

Happy Mother's Day to  
all you Moms and  
Grandmothers!



Happy Memorial Day!

# ACCORDION CLUB

May 2007

Official Instrument of San Francisco  
1912 ♪ The World's First Accordion Club ♪ 2006

**May 20 Meeting:**  
**Featuring the "MIDI King" Chuck Berger from Portland**  
**And Alex Yasko of the SF Bay Area**  
**Get ready for a very versatile and entertaining program!**  
**(More info on page 3)**



### President's Message

It seems that every month I say the same thing, "That was the best meeting we've ever had." Not wanting to repeat myself, but the April meeting was right up at the top of the list too. The **Aurora Mandolin Orchestra and Tango #9** were just great. The drawing was the largest we've ever had, and the

buffet, thanks to **Tuti Weber** and the crew at **OPYC**, was perfect.

The afterglow in the lounge went on 'til 7:00 pm with lots of music and refreshments. If you haven't stayed after a meeting, maybe you should check it out the next time.

Special guest performer, **Chuck Berger**, is our featured artist this month. Chuck is an expert with the MIDI accordion, and his playing is just--well, you just

can't sit still. Also on the program is **Alex Yasko**, a highly skilled accordionist who studied in the former Soviet Union. There should be some great playing on May 20<sup>th</sup>, so plan to be there.

We still need a Treasurer! I'm doing the best I can, but, well, **please call and volunteer.**

The picnic is coming up in July, and will be held at the Oyster Point Yacht Club this year. We're still working on the details, but a Bar B Q is on tap. Mark your calendar for **July 15<sup>th</sup>.**

Let me know if you have any suggestions, or gripes, to make our club better; we are always looking to improve things.

June is "**National Accordion Awareness Month**," so play your accordion as much as you can, for as many people as you can.

That's all for now, see you May 20<sup>th</sup>. Play every day, and remember,

**REAL MUSIC IS LIVE !!!**

*Peter Di*

### Directions to Oyster Point Yacht Club, 911 Marina Blvd., South San Francisco

From 101 traveling either north or south, take Oyster Point exit. Turn right on Marina Blvd. (be careful not to turn right on Gull Drive, just before Marina Blvd.!). Continue past gate house to sign "Oyster Point Yacht Club." There is plenty of parking and ramp access.

**Our Website [www.sfaccordionclub.com](http://www.sfaccordionclub.com) is live but incomplete and under construction**

## April Meeting:

### Something way out of the ordinary!

Pre-meeting warmup music was provided first by Yours Truly, then by Lou Di Maggio who thinks he's not ready to perform for the club yet, but we know better! He's fantastic!



The Aurora Mandolin Orchestra

First on the show was **The Aurora Mandolin Orchestra** ably led by their lovely and charismatic director, **Josephine Pellegrini** who also was their spokesperson. Providing the accordion presence in the group was Pres. **Peter Di Bono**. Wow! What a sound a group of mandolins makes! Mellow, harmonious, awesome. Soprano **Maria Fassio Pignati** sang some gorgeous vocals; another vocalist was **Lincoln Smith**, who also was a player. Other players were **Iona Ali**, **Satoshi Mukaida** (1st mandolin); **Janice Fournier**, **Bob Rizzetto**, **Lincoln Smith** (2nd mandolin); **Matt Vuksinich** (mandola); **Tom Romero** (guitar); and **Noell Toso** (bass). We enjoyed *Anema e Core*, *Prière Musicale* (which contained a beautiful French tune that I've heard many times); the familiar *Chitarra Romana*; *Sul Lago di Molveno*; *Comme Facette Mammeta*; *La Cumparsita* (vocal by Lincoln Smith); *Marechiaro* (Neapolitan song); *Non Ti Scordar di Me* (Do Not Forget Me), with Maria doing vocal; *Le Tango Du Pardon*, *La Vita e Bella* (from the movie *Life Is Beautiful*); *Soul of Russia* medley, arr. L. Papparello. The encore was the familiar *Tarantella Napolitana*. Each and every performer in the group has a very important part. I know from playing with the ACE Ensemble that there is a big "hole" in the music if any part is missing. This group is absolutely fantastic, and we hope they will come back again!

