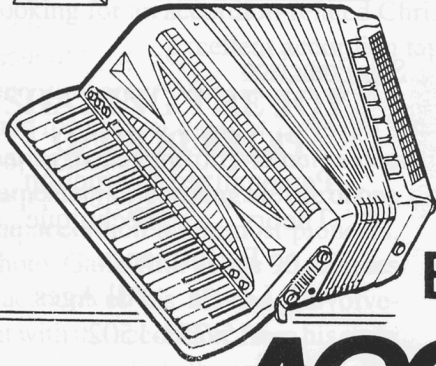


Newsletter of the

SAN FRANCISCO CALIFORNIA U.S.A.



BAY AREA

ACCORDION CLUB

A. Restrepo - 94

NOVEMBER, 1995

November General Meeting

by Denny Huff

The central theme of the evening was a birthday party for one of our Board Members and leaders, Mr. **Joe Smiell**. His contribution to music, the accordion and BAAC has been significant, and everyone enjoyed wishing him a Happy Birthday. As I watched him up there on the stage pumping out those "zippy" numbers, I was reminded of a comment I heard **Myron Floren** make on a TV interview recently. **Myron** allowed as to how he was getting older along with everyone else, but when he strapped on the accordion and went out on the stage, he felt like he was 18 years old again. Well....**Joe** may not have felt exactly 18 years old on Monday, but he was playing music with an enthusiasm and youthfulness which belied the event. More on the celebration later.

President **Bob Berta** opened the meeting with a number of comments, most of which I couldn't hear due to the high level of conversation from the audience and the back of the room. He did introduce his parents who were visiting attending their first meeting. That's about all I could understand.

Bob puts in a great deal of personal time on our behalf supporting the club and the accordion. It doesn't seem too demanding to expect us to keep quiet for 5 minutes a month and listen to what he has to say. This has been a continual problem for speakers and players for the three years I've attended meetings. Maybe we could work hard and show some "traditional BAAC hospitality" to our President and guest artists. Enuf said.

cont. on p. 4



JOE

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

December 4th, Monday. BAAC General Meeting, featuring Kelly Koehn, Jan Schallenberger, Frank Montoro, Lou Soper, BAAC's Ensemble with Joe Smiell conducting, Don Nurisso, and a quartet with Val Kieser, Nora Mazzara, Bob Smith, Mary-Alice Eldon. Donworth Hall, 22nd and Eucalyptus, S.F., just north of Stonestown Shopping Ctr. 7PM.

December 6th, Wed. BAAC Board Meeting, 7:30 PM at Ed Massolo's, 612 Lassen, So. S.F. Guests welcome. Call Ed at 589-8409 for directions.

December 10th, Sunday, 7 - 10:30PM. The United Irish Cultural Center presents the December Ceili. Join them for dancing and accordion music! Sloat & 45th, S.F.

December 11th, Monday. Fun Band Practice, 7:00 PM. Conductor Domenic Saso. House of Parties. (415) 587-7557.

December 13th, Wednesday 7:00 PM. BAAC Accordion Practice, House of Parties. Call Joe, 510-832-6938.

January 8, 1996, Monday. BAAC General Meeting (please note date change!) Special guest artist is Ken Olendorf! Donworth Hall, 22nd and Eucalyptus, S.F. 7 PM.

March 8 - 10, 1996. Texas Accordion Association Convention in Fort Worth. Call Norman Seaton at (214) 270-3791.

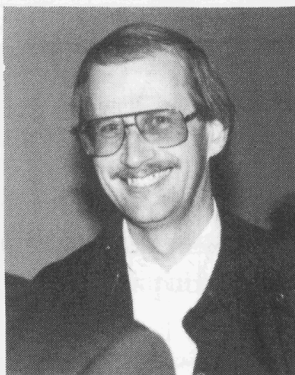
From your **PRESIDENT**

by *Bob Berta*

The holiday seasons are approaching and I wish the best to all of the BAAC members. This past year has seen some wonderful events like Cotati, our picnic and visits by some fabulous guest artists. But I can't let this opportunity go without a chance to praise the members of our club. As far as I am concerned our club has amongst its members some of the greatest accordionists alive today.

And let's not forget those fabulous people who constantly volunteer to help out at all of our functions. I won't list any names for fear I would miss and offend somebody. We all know who those members are.

