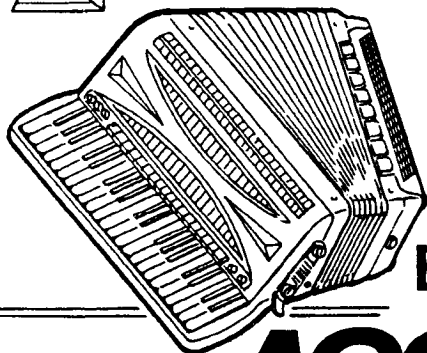


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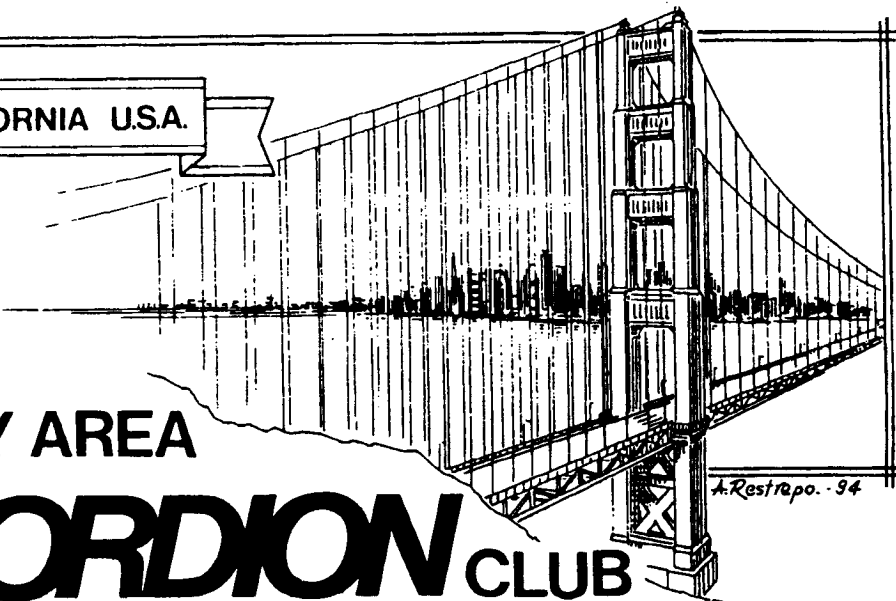
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BAY AREA

ACCORDION CLUB

May, 1999



A. Restrepo - 94

Editorial

by Bob Berta

BAAC President, Marian Kelly, is away on vacation so once again I get to climb onto the soapbox and put in my two cents worth.

A lot of changes have taken place at BAAC this last year. Some have gone smoothly and others have been a little bumpy. This is normal for any organization as large as ours. But overall I think we are seeing some positive movement in the direction of the club.

Besides acting as Newsletter Editor, I also chair the entertainment committee. You may have noticed we have sought to branch out into new directions and try to appeal to a wider audience. While we can take the easy route and stick to the most "popular" music styles and players, there is no end to the variety of musical styles and players we can focus our spotlight on and promote. I think you will agree that you are seeing much greater variety in musical styles and talent. We are also proud to showcase the young talent in our club. We should be proud to have some truly amazing students in our club who can often put most of us to shame when it comes to playing or the enthusiasm the exhibit. And if we want to keep the accordion alive and give it a future we need to continue to promote the accordion to kids and with music that they will enjoy and identify with.

While some music we have had may not have been to your taste we appreciate the fact that you have been very open to listening to these other musical styles and giving these promising artists a chance to be heard. And while you may have had some reservations about some of these music styles, you probably were surprised that you actually found it to be very interesting. All we ask is that when anyone is performing you give them all the courtesy and respect you would give to your favorite performers. Remember that many of these people and students are terrified about performing for an audience. And this is their one chance to be "in the spotlight" and will be remembered for years as a highlight in their life. Lets make sure that happens.

Mark Your Calendars

June 1 (Tuesday). BAAC General Membership Meeting and third annual SWAP MEET at *Verdi Club in San Francisco*. 2424 Mariposa at Potrero. 7:00 - 9:30pm+. Rare appearance by Ken Chambers. Also a demo of the new *Petosa Millennium* reedless accordion by the Petosa factory reps. Also announcement of three BAAC Scholarship winners. Come and sell/shop for accordions, music, music related items and white elephants. \$5 charge per vendor. Premeeting entertainment by Frank Lima.

