value on your Schedule A as a contribution and thereby lower your tax bill. Similarly, you may deduct any monies paid to BAAC in membership fees or donated to BAAC. Your Club is using donated, and occasionally purchased, instruments to loan and rent to potential accordion students, and we are currently working on greatly expanding this program. We're finding a lot of interest in the accordion among children, and by helping them find accordions to play, we are fulfilling our most important Club goal. So please help us with this one.

We are using money earmarked for our Scholarship Fund for this purpose of introducing the accordion to as many young people as possible, so please consider making deductible donations to that fund. You may recall that one-fourth of the money taken in during our raffle goes to the Scholarship Fund also, with another fourth going into general funds and one half going to the lucky winner.

We'll keep reminding you of the tax-deductibility of gifts to Your Club,

## Mark Your Calendars

**June 1.** General Membership Meeting. The theme is "Family Night". Starts 7:00pm, Eucalyptus and 22nd Ave, San Francisco (first block North of the Stonestown Shopping Center). See page 5 for list of performers.

**June 7.** Sea Chantey Workshop with Skip Henderson. At Boaz accordions in Oakland from 2:30-4:00pm. \$20. Limited to 10 students. Call 510-653-6983 for reservations.

**June 9.** (and every second Tuesday). Meeting of the Golden State Accordion-Aires. 7:00pm. Pietro's No.2. 679 Merchant St. Vacaville. Ca.

**June 10 (Wednesday).** 7:30pm. BAAC Board Meeting at Ed Massolo's home at 612 Lassen in So. San Francisco. Guests welcome.

**June 13.** Golden State Accordion-aires picnic. Call Carole (707)864-2359.

**June 13-14.** San Francisco Free Folk Festival at Roosevelt Middle School at Arguello and Clement St. in San Francisco.

**June 15.** (and every third Monday). Meeting of the Accordion Club of the Redwoods. 7:00pm. Volpi's in Petaluma.

**June 15-19.** First Annual Accordion Accord celebrating Accordion Awareness Month at the University of Arizona Campus at Tucson. Call Prof. James O'Brien at (520)621-3388 or Email Jobrien@au.arizona.edu.

**June 21.** Accordion Technique Workshop with Mike Zampiceni. At Boaz accordions in Oakland from 2:30-4:00pm.

Cont. page 4

Cont. page 2

**Calendar cont. from page 1**

\$20. Limited to 10 students only. Call 510-653-6983 for reservations.

**June 25.** Bellow Notte - See special notice on page 5.

**July 13.** General Membership Meeting. Swap Night. See page 5.

**July 8-12.** American Accordionists' Assoc. Festival, New Orleans, LA. Email Ameracc@aol.com or call (516)746-3102.

**July 17-19.** Accordion Teachers Guild Festival, Chicago, IL. Email AMYJO@APCI.NET or phone (618)632-2859.

**July 19.** Latin Music Workshop with Herb Meier. 2:00-4:00pm. \$25. Limited to 10 students. Call 510-653-6983 for reservations.

**July 20-24.** Galla Rini Accordion Camp @ Oceanside, Ca. Contact Ellen Bonica, Accordion World, 12672 S.E. Stark Street, Portland, Or. 97233 or call (503)254-2652 weekdays until 6:00pm.

**July 31- Aug. 8.** Lark in the Morning Summer Camp 1998. Folk music camp in Mendocino, Calif. call (707)964-5569 or Email Larkinam@larkinam.com.

**August 8-9.** Cabrillo Music Festival in Santa Cruz. New York Tango Project and Frank Marocco are playing.

**August 6-9.** Leavenworth International Accordion Celebration. Leavenworth, Washington. Call 509-548-5807 for more info. or Email to info@leavenworth.org

**August 15.** Accordion Club of the Redwoods picnic. Call (707)838-2859.

**August 29-30.** Cotati Accordion Festival, Cotati, Calif.

**September 20.** BAAC Picnic at Nature Friends. Butters Dr. in Oakland.

**October 17.** BAAC Annual Social Dinner and Dance at the Irish Cultural Center in San Francisco.

**BAAC Ensemble** practice first and third Wednesday of each month at Moose Lodge in Daly City from 7:00pm-9:00pm. Contact Frank Montoro (650)574-4757 for additional information.