The accordion brings tremendous joy to our members. Many people use it as a way to share their love for music with others while others just enjoy playing for themselves as a way of relaxing. For the New Year I would like to encourage those "closet accordionists" to make a New Year's resolution to come out and play for us at upcoming meetings. While some may feel intimidated by a large audience or think that they aren't "good enough" to play, this is wrong. Our club is for everyone and we want to share your love for the accordion. If you just can't get up the courage to play alone I would encourage you to join either the fun band or Joe Smiell's orchestra. Both are tremendous fun and you can learn more from a few weeks with those bands than



months spent by yourself.

In a large organization such as ours we occasionally have to deal with the sad loss of a dear member. Recently, a member passed away who to me was the epitome of the class of accordionists we have in our club. Harry Liedtke joined our club at the urging of fellow member Mary-Alice Eldon. Harry was an exceptionally talented accordionist. He was one of the members of the accordion orchestra led by Joe that I am also a member of. Even though he was dying of cancer he was at every practice and played enthusiastically. Even when he was so weak we had to pick up the accordion and place it on his lap he was at every practice....even up to a week before he died. I was impressed with his fine ear and abilities. I remember one practice session when he alone noted a "klinker". He said that the note wasn't right and thought the note was wrong on Joe's arrangement. Joe had us play the part over a few times and sure enough....the note was written wrong on the arrangement. This was probably the only time Joe ever made a mistake! I and the other members of the orchestra will sorely miss Harry and the sound of his Hohner accordion.

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1996 IS THE YEAR OF THE ACCORDION!!

MAY WE HELP YOU SOLVE YOUR CHRISTMAS GIFT PROBLEMS?

Looking for an accordion-related Christmas gift for someone special? Or, perhaps, for yourself? Keep reading! Several excellent accordion tapes, CD's, and a video have appeared within the last couple months.

SHARING THE JOY

Sharing the Joy is a forty-minute video documentary celebrating the life of one of the accordion's foremost pioneers. Anthony Galla-Rini at age 90 narrates the account of his life-long involvement with the accordion, from his early days in vaudeville to the present. Galla-Rini shares his love of life and music in this beautifully edited tribute, the first and only of its kind in the accordion world. Tony is featured performing many of his favorite pieces including *Summertime* from Porgy and Bess, Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata*, Puccini's *Musetta's Waltz*, and Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*. Tony says of this video, "It is a genuine reflection of all the significant events of my musical career."

The producer of the video, Jeff Barrie, has played the accordion since age 8. In 1990 he won the "King" award at the Accordion Federation of North America (AFNA) festival. He had been introduced to Galla-Rini only in 1989, when he had been invited to play in his Accordion Symphony. He vowed then to capture Tony's personality and story on video. Upon his graduation from UCLA in 1993, he undertook that project. Two years later, with Tony's help and blessing, the tape is available for purchase.

Request the tape from:

Barrie Productions
P O Box 6130
Torrance CA 90504

Enclose a check or money order for \$19.95 per video plus 8.5% sales tax. Also, please add shipping costs of \$3.00 for the first video, then \$0.25 more for each additional video. Or leave a message for Jeff at (310) 535-2419.

Christmas With the Accordion is a brand new collection of Christmas favorites just recorded by Lou Fanucchi. It's so new that we haven't even had a chance to preview it for inclusion in this newsletter. Lou says it is available either as a cassette or a CD.

To order, send \$10.95, shipping included, for a cassette or \$15.95, shipping included, for a CD to:

California Magnetics 7898 Ostrow St. Suite H San Diego, CA 92111

Planet Squeezebox

Everybody will want to check out the spectacular recording called Planet Squeezebox which has just recently been issued. This three cassette or CD package is a musical panorama of the accordion throughout the world. It showcases over 40 international traditions in 51 tracks. Relating accordions, bandoneons, concertinas, and all other squeezeable beauties in three hours of exciting music, Planet Squeezebox traces the cultural odyssey of our fantastically versatile instrument.

The American Accordionists' Association and, in particular, Faithe Deffner collaborated with Michal Shapiro of Ellipsis Arts to produce this wonderful compendium of accordion music. The set comes with a lavishly illustrated 56-page booklet which tells quite complete stories about each performer or group.

Listen to Michal Shapiro:

Jeff Charno, the president of Ellipsis Arts, sits opposite me. "I want to do an accordion compilation called *Planet Squeezebox*. What do you think of the idea?"

I jump up from my chair and give Jeff the high five.