June 3 (Thursday). (And every 1st. Thursday) Business Meeting of the Accordion Circle of the East Bay. 7:30pm. 1540 Scenic, Berkeley. For info call 510-548-2822.

June 6 (Sunday). Ducharme's Technique Series, Part 1 (Intermediate, advanced). At Boaz accordions in Oakland. \$35. Call 510-653-6983 to reserve a spot.

June 8 (Tuesday). (and every second Tuesday). Meeting of the Golden State Accordion-Aires. 7:00pm. Pietro's No.2. 679 Merchant St. Vacaville. Ca.

June 9th (Wednesday) Tentative BAAC Board Meeting. Location, and date not firm at this time. Contact Marian Kelly to confirm.

June 10 (Thursday) (And every second Thursday). Accordion Circle of the East Bay Music Meeting. 7:30pm, 1542 Grant St., Berkeley, in the cottage behind the main house.

June 13 (Sunday). (and every 2nd Sunday). BAAC San Jose meeting. Germania Rest. 261 N. 2nd. St. 3:00pm to ? Bring your accordion!

June 15 (Tuesday). (and every third Tuesday).

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Accordion Circle Band in East Bay. Call 510-548-2822 for more location and more info.

June 21 (Monday). (and every third Monday). Meeting of the Accordion Club of the Redwoods. 7:00pm. Volpi's in Petaluma.

July 6. (Tuesday). BAAC General membership meeting. Art Van Damme Tribute. Come honor a man who is truly a hero of the accordion.

June 13 (Sunday). (and every 2nd Sunday). BAAC San Jose meeting. Germania Rest. 261 N. 2nd. St. 3:00pm to ? Bring your accordion!

June 13 (Sunday). Demo of Gastagnari two row button box with Carolyn Anderson. At Boaz accordions in Oakland. Free Call 510-653-6983 to reserve a spot.

June 27 (Sunday). Irish Music for Piano Accordion with Libby McLaren (Intermediate). At Boaz accordions in Oakland. \$35. Call 510-653-6983 to reserve a spot.

July 16-18. Accordion Teachers Guild (ATG) Festival. Branson, MO. Call Amy Jo Sawyer at (618)632-2859.

June 17, 18, 19. Leavenworth International Accordion Celebration and Competition. Leavenworth, Washington. Call (509)548-5807.

July 31 (Saturday). Accordion Club of the Redwoods Summer Picnic.

August 28-29. Cotati Accordion Festival.

Sept. 18. (Saturday). BAAC annual picnic at Nature Friends picnic area in Oakland. Details to follow.

BAAC Ensemble practice first and third Wednesday of each month at Moose Lodge in Colma at 7535 Mission St. 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 Colma at 7535 Mission St. from 7:00pm-9:00pm. Contact Tom Cordoni @ 415-333-5625 for more information.

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

May General Meeting Review

by Lynn Ewing and Bob Berta

The ladies of BAAC had their moment in the spotlight at our annual Ladies Night. The limited parking caused by the repaving of the MUNI bus yard next door caused some concern but evidently the members were able to find the limited parking spots available as a good number of members turned out to cheer on the ladies. Word is that parking will be back to normal at our next meeting.

Prior to the meeting Val Kieser entertained us with a selection of tunes that put us in the spirit of the meeting. As always Val is a real help and always there when we need her....thanks VAL!

This must have been newcomer night as with the exception of one person none of the evenings artists had been on our stage before.

MC for the night, Lynn Ewing introduced the first couple of artists who are advanced students of Lou Jacklich. Jane Tripi played *Japanese Sandman* and *Carioca*. Jane impressed us with her excellent musicianship and nice technic. The arrangements of the tunes were nice and her playing style was very classy and smooth.