**BAAC Fun Band** practice fourth Wednesday of each month at Moose Lodge in Daly City from 7:00p.-9:00pm. Contact Tom Cordoni @ 415-333-5625 for more information.

**Beginners Support Groups/Bands**

East Bay 510-843-9958

San Francisco 415-673-8835

South Bay 408-258-1258

*Please send Calendar Information to your Editor, using the address on the last page.*

**MAY GENERAL MEETING**

by Lynn Ewing and Bob Berta

The May meeting was our annual ladies night. The program provided a smorgasboard of great performances. Prior to the meeting and during the intermission Bob Smith provided the background music. There was a good contingent of youngsters on hand to cheer for the San Carlos Charter Learning Center Ensemble which was on the program. It was noted that several of those youngsters were admiring the fine playing of Bob.



**San Carlos Learning Center Ensemble**

Lynn Ewing was the M.C. for the night and she started the entertainment portion of the meeting by introducing four of her students from the San Carlos Charter Learning Center Ensemble. We last heard from them at the beginning of this school year after they had only a few lessons. The rapid progress was apparent in their smooth performances. A couple of them had already graduated from their 12 bass accordions.



**Jackie Jones and Pauline Scholten**

Sarah Caves started with a solo performance of the *Marine's Hymn* and was followed by Janet Seiden Frishberg with *Big Top March*. Arielle Bellows performed another well known tune, *Old McDonald* and Elise Caves ended the solo performances with her rendition of *Romance Waltz*.

Next we were treated to a fine ensemble playing by the girls of *Lazy Mary*. In a discussion with Kimric Smythe prior to the meeting he noted that he has been amazed at the number of young people buying accordions at his new store in Oakland. He is selling about one per week. This is quite encouraging and hopefully programs like Lynn's will ensure that the trend continues.

Next on stage was Jackie Jones on accordion and Pauline Scholten singing and playing guitar.



**Nora Mazzara and Lynn Ewing**

*cont. on page 3*



We always enjoy their performances. Sadly Jackie decided not to include a performance on her infamous musical saw but as always we were treated to some entertaining music. Besides playing a mean accordion, Jackie can keep you in stitches with her ongoing comedic patter. After one of her songs she told us that she was advised that whenever you get nervous performing for others you should imagine that the audience has no clothes on. She then said that if anyone wanted to take their clothes off to make her less nervous that would be just fine! It wasn't noted if anyone took her up on that but she certainly seemed cool as a cucumber as the duet played and sung *All of Me*, *Ferryboat Serenade* and *Blue Bayou*.



Marjorie Conrad

Nora Mazzara joined Lynn Ewing in duets of *Merry Widow Waltz*, *Czardas* and a *Landler* by our own Joe Smiell. They did a great job and I especially enjoyed the Waltz. A waltz always brings back memories of elegant couples in beautiful palaces in Vienna and gracious living.



Nada Lewis & Nicole LeCorgne

Marjorie Conrad brought her button accordion on stage and started with another Joe Smiell number, *Waltz for April*. She followed that with a *Scandinavian Medley* and then a neat piece that she composed for Connie and Bill White's 50th wedding anniversary. It was titled *Ja Vi Elsker Vals* which means *Yes we Love* in Norwegian. We certainly have some fine composers in our club!



Norma Parsons

After the break we were treated to Nada Lewis performing the music of Eastern Europe. She

was accompanied on drum by Nicole LeCorgne. They represented about 40% of the musical group, **Panacea**, which is a 5 piece World Gypsy Band. They played the very difficult tempos typical of this type of music with ease in a Balkan Rom, *Cocek*, and Bulgarian tunes *Bicak*, *Paidusko* and *Sedi Donka*.