Intermission followed, featuring once again, a magnificent spread of all kinds of food and sweets. Our congratulations and thanks to **Tuti Weber**, our excellent cateress, who is always cheerful and looking for ways to please. How fortunate we are!

Following intermission and the drawings for prizes (cash and otherwise), Peter announced that **Sheri Mignano** was present. She has a wonderful group called *Zighi Baci* and also wrote a

book, *Mandolins, Like Salami*, a 200-page book in 8 1/2 by 11" format, that is a social history with biographical sketches and sample programs dating back to the early 20th century. It contains over 40 photographs and some original concert programs. Fascinating. And, Sheri donated a copy to the club for a future drawing. Thanks, Sheri!

The program continued with another blockbuster: **Tango No. 9**. Once again: WOW! This unique quartet features **Catharine Clune** on violin, **Joshua Brody** on piano, **Isabel Douglass** on accordion (both bandoneón and beautiful Excelsior piano accordion), and



Tango No. 9

**Greg Stephens** on trombone. As they played, **Lincoln Smith** from the mandolin group and his dance partner **Jane** added to the fun by doing some fancy tango steps. **Tango No. 9** played *Felicia* (traditional tango); *Luz y Sombra* (early Piazzolla); *Palomita Blanca* (traditional vals); *O These Dark Eyes* (Russian Tango); *Time & a Half Gavotte* (Prokofiev); *Mozzo Guapo* (traditional Milonga); a slow country Milonga; *Street Tango* (Piazzolla), *Here Live No Fish*; and *Libertango* (late Piazzolla).

This was definitely one of our best meetings. What a great time we all had!

Val



Welcome Table: Much-appreciated volunteers **Barbara Firpo**, **Ruby Dezman**, **Jim Firpo**

### Wanted

**Items for the newsletter!** Send me your articles: on playing tips, technique, accordion history, music theory (not too complicated!), events, personal experiences, photos—whatever might be of interest for the newsletter.

**Call Val (510) 531-4836 or [vtkacc@ifn.net](mailto:vtkacc@ifn.net).**

## About our Performers for May

**Chuck Berger** has been a professional performer for 40 years. His repertoire consists of the Big Band sounds of the 40's, through music of the 70's and 80's! Chuck is proud to play a Petosa AM-1100 MIDI accordion. Through the early years of his career, polka music was his mainstay while working with the big name polka bands in the Midwest. With the advent of the MIDI accordion, he now precisely emulates all styles of music, whether it be Big Band, country, vocal groups, or polkas and waltzes (Swiss, German, Italian, Polish to name a few). His sound from stage is equivalent to a 14-piece orchestra, *without* the aid of computer-generated background.

Each instrument heard is actually being played by Chuck. Chuck continuously performs for such events as the prestigious USBDA Association, polka dances and festivals, exclusive county clubs, private dance clubs, anniversaries, dinner shows, conventions, and cruise ships. Because of his love of the accordion, he goes out of his way to perform for accordion clubs throughout the US. He is a true crowd pleaser.

**Alex Yasko**, whom we have known in the past as Alex Yaskin, has reinvented himself musically and is eager to show us what he has accomplished. Alex has been popular in the Bay Area in the past. He has an incredible repertoire covering every ethnicity and every type of music/dance. Alex was born in Belarus and has music degrees from Tchaikovsky Music School and Socolovsky Music College as well as a Bachelor of Arts in Music. He immigrated to the United States in 1994 and became a professional accordionist in San Francisco. Besides the accordion, Alex also plays the bayan, guitar, piano, balalaika and — the "accordion case drum"! He has also been a performer at the Cotati accordion Festival.