Weeks later, I have become a search and gather machine. CD's and cassettes are coming in from all parts of the world; my telephone and fax are SMOKING. I have found that the squeezebox has a host of champions who give of their time and intelligence freely. What separates them in some cases is their musical bias, but all are united in their love (and sometimes defense) of this instrument.

And the music!!! The variety is dizzying, the quality almost uniformly high. Some of the genres are familiar: Celtic, Polka, New Music, Classical. Others I will have to learn about: Forró, Musette, Chamamé and more.

Here is *Planet Squeezebox*. I have tried to represent as many kinds of accordion music as came across my desk. The decisions have been hard; how can any one or two tracks represent an entire school of music? There is a world of fine recordings and so many great musicians out there, and my thanks go out to all of them for sending me their work.

As for the squeezebox, I learned that different cultures have had different names for it. Leadbelly called it a windjammer. The Zulus call it a squashbox. Mark Twain called it "the stomach Steinway." In Germany, it has been scathingly called "the pig-organ." After listening to so much squeezebox music (an astounding ninety percent of it is dance music), I would like to add my own personal nickname: "Joygiver".

Should you wish to purchase Planet Squeezebox, Marian Kelly is handling them for Ernest Deffner, Inc. The CD set (3 CD's and the 56-page book) sells for \$45; the cassette set, which also includes the book, sells for \$35. Call her at (415) 854-1896, or you may purchase a set at BAAC's December general meeting.

November General Meeting, cont.

Our skilled Master of Ceremonies, **Domenic Saso**, freshly rested from his well deserved vacation, was back at his post. First up was a "fun" trio of **Tony DiBono, Lee Woodall** and **Jim Firpo**. And their first selection was my all time favorite song, story and movie — Lara's Theme, *Somewhere My Love*. It brought a lump to my throat as it always does. Followed by something a little lighter, *Five Foot-Two* and *Yes Sir, That's My Baby*. Next was another of my favorites, not often heard anymore, *Alley Cat*. And if we weren't already swept up into the good mood, our peppy group finished the set with *Beer Barrel Polka* — a Czech, not a German song, by the way!

It wasn't an evening for melancholy music, because **Reno Pucci** jumped up onto the stage next and dazzled us with a selection of Italian tangos. First up was *Tango della Rosa*. Followed by *Tango Capinere* and *Tango della Gelosie*. If you'd have closed your eyes, you might have thought **Reno** was playing a bandoneon! He snapped us out of our Argentine mood with his encore number, **Under the Double Eagle**. Thanks **Reno** for another great job!

Next up was another **DiBono** — also another **Reno**. **Reno DiBono!** **Reno** was sporting his new accordion, a 22 lb. Sonola. Four bass and two treble reeds. He was happy with it and so were we. This loss of the ten or so pounds didn't diminish its quality a bit. *Midnight in Paris* was **Reno's** first song, followed by a Neopolitan love song, *Vicino a Mare*, which **Reno** sang. His next presentation was very unique, instructive and showed considerable ability — **Reno** did his impression of three accordion role models who were influential in his development as a player. First up was "Mr. Chords," **Ernie Felice**, playing the *Penthouse Serenade*. Then jazz giant **Art Van Damme**, doing 'SWonderful. His final impression was a group, the **Three**

Sons, doing *Twilight Time*. **The Three Sons** were a trio, consisting of a lead accordion (naturally!), a guitar, and an organ, which played a very mellow style of music. **Reno** finished up with *Volare*.



Reno DiBono

Reno, by the way, recently did two tapes for Foothill & DeAnza College. One solo and one with his group (which has a great clarinet player.) I was channel surfing one evening and whipped past what looked a lot like a vertical keyboard. Whoa....As I dropped back a channel and the camera backed off the (yes, it was an) accordion, our distinguished BAAC'er **Reno DiBono** appeared on my TV screen. Well done, **Reno!**

As if all this weren't enough, the second half of the evening we were treated to Joe Smie! and his Polka Band. It's hard to thank **Joe** sufficiently for all that he has done within the club, but everyone gave it a good shot. A large cake was presented to our Hero at half time, and we all sang Happy Birthday!