Next on stage was Lou's other student, Colette Ogata, who tackled two very difficult selections - *Cumbanchero Cumana* and *Malaguena*. Colette worked through *Cumbanchero* and gave evidence of real interpretative skills. Next she performed a very difficult arrangement of *Malaguena*. We have to admit that playing in front of fellow accordionists can be an intimidating experience and there isn't one of us whether amateur or professional who doesn't get butterflies when performing in front of the BAAC membership. Judging from her performance and the long applause after her performance she had no reason to be nervous....she gave one incredible performance! We are looking forward to hearing these two excellent musicians at other upcoming meetings.

Coming all the way from Santa Rosa were two of Ken Chambers students. Mari Bonnici is 11 1/2 years old. She began playing the accordion when she was 7 years old and her prior teacher was Guido Canavari before coming to Ken Chambers. Mari performed Pietro Diero's arrangement of *Ave Maria* and her own arrangements of *Chopsticks* and *Cruella Deville*. The audience enjoyed her neat arrangements and were impressed with her great stage presence and wonderful smile. She was obviously having a good time!



Jane Tripi



Colette Ogata



Mari Bonnici

Next, after an accordion exchange, (they both use the same accordion), big sister took the stage. Amierose Bonnici is 14 years old. Amierose started playing



Amierose Bonnici

accordion when she was 8 years old. Teachers included Jim O'Grady, Guido Canavari and now Ken Chambers. She is a big fan of Elvis Presley and treated us to two selections by him, *Can't Help Falling In Love* and *Return To Sender*. The arrangements were both by Amierose so she, like her sister, has already started a promising path as a fine arranger! Her last song was *The Beijing Waltz* by Viecko Ahvenainen, a frequent past performer and good friend of our club.

After a short intermission to allow everybody to socialize and enjoy the snacks provided by the Verde club, the audience again took their seats. The next act was a group called **Corner Tour**. This group is comprised of Caroline Cooley and Caroline Shanti both on accordion, Stormy Knight on trombone, guitar and trumpet, Alicia McCarthy on banjo and guitar and Chiara Giovando on violin. They performed several tunes that various members wrote. The group has been together about a year and performs on various street corners in San Francisco, plays for the *Shadow Puppet Show* and is currently working on an animation film soundtrack. We enjoyed the original compositions and playing of the group.

Last on the program was the group **Belle Beaucoup** which consists of Barbara Ann Barnett on accordion and Sylvia Herold on Guitar. They featured a program of all French musette music. Included in their program were *Flambee Montalbanaise*, *Jazz Waltz*, *Swing Waltz*, *Jeannette*,

Coer Vagabond, and that well known tune *Indifference*. The two performed beautifully together and evoked memories of pleasant strolls in Paris. Both perform together as well with other groups. Sylvia also plays with Cats and Jammers and with the Hot Club in San Francisco. Barbara Ann plays at Satin 'n' Sage.

The next two general membership meetings promise to be outstanding. The June meeting will feature Ken Chambers in a much overdue return to our stage. Also on the program is a Petosa factory demo of the new and much anticipated Millennium reedless accordion. The program will be intentionally short to allow us to have our third annual Accordion Swap Meet and White Elephant Sale. A selection of vendors will be on hand to allow you to browse through a selection of used accordions and equipment, music and odds and ends. Vendors will be charged a entry

fee of \$5 each. Also Petosa has promised to allow interested parties a chance to check out the new reedless accordion for themselves.

The July meeting will be our big Art Van Damme tribute. Come prepared to honor one of the giants in the accordion world for a life time of accomplishments that are truly amazing. This promises to be a night you won't forget!

And of course the big concert of the year featuring Peter Soave will be happening at our September meeting.



Corner Tour



Belle Beaucoup

Save This Date

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BAAC Annual Picnic

at Nature Friends in Oakland Hills

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National Accordion Convention Plano, Texas - April 8-11, 1999

by Val Kieser

While it is common to see reviews of our local accordion events and club meetings, there are many accordion events around the US and the world that some of our members attend. After reading the following write-up by Val Kieser, the Editor thought that other members might find it interesting and perhaps Val's story may encourage other members to attend one of these fantastic events.

I went, and had a super time! My husband John and his mom went with me because they have relatives in the area whom they could visit while I attended the Convention. On the morning of the day we flew there- which happened to be John's and my 38th anniversary- we had a huge hail storm here in Oakland, and we were concerned that the flight might not take off, or at least not on time. Surprise! It took off on time! I was happy to be allowed to carry my button box on board but had them check my accordion as baggage. I had borrowed a steel case for shipping accordions, so I could check it safely.