Marian Kelly

Norma Parsons next entertained with her fine playing and singing. Norma always impresses us with her relaxed demeanor and accomplished playing. She got our blood flowing with spirited playing of *Repasz Band*, *Somebody Loves Me*, and a *Latin Medley*.



Bob Smith and an admirer

Final artist was our president Marian Kelly. She took a break from her new chromatic button accordion to perform on her recently refurbished Excelsior accordion. Vince Cirelli did a great job as Marian never sounded better! She performed *Desafinado*, *Temptation Rag*, *Brazil* and *Fascination*.



**Bellow Note**  
by Tom Torriglia



On Thursday evening, June 25, All Things Accordion will be presenting **La Bellow Note** in celebration of National Accordion Awareness Month (NAAM).

La Bellow Note is a one-night evening of song in which 25 accordionists will be performing in 25 restaurants in San Francisco for a two-hour period free of charge. In addition to showcasing the accordion and each accordionists' talent, patrons at each restaurants will be asked to give a donation in appreciation for the music to Music In Schools Today; a nonprofit organization that benefits high school music programs.

If you would like to be a La Bellow Note Performer or event liaison, please contact Tom Torriglia at (415)440-0800 or at [Belloblade@AOL.com](mailto:Belloblade@AOL.com).

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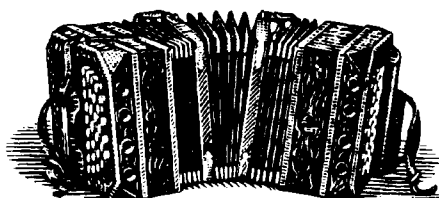
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A BANDONEON

because we'd like to keep expanding this program.

You can expect to meet up with a few changes to our general meetings. We're doing a bit of experimenting with format to try to induce more of you stay-homers to attend. I won't provide details here of what you should expect...only that you should expect some noticeable differences, beginning in June. And I want to urge you to let us know what you think of our adjustments. More on this subject later.

We'll have lots of tickets available for purchase at our June meeting, so be ready! We'll have Swap Night Sales Permits, tickets for our September 20th picnic and Cotati Accordion Festival tickets. The latter two tickets will be discounted for advance purchase; picnic will be \$9 in advance until a certain (undetermined) date, and \$10 thereafter; Cotati tickets will be \$1.00 off the marked price.

Last but not least..June is National Accordion Awareness Month. What if each of you would make one person newly aware of the joys of accordion playing and listening in June? Do your share to spread it around! That's all it takes!



A FOUR STYLE ACCORDION



## Bells and Whistles

by guest columnist *Faith Deffner*



A LITTLE ONE-ROW BUTTON ACCORDION

Excess weight handicaps the musician, yet, we constantly strive for more bells and whistles on our accordions, making it inevitable that size and weight must increase.

The late Bill Palmer told me about the lute which was extremely popular a few centuries back. The lute apparently went through a similar metamorphosis. People wanted more and more notes which required the makers to add strings and increase its size; music was written with significantly greater range, playable on these specially built lutes. Over the years, the instrument which had enjoyed great popularity because it was light and portable in addition to producing pleasing music, became an obscure instrument as it grew cumbersome and awkward. Its popularity faded and it was replaced by lighter and more portable plectrum instruments which both sounded good and were easier to handle.

The message was clear to me. The basic accordion already exceeds most other instruments in range, yet accordionists seem to harbor an insatiable desire for more. Pianists don't ask for more keys, nor do violinists ask for a 5th string. And flute and other wind instrument players are happy with only being able to play one note at a time. Maybe orchestral instrumentalists consider their instruments adequate because they enjoy "respectability" which saves them from confusing "range" with "musicianship".

While manufacturers can reduce weight of accordions it seems counterproductive if we only than add on additional features to make up the difference. Complaining about weight while insisting on weighty reeds and mechanisms doesn't seem realistic; also it discourages those who aren't already hooked on the accordion from pursuing it at all. Every instrument has a range limitation and we might try to learn to live with range limitations too, thus enabling the accordion to continue to fill our musical lives with pleasure through the years.