Joe's group consisted of his son, **Joe**, on the clarinet, **Roger Torrey** and **Chris Bogios** on trumpet, **Hal Nachtrieb** on tuba, and **Kevin McCarthy** in the percussion section. **Joe**



Reno Pucci and Steve Cannata



Clyde Forsman and Jim Ragel

November General Meeting

Joe said that he would be playing (at least starting with) Oktoberfest musik. And did they! I thought I was sitting in the Paulaner tent in Munich. Joe didn't give the names of most of the songs, but he did, in European style, say a little about the subject of each of them. An Austrian polka, an Alpine waltz, a mountain polka, etc. I particularly liked the one about the Beer Wagon – a polka. As the song goes, the wagon was out of beer by the time it reached its destination. We were pleased to meet Joe's wife, Lucy, who was attending her first meeting, and his brother from Pittsburgh (I'll guess it was his first meeting too.) Joe introduced several other guests who were visiting from out-of-town to help celebrate the event.

Amid the "zippy" Swiss Landlers (a waltz precursor), Boarische's, and Stierische Polkas, which Joe felt kept a person young, the group branched out and played a number of Polish numbers and an Argentine Ranchera. We learned that the Chicago Poles slow down the polka, that Joe understands Polish, and that simple songs can indeed be very beautiful.

The group's finale was worth the price of admission. With the two horns gradually approaching the stage from the back of the auditorium, the two sections of the group echoed back and forth the melody of a beautiful but simple European folk song. Joe did it again! Another memorable performance. We're glad you let us participate in your Birthday, Joe. Thanks once again for your unending, quality support.

We all went home richer for having been there. Especially Gilbert Rossetti who was doubly enriched as he won the evening's raffle. Congratulations, Gil.



l. to r: Hal Nachtrieb, Chris Bogios, Roger Torrey, Joseph E. Smiell, Joe. Front, Kevin McCarthy.

November Board Meeting

Synopsis

- Treasurer Algis Ratnikas reported \$9,342 in our combined accounts. He will look into other interest-bearing instruments where we might increase the amount of interest received on this money.
- The Board discussed the January visit of guest Ken Olendorf and began making plans concerning how to make Ken and Barbara comfortable.
- It was decided that when the Club encourages members to play at a particular event, they will first be sure that performers will be adequately paid; otherwise, the Club will not become involved. The Board arrived at this decision after listening to one member's report of time spent and monies received playing at this year's Anchorage Accordion Festival.
- At the November meeting, we will initiate a monthly drawing. After a \$1 donation to the Club, attendees receive a numbered ticket for the drawing at the end of the evening. The person whose name is drawn will split the evening's donations with the Club.
- Jim Boggio attended as a guest to discuss with the Board his plans for presenting a Cajun workshop early in '96. As currently envisioned, the workshop will be a day-long affair with one or two guests to be invited by Jim. Date, location, and fee to be charged have not yet been determined.
- Marian circulated the updated membership list to Board Members. Our membership is at record heights.....310!
- The Board restated its previous interest in having meeting attendees wear name tags. We will make up one name tag for new members and for any old member who never received one. Members will bring their tag to each meeting. If they arrive without a name tag, they may make up and use a paper name tag. Bob Smith volunteered to oversee this process.
- Members are reminded that our January meeting will occur on the *second* Monday rather than the first due to the holiday.

MK

If you would like to join the San Francisco Bay Area Accordion Club, please send a check for \$20 payable to BAAC to our Financial Secretary, Frank Montoro, 1448 Tarrytown San Mateo, CA. 94402. You will receive newsletters through June

Confessions of a Professional Accordionist

by Reno Di Bono

I thought you might be interested in an article about what goes on in the life of a Professional Accordionist.

PRELUDE....

In 1970, I made a major decision in my life. After coaching high school basketball and baseball for 10 years, I decided to quit coaching, dust off my Giulietti Model B115, and start a career as an Accordionist. I had taken lessons from Dino Benetti up to 1959, when I went on to Santa Clara University to play baseball and major in American History and marry and produce three sons and quit the Accordion. Well, since 1970, it has been 25 years of consistent performance of all kinds.

HIGHLIGHTS:

Years played: 25, 1970 - 1995.

Gigs per year avg: 150

Estimated earnings: \$400,000

Beneficial use of earnings: Tuition for three sons at Santa Clara University.

Highest paid gig: At Hyatt Tahoe, when what seemed to be a drug-dealer tipped us \$1100 to play "Danny Boy" on St. Patrick's Day, 1986.

Italian Weddings: 500.

Most Requested Song: "Spanish Eyes" (if only I had a nickle for each time I played it!)

Most Bizarre Gigs : Playing an Oktoberfest at the Lupin Lodge Nudist Camp, Santa Cruz, 1988.