We arrived too late for me to participate in the ensemble practice that evening, but we did go to dinner at the local German restaurant that evening. I was hoping to run into Jake Kons, of button-accordion fame, playing there, as he often does, but Jake was off that night, so we heard their other accordionist, whom Marian Kelly also knows, Allen Walling, a very tall and handsome young accordionist who plays all styles. Our cousin slipped the word to him that it was our anniversary, so he played some special anniversary music for us-and the people at the adjacent table became our cheering section!

Soon after that, Al's accordion got a stuck reed and he had to stop playing early. To make the story short, Al knew I played button box because I told him we had hoped to run into Jake, so of course he asked me to fill in the extra time with my button box. I had no chance to warm up at all, and was not at all proud of my performance-but our cheering section at the next table loved it!

Back to the Convention: So many wonderful accordionists, many of them legendary in the accordion world! Some of them I had met before and some I had only heard about including Tim Alexander (Tex-Mex specialist), John Simkus of Chicago (Jazz specialist), Peter Soave (multiple world champion, and who will be performing in concert for BAAC in September), Tom Collins (Performer, teacher composer, arranger and a wonderful guy), Rim Rommel (very popular and gifted entertainer), Jim Wadowick (Music professor and accordionist), Ponty Bone ("Texas Legend in Folk Music"), Kevin Friedrich (from New Zealand), Eddie Chavez (coauthor of The Golden Age of the Accordion), Pete Nalda (plays various styles of diatonic button accordion music), Gina and Romany Rye, Paul Pasquali, Faithe Deffner, Gordon Kohl; and Arleen Boddicker and Major Lois Tilley, who very ably conducted our two ensembles. There were man others but I can't name them all here!

Workshops covered everything you could want to know. I was flattered to be asked to give one on Slovenian button-box technique, with emphasis on bass solos and how to incorporate them into pieces. I was scared to death, but needlessly, as there was a lot of interest in various types of diatonic accordions, and people were fascinated and had loads of questions. I also attended other diatonic workshops, and a workshop on chromatic accordions. (*hmmmm...I noticed a new chromatic accordion in Val's house the other day...looks like Val is venturing into new territory!* - Editor). The Convention had many rooms of accordion dealers, of both

Continued on Page 6

Make Your Accordion Sing

by Bob Berta

Some 42 years ago, when I first started playing accordion at the tender age of 9, I had the benefit of learning from a teacher who was primarily a violin instructor. There wasn't an accordion teacher available and the teacher volunteered to teach me until there was an opening with an accordion teacher.

While I quickly reached a level where he couldn't keep up with my progress and I then transferred to a "real" accordion teacher, I always felt that teacher taught me a very valuable lesson. In a very early session he told me that the most important thing to remember is to play any instrument like it had a voice.

Later my new accordion teacher repeatedly criticized me when I forgot this axiom. But he described the "problem" differently and described it as a style that many accordion players fell into which made their accordion into a drone. But he was talking about the same thing as my first teacher. In fact he said that one of the biggest criticisms of many accordion players is that the playing seemingly goes on and on and on and on and lacks any clear emotion or structure.

Later our very own Joe Smiell again has repeatedly taught this to members of the Clubs Accordion Ensemble that I belong to. Only Joe calls it "railroad tracks". Again a different name but the same thing.

Just what is this "secret" all these great teachers are preaching? Well...think about it...how does an accordion differ from many other instruments? Consider a piano. When you first hit a key the note is strong and immediate than falls off to nothing. Or how about a guitar? Same thing...loud at first and then falls off.

Now consider the accordion. You hit a key and instantly the sound comes out. Let go of the key it stops. Sort of like an on/off switch. The volume depends on how hard you pump on the bellows. But that is the difference that can get you into trouble. The sound doesn't fall off but stays the same, at least until you reverse the bellows. In fact unlike a piano you can make the sound get progressively louder if you wish, or change volume in mid note. If you ask which instrument is perhaps closest to the accordion you might guess the violin. It too can sustain a note for a while but then, just like the accordion, needs to do something since a bow direction change is required.