*About the author... Faith Deffner is owner of Ernest Deffner Co. She is also president of AAA (American Accordionists Association). She can be reached by calling (516)746-3100 or writing to her at P.O. Box 608, 230 Herricks Road, Mineola, NY 11501.*

# Who was Charles Magnante?

Most accordionists are familiar with the name Charles Magnante and likely have played at least one of his compositions or arrangements. Magnante had a career of not only achieving stature for himself, but also one of developing a way to bring the Accordion into its own. It is a story which should interest all aficionados of the Accordion.

When Charles Magnante was a mere youngster, the Accordion was equally young as a professional instrument. Accordionists were primarily soloists who "fill in" at weddings, private dances and "smokers". A few achieved recognition by dint of fascinating dexterity and extensive classical repertoires, but for the most, the peak of achievement was a good spot in vaudeville. The art of playing was primarily one of hit and miss since no one had then developed a systemized method.

## 8 in the 802

Certainly the bands and orchestras of the day found little need for the instrument. Further proof of the instrument's extreme commercial infancy was the fact that in those days, Local 802 in New York only listed eight Accordionists. But Charles Magnante had ideas. Taught by his father, a talented amateur Accordionist, Charles developed unusual dexterity and style. He haunted the vaudeville houses to hear his hero, Pietro Deiro. He studied the style of Pietro Deiro and improvised and developed his own individual method.

## Jazz Concerto

By the time he was fourteen, he was started on a professional career. He rejected vaudeville, determine to try new fields. By the time he was 20, young Magnante had turned down many high priced vaudeville

*Continued on page 7*

# Coming Events

*By Ed Massolo*

There is quite a bit scheduled for the coming months. Some traditional events and a new event should make your monthly meetings fun and entertaining.

June is our first annual **Family Night** and we are looking forward to seeing some great performances. On the program are Joe Smiell and his son, Bob Rossi and his 7 year old daughter Rachel, Aldo Argenti and his daughter, Gwyn Lister and her son and the DiBono family. Also a special performance by Nikolai Prisakar is slated. Prior to the meeting and during intermission the duet of Jim Firpo and Leon Broussal will entertain you.

July is the second annual **Swap Meet**. Forms to sign up for this event will be available at the May and June meetings. The board decided that anything **MUSICAL** can be sold at the event. This will not be limited to accordions and accordion related items only...but note that common sense should be used....there is not sufficient room in the hall to bring in your grand piano or pipe organ! Rather than the club taking a percentage of each sale there will be a one time \$5 charge for each person wishing to sell anything. Use the form on this page to reserve a spot.

## July Swap Meet Signup Form

The General Membership meeting on July 6th will feature a musical swap meet. Anything **MUSICAL** can be sold at the meeting. This will not be limited to accordions and accordion related items only...but note that common sense should be used...there is insufficient room in the hall to display your grand piano! There will be a one time \$5 charge for each person wishing to sell anything.

\*\*\*\*\*

I wish to reserve a spot at the swap meet.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Please inclose a check to BAAC for \$5 for each individual selling at the event.

Send this form and a check to:

Ed Masollo  
612 Lassen  
South San Francisco, CA. 94080

## Community Service Program

*by Lynn Ewing*

The ACE (Accordion Club Ensemble) has played at Cumberland School in the South Bay, where Nora Mazzara docents with "Music for Minors". We received some marvelous letters from the kids who heard us. We may be reproducing some of these in future issues of the BAAC newsletter.

Have you played at a senior center, convalescent hospital, or school lately? Let us know by calling Frank Montoro at (650)574-4757.