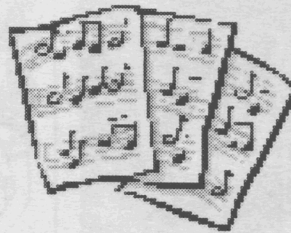
Our Tango Dancers, Jane and Lincoln



Peter Di Bono and Sheri Mignano



Just for Fun: Frank Schlotter in his early accordion days



Peter Di Bono and Joe Smiell thank Iona Ali and Josephine Pellegrini of the Aurora Mandolin Ensemble



Gwyn Lister and Sue Hirigoyen

### Word Has It . . .

. . . That our good friend and long-time SFAC member **Clyde Forsman**, who turned 92 on May 3, recently suffered a stroke and also has been ill. How does one wish someone a Happy Birthday and a fast recovery all at the same time? Well, I guess we just did it. Clyde, we miss you and want to see you back among us a.s.a.p.!

. . . That another good friend and SFAC member, back in Pennsylvania, **Tom Bruno**, just got engaged! We are so happy for **Tom and Amber** and wish them many years of happiness. We'll be seeing them both in July when they come out together for the Galla-Rini camp, and Tom will play for the club.

. . . That **Ernst Angst** has had more than his share of problems this year, and we hope that they are all in the past now! Hurry back, Ernst! We hope to see you at our May meeting!

. . . That **Barbara Ann Barnett**, one of our favorite players from years past, is just beginning to play again following an unfortunate accident 16 months ago. I can hardly wait until she can come and play for us again!

. . . That SFAC member **Ed Suterko** forwarded to me the information that the Accordion Pops Orchestra (APO), under the direction of **Dan Desiderio**, presented "A Concert of Hope" on Saturday, April 21 in the Perelman Theatre at the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts in Philadelphia. This is a very important fundraiser for the ALS Hope Foundation. You can view a brief synopsis of the impressive and emotional program at [www.cordeenman.com/apo](http://www.cordeenman.com/apo).

. . . That **Sue and Mike Hirigoyen** took a fast trip to Germany for a week. Sue loves the accordion so much, she will be looking in every music store at accordions and button boxes! It will be fun to hear all about it when they return (in time for our May meeting)!

. . . That Val and a couple of her friends went to **Lugano Swiss Bistro** at The Barnyard in Carmel on Thursday, April 22 and what fun we had! My good friend and SFAC member **Richard Denier** plays there on Thursday evenings. **Mike Marotta Jr. and also Sr.** were there, and to top it off, **Lou and Jane Di Maggio** showed up! We had five accordionists (but no violin or vocals that night). By the way, SFAC member **Joe Domitrowich** also plays at Lugano on certain nights. I'm going to try to catch one of his performances there too! One more note about Lugano: the food is terrific! I highly recommend it for a fabulous night out in Carmel!

That Oakland accordion-store owner **Kimric Smythe** helped build a *drivable* Victorian house (see photo, right) and also a steam car, featured in *Make Magazine*, a magazine for aficionados of do-it-yourself tech projects.



### Very Sad News

Our club has lost one of its most ardent supporters, who will be sorely missed, **Dale Winter**. We are accustomed to seeing Dale and Barbara at just about every meeting, always smiling and loving the accordion and the music. Our hearts go out to Barbara, and we hope to continue to see her often.

I have also heard of the passing in April of another friend of the club whom some of you know from years past, **Curt Van Neck**. We send our deepest condolences to both families.

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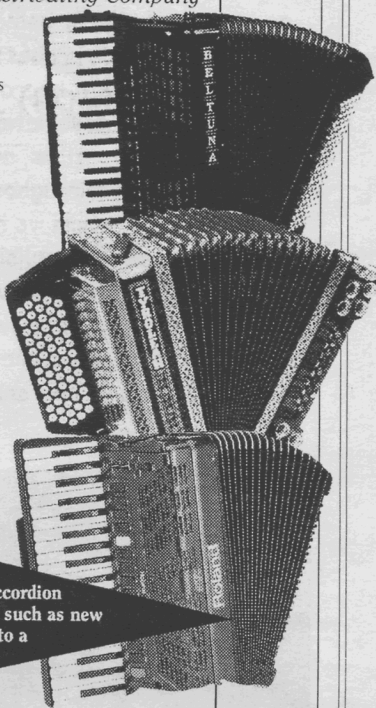
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Mike Zampiceni South Bay [eclecticguy@comcast.net](mailto:eclecticguy@comcast.net)  
Zighi Baci San Francisco [www.slavonicweb.org](http://www.slavonicweb.org)