In the hands of a fine musician any instrument is capable of beauty...but in the hands of a person who doesn't understand how to make their instrument "sing" it can become very trying to listen. In the case of the accordion, a player who doesn't understand this important principle will play all the notes on the page in a systematic manner much like a machine. Hopefully every note is played at the correct note and duration, but often what happens is that the music just drones on without any notable changes until the music

stops, the player takes a sip of coffee, and the next "song" starts. You may be thinking....so what....every note was there. Think about how you would like to be listening to this music. Nothing to write home about huh!

At this point it is time to get to the point....how do you "fix" this problem. The answer is to think of every tune you are playing as a song....even better is to actually sing the tune rather than play it. You may notice that unlike a machine you have a slight problem....you have to take a breath every once in a while. In fact you may come to notice that often the phrasing of the music you are playing is written like it was itself taking breaths every once in a while. **Aha! That is the secret! Play your instrument like you were singing!** And when you take a breath, don't rush it, take a brreeaaattthhhh.

And just as importantly don't trip yourself by changing bellows direction in the middle of a phrase if you can possibly avoid it. You can imagine singing a song such as *Row, Row, Row, your Boat*. First try singing it "Row, Row, Row, Your Boat, Gently Down the Stream. Merrily," etc. You should see a slight pause after the word "Boat" and then take a longer pause to grab a deep breath after "Stream". Now imagine what happens if you don't follow good phrasing. Again sing the lyrics but this time hold your breath and continue on without a break to take a breath and about the third "Merrily" you will probably run out of breath and have to take a big breath to keep from hyperventilation. Try it both ways and it will be very obvious what is the best way to sing it. Now sing it at the same time as you play it. Simple isn't it! This is where the musical term comes into play called "phrasing". In effect what you want to do is string your musical "phrases" together as if you were singing a song. Make each phrase and sub phrases distinct and clearly defined and take appropriate "breaths" whether you are singing or playing an instrument.

My 17 year old daughter, a very fine flute player, recently competed in a graded competition at SF State. She received the highest rating but the most satisfying part of the Professors comments came when he remarked that he had been listening to students all day who got all the notes in but forgot to pay attention to phrasing. She was the first one that day who paid attention to the phrasing. She had certainly heard enough about this from her teacher and dad!

Each phrase should stand on it's own and when you get to the end of a phrase imagine there are Joe's famous "railroad tracks". Don't cross over until you have had a chance to look both ways....you don't want to get hit by the train!

Get On The Internet with BAAC.

If you are an accordion teacher, salesman, or repairperson BAAC wants to promote YOU. Contact Marian Kelly to get information about how you can be listed on our WEB page. Call 415-974-9210

Convention Continued from page 4

new and used accordions, and MIDI's including various models of the new reedless/cordless MIDI's. Many, many brands were featured, including (among many others) Petosa, Concerto, Diamond, Monarch, Titano, and others that I can't even recall. There were also rooms full of all kinds of accordion music.

The vaudeville show Friday evening and the concert Saturday evening were big successes and played to a full house, Norman Seaton, TAA President and the organizer of the whole Convention, added a wonderful element of humor as he kept everyone in stitches every time he took the mike.

I think the most impressive act of all was Peter Soave on both Bayan and Bandoneon. He has become a master of both, after already being a master of both piano accordion and C-system chromatic! We at BAAC will have the rare opportunity of hearing Peter play for us on all three instruments in a demonstration of the differences and unique characteristics of each. This exciting concert will happen in September. Watch the Newsletter for details. **YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS THIS.**

We also had lunch entertainment, including, besides accordionists, a whole band of about a dozen musical young children aged from about 5 to about 12. Their teacher played accordion and the kids all played different instruments. Everyone was impressed with these kids, and conversations sprung up about what a tragedy it is that music no longer plays a major role in the schools, and how that situation should be remedied.

Except for the 12-hour wait at the Dallas/Fort Worth airport trying to get on a flight home, the weekend was definitely worth the trip.



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Our Guest Columnist

Bob Smith is an enthusiastic member of our club who enjoys participating in various ensembles and writing fine arrangements of music that showcase his arranging talents. Besides playing accordion, Bob also has a love for theatre pipe organs as do many other BAAC members.