## Do You Have a New Address or Phone Number?

If so please let Lynn Ewing know by calling her at (650)365-1700. You can also write to her at 80 Loma Road, Can Carlos, Ca. 94070. For those who prefer to use their computer she can be contacted via the Internet at LynnEwing@AOL.com

# Accordion to Boaz

by Boaz Rubin

## Reeds, Reeds, Reeds

Wherein lies the value of an accordion? In order of importance: the reeds, the manufacturer, tone chamber, size and color. These all will affect the purchase value of a new accordion as well as its resale value. We'll begin with reeds:

### Parting the Reed Sea

Reeds are the foundation of your accordion's sound. Reeds fall into three basic categories: commercial, hand-finished and handmade.

Commercial reeds are mass-produced, usually smaller than other reeds and of softer material that breaks and loses tuning more easily. That said, many people prefer the sound of commercial reeds - especially those who play Cajun or Tex-Mex.

Hand-finished reeds are better quality than commercial. They begin as mass-produced items (of better quality materials than commercial reeds) but their final shaping is done by hand. Sometimes hand-finished reeds are passed off as handmade.

Handmade reeds are longer and thicker than other reeds and have a subtle but distinctive shape given to them by the craftsman. These will produce the richest and warmest tones, hold their tuning longest and respond better than reeds of lesser quality.

If you intend to play out professionally or to play in combination with other instruments you probably want handmade reeds in your accordion. Not only do they respond better and stay in tune longer, they also stand up better to the rigors of trying to compete with that blow-hard on the trumpet. Handmade reeds are at their best when played through a tone chamber, which is a type of built-in resonating chamber.

Smaller-sized accordions or those with smaller keys are less likely to have handmade reeds. As a rule, the quality of the reeds is in keeping with the size of the accordion (small accordion, cheap reeds) and the quality of the brand. There are always exceptions, such as custom made instruments and certain high-quality button accordions.

### Counting the Reeds and Switches

The more reeds an accordion has, the more versatile it is. More reeds means more register switches and a wider range of sounds. If the accordion has four sets of reeds in keyboard it most likely has five sets of reeds in the bass. If an accordion has two or three sets of reeds in the keyboard, it will usually have four sets of reeds in the bass. (Four sets of reeds in the keyboard and five in the bass has long been standard for a full-featured professional instrument - but this standard may be redefined as today's players shift to lighter-weight accordions.)

So how do you tell how many reeds it has? Look at the register switches. If the accordion has seven or more switches on the keyboard, it almost certainly has four or more sets of reeds on that side. Below that number of switches, some detective work may be necessary. Some register switches have dots or eighth notes on them in a pattern to indicate which reeds are engaged by that switch. The switch with the most reeds indicated on it will tell you how many reeds the accordion contains. Smaller accordions and accordions with less than four switches aren't likely to have four sets of reeds in the keyboard.

Every feature that adds value to an accordion (other than color) also adds weight, and that includes handmade reeds. This is why professional strollers tend to have fewer reeds in their accordions - often these instruments are full size but contain only two or three sets of top quality reeds in the keyboard. While these accordions are somewhat rare on the used market, they can be special ordered new. 96-bass accordions are also being built now with all the professional features; these are still extremely rare on the used market.

### How Much Is That Accordion in the Window? (Buyers' Tip)

Don't make a "great deal" on an accordion that's a dog (or a lemon). Ultimately the most diligent shoppers can still be taken in by a good sales talk. Your best defense is to buy from somebody you know and trust, and to know the difference between items that add genuine value and those that don't. And know exactly what you want before you agree to buy. If you are going to the shop to find out what you want, give yourself enough time to make a good decision.

*Accordion answer man Boaz Rubin is a professional repairman based in Oakland. Send your accordion-care questions to Boaz care of this newsletter or e-mail Boaz at: schmatte@well.com.*



**To join BAAC send a check for \$10  
(until Sept. 30) to:  
BAAC  
31 Aliso Way  
Portola Valley, Ca. 94028.**



### Humor From the Internet

*Question:* How can schools get kids interested in playing music instruments and joining bands?

*Answer:* Place the Nike logo on all instruments and change the name to "Band Ball". Maybe school administrations would even support it!

Candidate for the busiest accordionist in San Francisco is Alex Yaskin (who played at our December meeting). He only came here from Russia 3 years ago and is a very busy musician! He was able to provide us with a few of his upcoming gigs.