### **MANY THANKS . . .**

. . . to Telmo Echeverría, Anne Métais and Sue  
Hirigoyen for their willingness always to help with the  
proofreading, folding, labeling, stamping and mailing of  
newsletters; and to all the generous people who bring  
food to the meetings and help with the serving. Even if  
we don't get all the names,  
your volunteer spirit is very much appreciated!

### **LOU SOPER MEMORIAL**

A reminder, for friends of Lou Soper, that there will be  
a Celebration of Life service for Lou on Saturday, June  
16 at 11:00 a.m. at Fremont Chapel of the Roses,

### **Your Executive Board . . .**

. . . Has not met this month due to absences.

### **When do our fellow accordion clubs in the Bay Area meet?**

**Accordion Club of the Redwoods (ACR)** regularly meets on  
the third Monday of the month, Hermann & Sons Hall, 860 West-  
ern Avenue, Petaluma. Contact: Kris Nelson [krisnelson@aol.com](mailto:krisnelson@aol.com)  
or (707) 795-4860.

**Silicon Valley Accordion Society (SVAS)** meets on the first Sunday of the month, 1:30 p.m. at Harry's Hofbrau,  
390 Saratoga Avenue between Keily Blvd. and Stevens Creek Blvd. Contact: Bill Topogna (408) 984-5290.

**Golden State Accordion Club (GSAC)** has three divisions. The **Vacaville** club meets on the second Tuesday of  
the month at 6:30, Moose Lodge, 6585 Gibson Canyon Road, Vacaville. The **Humboldt** Club meets on the third Tues-  
day, 7:00 p.m., Humboldt Swiss Club, 5403 Tompkins Hill Road, Loleta, CA 95551. The **Sacramento** group meets on  
the fourth Wednesday of the month at the Dante Club, 2330 Fair Oaks Blvd., Sacramento. Contact for all the GSAC  
Clubs: Carole Enneking (707) 864-2359.

**Good Time Accordion Club (GTAC)** meets on the second Wednesday of the month 7:00 p.m. Escalon Community  
Center, 1055 Escalon Ave., Escalon. Contact: (209) 545-3603.

### **ACE Ensemble News**

We are enjoying rehearsing at the Oyster Point Yacht  
Club. **Dave and Dee** are very gracious to open for us and  
prepare nice fresh hot coffee! We're gratified also that the  
acoustics are very good there.

We are now practicing for our fall concert(s) and our  
Holiday program. Stay tuned . . .

*ACE players: Aldo Argenti, Jr., Peter Di Bono, Reno Di  
Bono, Mary-Alice Eldon, Lynn Ewing, Ron Harris, Marian  
Kelly, Valerie Kieser, Deborah Knapp, Nora Mazzara, Kevin  
McCarthy (percussion), Anne Métais, Frank Montoro, Bob  
Smith, and Sharon Walters Greyhosky. Joe Smiell is our  
musical director and arranger, and Chris Arild is our hard-  
working Librarian.*

### **Fun Band News . . .**

The San Francisco Accordion Band, a.k.a. the "Fun  
Band," meets at Val's house on the second and fourth  
Wednesday of the month. The members seem to like meet-  
ing at my house, which is a wonderful convenience.

We will be among the performers at **Tom Cordoni's**  
"Celebrate the Accordion" weekend in Petaluma June  
23 and 24 (we'll be playing at 2:00 on Saturday afternoon).  
We're also presenting a program for the annual "Piccolo  
Pavilion" event in Corte Madera at 5:00 p.m. on July 29.  
This is a delightful community event (see page 6).