Playing "O Sole Mio" Italian love song for a young man as he proposed to a girl from below her balcony. Alameda, CA, 1993.

Playing Christmas Carols at Woodlake Joe's restaurant bachelor party and being shocked when a female stripper leaped up onto a table. San Mateo, 1990.

Watching a dancer drop dead in front of the bandstand while doing the chorus of Glenn Miller's "In the Mood." Moffet Field Officers' Club, 1978.

Playing the Chicken Dance in front of my high school students at a school rally. Monta Vista High School, 1991.

Playing the theme from the "Godfather" at a Francis Ford Coppola hosted party in the wine country, 1993.


Best Client: My band played for all five Maher family weddings. Atherton, CA, 1978 - 1990.

Most Unusual Requests:

Play for an Italian funeral dressed as a penguin (didn't do it).

Played in a Mexican Band.

Most Nerve-racking Gig: Playing for BAAC.

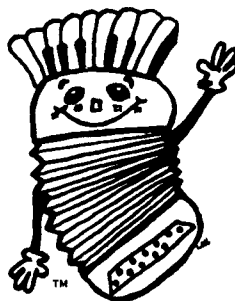


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by
Dale E. Wise

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Hear the Word....And All Cheer For the Gospel
(Accordion to Women, of course)

The Gospel Accordion to Women featuring BAAC members Nancy DeStefanis, Lee Woodall, Ann Bonzani, and Sharon Walters, won the Fifth Annual MAIN SQUEEZE contest at the Anchorage Festival on October 22nd, 1995. Herb Caen marked this coup in his Chronicle column on 10/24 as follows:

GOD, I loove this town: The Gospel Accordion to Women, six feminists who indeed play stomach organs, took first place in the fifth annual Main Squeeze accordion contest at The Anchorage Sunday. Their number that wowed the judges was "Bye Bye Packwood," to the tune of "Bye Bye Blackbird"...

And a couple days later, the Examiner columnist Stephanie Salter did an entire long column on the group started by Nancy. With this feminist accordion group, said Salter, Nancy is true to her long commitment to both women's equality and to humor and to her insistence that the two can coexist. Our good friend Clyde Forsman gave Nancy a few accordion lessons and she was on her way. They are even beginning to receive a little compensation for their gigs, which they promptly donate to either a camp for kids who live in homeless shelters or to an organization that promotes equality for women and girls.

Auf Wiedersehen, Harry

Harry H. Liedtke, BAAC member and player in Joe Smiell's Accordion Ensemble, died on November 11th. He taught music and played the accordion (as well as the clarinet and sax) professionally in Germany and the United States for many years before and after World War II.

Harry was an inspiration to many of us. Even when he was too weak to lift his accordion, he would faithfully come to rehearsals and have one of us place the instrument on his lap as he proceeded to play his part flawlessly. We miss you, Harry.

Mary-Alice Eldon

Accordion Production and Importing

by Daniel Hersh

hrshsand@netcom.com

I looked this up today on the CD-ROM series "US Imports of Merchandise," checking data for Italy, Germany, China (mainland), and the grand total. Here's the info:

Piano Accordions

1993 Italy: 380 Germany: 499 China: 75,707 Total: **84,304**

1994 Italy: 327 Germany: 122 China: 63,575 Total: **64,024**

"Accordions, NESOI" (I assume this is other types, perhaps including concertinas)

1993 Italy: 1,242 Germany: 2,212 China: 13,251 Total: **17,002**

1994 Italy: 1,290 Germany: 2,462 China: 24,791 Total: **29,624**

These are the official figures from the US government, derived (I believe) from customs reports, but I'm not sure how accurate they are.

Editor's note: Daniel, who lives in Martinez, sent this information to the accordion newsgroup on the Internet (accordion@cs.cmu.edu). I found it interesting, but have not tried to check or verify it..



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George Chavez, Hillsborough, CA

Lynn Ewing, San Carlos, CA

Young H. Kim, San Francisco, CA

Michael Perkins, Santa Cruz, CA

Welcome to all of you! Please let us know your ideas and suggestions for improving our Club! Board members' phone numbers are on p. 2.

AD POLICY

MEMBERS PAY \$5/ISSUE FOR SMALL ADS, \$10 FOR BUSINESS CARD SIZE ADS. (Ask about other sizes.)
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NEXT MEETING: MONDAY
December 4, 1995
7:00 PM

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