He plays in two day-time restaurants (in good weather), and in two night-time restaurants. The first day time location is the "Claude Cafe" a French restaurant. It is located between Sutter and Bush very close to Kearny in San Francisco. Claude Lane is the name of the narrow street there. He plays from 12:30 to 2:30pm on sunny days only. The other is the "Mocca Cafe" which has Italian, Mediterranean cuisine. It is located on Maiden Lane close to Stockton between Geary and Post (also in San Francisco). He plays there from 3:00pm to 4:00pm also on sunny days.

Night time jobs include "Katia's Restaurant" which is Russian. It is located at the corner of Balboa and 5th Ave. in San Francisco. He is there Tuesday through Friday from 6:60pm to 10:00pm. The final gig is at "Saul's". That's a Jewish delicatessen restaurant located in Berkeley at 1475 Shatuck Ave. at Vine. He plays there Saturday and Sunday nights from 6:00pm to 9:00pm.

Next time you are in any of these areas stop by and say hi to Alex and make sure you inform the restaurant management that you came for the food AND accordion music.



engagements to devote more time to the study of the Accordion. He developed amazing technique and skill. When Frank Harling, the eminent composer, wrote a jazz concerto featuring the Accordion which included a cadenza very difficult to interpret, he gave Magnante an audition. Magnante got the job on the spot and started a brilliant career.

**Under the Baton of Erno Rapee**

Within a short time, Charles was a member of the Roxy Jazzmanians and in the Roxy Orchestra. The latter broke a long standing precedent by using an Accordion for the first time in a symphony orchestra. As one of the 110 musicians under the world famous baton of Erno Rapee, he not only won recognition for his own virtuosity, but opened a completely new field for future Accordionists.

**Hitting the Air Waves**

The next pioneer step was in the radio world...then making its own first pioneer steps. When radio station W.E.A.F. (later to become the giant W.N.B.C. and than N.B.C.) began its New York broadcasts, Charles was invited to play. According to Charles, it is an experience he shall never forget. The now vast, awe-inspiring N.B.C. network was then a one room office. Performers and announcers would put on a show as technicians, visitors and executives wandered in and out. He was soon brought into the very popular Roxy Gang, a weekly radio feature, later joined the Major Bowes Capitol Family Hour and for years appeared with his quartet on the Lucky Strike Hit Parade.

**How do you get to Carnegie Hall?**

When he could have toured the country as a soloist, Magnante preferred to start his own quartet, appearing with them on the air and at concerts. In 1939, he achieved an ultimate ambition when he gave a concert at Carnegie Hall...the first Accordionist to every appear in that distinguished hall. He was accompanied by his quartet and won rave notices from the leading musical critics.

**Versatility and Sight-Reading**

He had very definite ideas about what study methods should be used. When asked for his advice to young accordionists he said that students should definitely have a fundamental background in classic but they should include serious thought and study of the art of sight-reading, for it is an important factor in group work. He recommended that a professional Accordionist should also have a knowledge of all types of popular rhythms and repertoire of popular and standard music.



**Contact Phone #s for Officers :**

- Pres. Marian Kelly (650)854-1896
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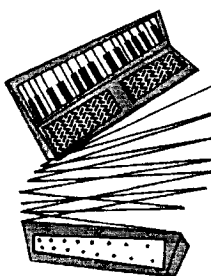
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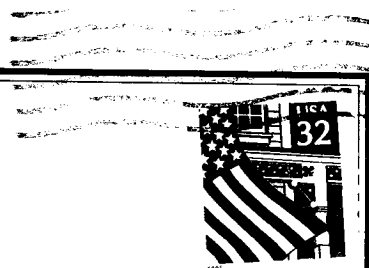
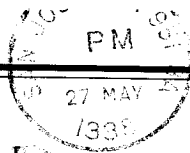


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If you would like to play at a meeting contact Ed Massolo at (650)589-8409