### **Welcome New Members**

**Eleanor Bizzo** of Daly City, although she is not an  
accordion player, enjoys "Oldies" and Modern/jazz ac-  
cordion music.

**Edward Lewis**, from Milpitas, plays clarinet but en-  
joys accordion music of all types: "Oldies," Modern/  
jazz, Classical, European, Latin, Cajun/Zydeco. How  
about getting Edward and an accordionist together for  
a performance for the club?

**Cpl. Charles Ratto** of Daly City also enjoys "Oldies"  
and Modern/jazz accordion music, although he does not  
play accordion himself.

*Welcome aboard, Eleanor, Edward and Charles!*

We hope to welcome you often at our meetings. Please  
make yourselves known when you come to the next  
meeting so that we can introduce you!

**UPCOMING ACCORDION EVENTS THAT EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT!**

**The National Accordion Association of Dallas, Texas**  
is sponsoring the  
**NATIONAL BUTTON ACCORDION FESTIVAL**  
May 25-26-27

Yukon Czech Hall In Yukon, Oklahoma.

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Three fun-filled days of music and dancing; polka Mass and concert on Sunday; Info: Val has the flyers, or visit [www.accordions.com/naa](http://www.accordions.com/naa) or e-mail [rpivovar@verizon.net](mailto:rpivovar@verizon.net)

**Fifth Annual Celebrate the Accordion Weekend**

In Petaluma, CA June 23 and 24.

**Tom Cordoni** writes:

**AN INSTANT FIX FOR A.D.S.**

(*Accordion Deficiency Syndrome*)

The cure for A.D.S. will take place at the Petaluma Historical Library and Museum Courtyard, 4th and B Streets, Petaluma, on June 23 and 24, 2007, from 11:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. both days. No pills! No drugs! Just live accordion music! Your feet will tap; your hips will sway; your voice will sing and your body may even dance!

The musicians who create this miracle will be appreciated by all. There marvelous volunteers, giving of themselves to bring joy to others, include Stave Balich, Sev Garcia, Ben Creed, Sheri Mignano and Gina Gallo, the Euro-tones, the San Francisco Accordion Band, and Coro Allegro, the wonderful Italian chorus from Santa Rosa, under the direction of Salvatore Peritore, accompanied by accordionist Eva Marie Sbrazio. Many others, including some very talented youngsters, will be on hand to share their love of the accordion and their talent.

Many types of accordions will be featured—piano and button box, chromatic, diatonic and MIDI, playing a wonderful variety of music. Something for everyone and no charge to anyone!

Tom Cordoni and the co-chair of "Celebrate the Accordion," Kris Nelson, President of the Accordion Club of the Redwoods, will be introducing these great acts and doing a little entertaining of their own.

Come and join the fun! Saturday, June 23 and Sunday, June 24 from 11:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m.

**The Las Vegas Accordion Convention,**

takes place Monday through Thursday, June 18-21, 2007 at the Gold Coast Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas. Headline artists include **Leo Aquino** from Canada, **Daniel Desiderio**, **Tony Lovello**, **Walter Ostanek**, **Mario Padone**, **Soundscape Accordion Trio**, **Sammy Thomas**. Featured legends will be **Art Van Damme**, **Peter and Mady Soave** and Comedian **Pete Barbutti**. Also appearing will be **Gina Branelli** from the UK, **Gordon Kohl** from San Diego, and our own **Ron Borelli** and **Joe Domitrowich**.

The Convention will be celebrating 100 Years of the Piano Accordion! For details visit [www.AccordionStars.com](http://www.AccordionStars.com).

**Rose City Accordion Camp**

In Silver Falls, Oregon, June 3-8. Info call (530) 293-0322.

**Galla-Rini Accordion Camp**

July 22-26, at Dominican University in San Rafael.

Musical Director is Joe Smiell

For info contact Tor Arild (650) 851-7831, e-mail [mcariid@earthlink.net](mailto:mcariid@earthlink.net) or Marian Kelly (650) 854-1896 or e-mail [kelly.marian@gmail.com](mailto:kelly.marian@gmail.com)

**The Confédération Internationale des Accordéonistes'**

**2007 Coupe Mondiale World Accordion Championships**

Taking place August 13-18 in Washington, D.C.