Bob has submitted two technic articles that we are sure you will enjoy. The first one is on this page with a followup article next month on *Diminished Chords*.

If you have a "trick" or "tip" that works for you, something that has made accordion playing more enjoyable or easier...we want to hear them. The Editor is encouraging other members to submit articles on any musical technic that you would like to share with your fellow club members. We just completed the extensive writings of Jim Holliday with a lot of appreciative feedback from club members.

Submit any articles or ideas for articles to the Editor, Bob Berta at any club meeting or mail to him at 4 Park Manor Drive, Daly City, Ca. 94015. Or for our WEB wanderers you can reach him at RKB4@pge.com.

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The Seventh Chord on the Accordion Bass

by Bob Smith

The bass side of the accordion seems to be more poorly understood than the treble side. My own knowledge of the bass section began to improve the evening of a BAAC picnic many years ago. Maestro Anthony Galla-Rini was an honored guest at the picnic, and a few fortunate members of our club were invited to Marian Kelly's home that evening to share a few hours with the maestro. That night I came to understand a number of things about the straddella bass. One interesting feature was that the "fifth" was missing from the seventh chords on the bass of most accordions (but not all, as I later discovered). This feature was first introduced by Galla-Rini in 1924.

Consider a simple C-major chord consisting of the notes C, E, and G. The C is the root of the the chord, the E is the "third", and the G is the "fifth". The naming conventions are based on the standard "major" scale, where we start counting from one. The C-7th chord can be constructed by adding a flatted "seventh" note, or a B-flat to the C-major chord in our example, so that the individual notes become C, E, G, and B-flat. This is properly called a dominant seventh chord to distinguish it from other seventh chords which we can discuss at another time. However, in traditional harmony it turns out that the fifth can actually be omitted without chang-

ing the essential nature of the seventh chord. You can easily convince yourself of this by playing a seventh chord on the treble side of the accordion, and then dropping the fifth. Yes, you can certainly detect the absence of the fifth, but it does not affect the important part of the sound or feeling of the seventh. Perhaps a slightly better experiment is to "resolve" a C7 chord by following it with an F-Major chord. Try it with and without the fifth, and you should understand.

To continue the story, one night in a hotel room in 1924 Galla-Rini went into the bass mechanism of his accordion and filed off the pins controlling the fifth on each seventh chord! Try to mentally put yourself in his place and see if you would have the courage to do that. The greatest advantage to this change is that some of the other forms of the seventh chords can now be played without an unwanted dissonance. The most common of the alternate forms is the 7th chord with an augmented 5th. The augmented fifth may be added in either the bass or the treble section. Another form is the 7th chord with a diminished fifth. In addition, the original form of the 7th chord can still be obtained by merely playing the major chord button with the 7th chord button. (There are also other ways, which I plan to discuss at another time). Yet another advantage to Galla-Rini's modification, according to our own Joe Smiell, is that the seventh chord with the omitted fifth sound cleaner or less muddy.

Galla-Rini went on to convince the Accordion Teacher's Guild (ATG) to adapt as a standard that the 5th should be omitted on 7th chords on the accordion. He visited various factories in Europe as a representative of the ATG to convince them to drop the 5ths from the 7ths. He was successful in most cases. However, even today you will find some accordions made with the 5ths still included in the 7ths.

If you wish to find out whether your 7th chords have the 5ths included, play the C-7th button on the bass side while playing a G# note on the treble side. If you hear a clashing dissonance, then your 5ths are there. If you want them removed, you can probably have it done by your favorite accordion repair person. Note that it is a one-way operation and it is much more difficult to add the fifths back than to remove them.

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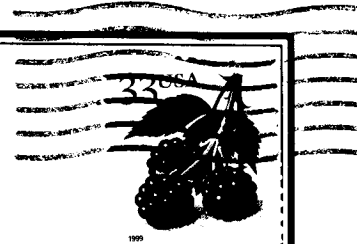
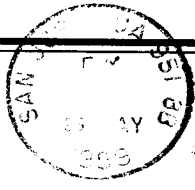


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If you would like to play at a meeting contact Bob Berta at 510-450-5766