Co-hosted by the AAA and the ATG. For info: [www.ameracord.com](http://www.ameracord.com) or e-mail Joan Cochran Sommers [sommersj@umkc.edu](mailto:sommersj@umkc.edu) or call (913) 722-5625

**Kimberley International Old Time Accordion Championships (KIOTAC)**

July 9-14, 2007

Featuring a concert by **Sammy Thomas**, family dance events each evening with various dance bands, including the **Al Meixner Trio** whom we have seen at Cotati; a large contingent from the **Angel Music School** in China, which has several students entered in the competitions; the **Killenbergs Orchestra** from Norway, active since 1930; **The Cottonpickers**, the **Western Senators**, **Beyond the Pale**, **The Softones**, the **Kawa Family Band** and much, much more. In addition to the competitions (\$12,000 in prizes), there will also be jam sessions, dance workshops, exhibits and trade tables, a souvenir booth, a food fair, and free daily "Platz!" entertainment all week long. For details visit [www.kiotac.ca](http://www.kiotac.ca) or e-mail [info@kiotac.ca](mailto:info@kiotac.ca), or FAX (250) 427-4547 or phone (888) 4kiotac.

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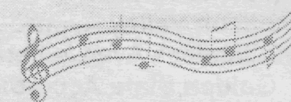
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- Sun Sentinel, Ft. Lauderdale, FL  
"He Brings the Accordion to Life"  
- Al Rovanand, Talent Agent  
Article in News of Delaware County PA

## SFAC Evening Ensemble Practice

First and Third Wednesday of the month

**ON HIATUS**—members will be notified when/if we start up again!  
Joe Smiell's schedule is making it difficult for Joe to be there.

## SFAC Band Practice

Wed. May 9 and 23, 7 p.m. at Val Kieser's Home in Oakland  
**CALL AHEAD!! Please join us!**

Info: call Frank Schlotter (510) 339-1163

Or Valerie Kieser (510) 531-4836 [vtkacc@ifn.net](mailto:vtkacc@ifn.net)

### Our Sincere Thanks

To those who generously donate to the Club.

Each year we start a new cumulative list of donors. If you donate and it doesn't show up in this column, please call Val (510) 531-4836 or [vtkacc@ifn.net](mailto:vtkacc@ifn.net) and let me know. We want to be sure you are recognized! Thanks! So far this year your Editor has learned of two donations from  
**Mark Zhagel**

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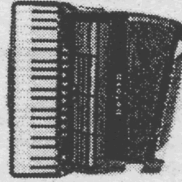
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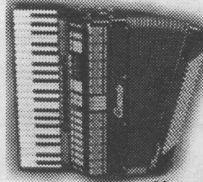
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\$10 for each guest

**SFAC Newsletter Ad Policy**

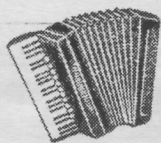
Members may place one small ad for one month free of charge in a given year; after that the charge is \$6.00 per issue. A business-card-size ad costs \$6 per issue or \$60 per year for members; a quarter-page ad costs \$15.00 for members; a half-page ad costs \$25 for members. A full-page ad costs \$50.00 for members. Discount available for ongoing ads. Ads placed by non-members will cost twice the above-quoted prices. A flyer advertising an event may be included in one issue for \$25 for members, \$30 for non-members.

**SFAC Officers**

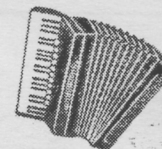
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**We need volunteers for vacancies!**  
**Call Peter or Val (see numbers above)**



The next meeting will take place on  
**Sunday, May 20, 2007.** Featured will be Alex  
Yaskin (now known as "Yasko") and The MIDI  
King Chuck Berger from Portland. See you  
there! (Directions on front page)



**Newsletter of the  
San Francisco Accordion Club**

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**FIRST CLASS POSTAGE**

