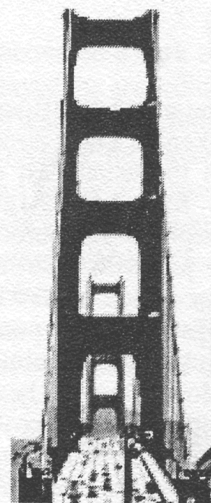


NEWSLETTER OF THE
 SAN FRANCISCO
**BAY AREA
 ACCORDION CLUB**

EDITOR: Marian Kelly



October, 1993

September General Meeting

Before starting, we observed a moment of silence for the passing of Mr. **Ron Flynn**, the author of "The Golden Age of the Accordion." We had a full house tonight and a great display of accordion talent! Among the regulars were **Don Kosewic, Rob Campanella, Hans Frei, Ivano Santi, Al Maccari, Valerie Kieser, Bob Berta, Evelyn Baulch** and **Celine DiBono** who's feeling a lot better. Among the missing was **Walter Traverso** who's very busy slowing down (that is an oxymoron) and taking some time to travel. Before the music started, the membership had an open discussion about our participation at Cotati this year. No conclusions were drawn but the members highly recommended that they want to make the final decision about our role at next year's festival.

Let's have a tune!

We opened with a duet by **Ron Borelli** and **Dave Baioni** who had never played together before, or so they claimed. Well, their renditions of "Besame Mucho," "Undecided" and "Days of Wine and

Roses" left many of us believing something else. If you think that one good accordion player is enough, you should hear this dynamic duo! We want them back for another spontaneous performance.

If you're looking for another person who is willing to play on the spot, just ask **Bob Delgado**. Bob's beautiful style really came through with his interpretation of "Rose Room" and "Carolina in the Morning." You can hear Bob performing at Ristorante Veneto Cucina in Alameda on the weekends.

Next, **Peter DiBono** strapped on his Giulietti and softly played "Under Paris Skies," "River Seine" and "Pigalle." Peter



Dave Baioni, Ron Borelli

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

October 23 & 24, Saturday, Sunday. Anchorage Accordion Festival, Anchorage Shopping Center, Fisherman's Wharf.

November 1, Monday. BAAC General Meeting, 7 p.m.

November 10, Wednesday. BAAC Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m. At Frank Montoro's, 1448 Tarrytown, San Mateo.

November 14th, Sunday. Lou Fanucchi and Anthony Galla-Rini joint concert. San Diego Citadel Community Hall, 4170 Balboa Ave., Claremont, CA. Admission \$10.00.

December 6, Monday. BAAC Christmas Meeting, 7 p.m. Paul Pasquali is driving in and will demonstrate his new midi.

December 8, Wednesday. BAAC Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m. Frank Montoro's, 415-574-4757

March 19, 1994. Texas Accordion Association Annual Convention, Plano Texas

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Who's running the store? The Board of Directors has taken on a new direction. Along with the usual cast of players, Dennis Stoscher, Algis Ratnikas and Josephine Hornbrook have come to the job with a strong intention for a better club. Dennis will be the chairperson for the Events committee, Algis will chair the Administrative duties and Josephine will head the Personnel activities. The only problem is we need more people to mind the store! Call me if you are interested (415-587-4495)...

Everyone wanted to play the Festa Italiana. This was one event when accordion players came out of the woodwork to request to play! For two

days we provided 11 accordionists, and the reviews were very favorable. On Sunday we even had Ron Zucca's band jamming with our players, and another group accompanied John Fiore's dance ensemble. The next opportunity to strut your stuff will be on October 23 & 24 at the Fisherman's Wharf Anchorage Center. Call Dennis Stoscher for details (415-598-0434)...

Do you have any ideas about themes for our monthly gatherings? Ladies Night was our first experience using a theme, and it was a huge success. Previously there was a discussion to have a South Bay night, a dinner evening, and a brunch meeting during the Cotati Accordion Festival. Joe Smiell will be chairing the Program committee and would appreciate your thoughts (510-832-

6938). Also call Joe if you would like to play at one of our monthlies. We are establishing a yearly calendar for all accordionist who would like to play. So just pick a month and let us know...

I recently overheard the possibility of a group of players who would like to create a 15 song repertoire. The music selections would be given to anyone who would like to learn them, or they could be reprinted in the newsletter, and rehearsals would follow. I'll join if they're willing to learn the Star Spangled Banner. I would love to play the anthem for an event that would give the accordion national TV exposure. Any takers?

dominic palmisano



Simon Shtauber

was able to completely silence the audience through his choice of soft dynamics and his outstanding skills. Peter ended with a rousing rendition of "Trieste Overture"

Before intermission we all met **Simon Shtauber**, a native of Moldava, part of the Soviet Union, whom **Clyde** had

October meeting, cont.

brought to our meeting. **Simon** stepped forward and demonstrated why the European method of musical study pays off! He played flawlessly, effortlessly, and with great feeling songs from Romania and France. If you need a soloist, don't hesitate to call him (415-731-0272).

After intermission we had the pleasure of being entertained by **Ron Zucca** and drummer accompanist **Gary Chula**. Some of us were introduced to **Ron** when he played on the third stage at Cotati, and we're certainly delighted to find him. **Dominic** said **Ron** had brought a group to Festa

Italiana on Sunday, that they set up near the entrance door and impressed the socks off everyone who heard them. For us, **Ron** and **Gary** presented terrific arrangements of several old favorites, such as "La Campagnola," "Flight of the Angels,"

"Grenada," "El Cumanero", and **Ron** did a fine Dick Contino version of "Lady of Spain". Thank you, **Ron**; we hope you'll join us regularly!

The after hours at Westlake Lyons is documented beautifully by Paul Magistretti in another article, so we won't tell you about it here!

See you at our next meeting, November first.

Josephine Hornbrook



Gary Chula, Ron Zucca

LYONS up-ROAR

by Paul Magistretti

After the October SFBAAC fest Monday, a few faithful dragged themselves to Lyons for the usual whatever, making sure Clyde Forsman had Simon Shtauber in tow. We all wanted to squeeze this guy for a little more. And he came across – for at least an hour's worth, a warmed up more tuneful, passionate performance of what we got at the meeting (unbelievable, but true).

When Simon took a break others pounced on Clyde's lascivious Brandoni. Bart Beninco did some fine "Peanut Vendoring." Bob Delgado sat down right after accordion players can't resist a different instrument. Ooow, strange reeds, let me fondle the keys. Bob wanted to complete the parts of "Carolina In The Morning" he left out when he played at the Club.

Clyde regaled us with a Norwegian song which was Greek to us, but rumor has it he has groupies in Oslo.

Then in less than a Scandinavian second, Rob Campanella sneaked up with a strange looking thing, a whazzit! chromatic accordion. God! Ugly! It's got basses on both sides! Laughter! Ridicule! But Rob seemed to be able to make music with the thing; in fact, he made excellent music, doing a couple of nice French musette pieces and "Fascination Waltz." His sensitive playing and his instrument's odd configuration opened the floor to questions. Dominic Palmisano wondered if we piano key supremacists shouldn't be more open minded maybe even take a closer look at the chromatic thing.

Rob's story might prove instructive.

Rob had a long history of synthesizer abuse. He was known to hook up every appliance and electrical device in his house and run it through a keyboard and into a computer. Then, he would acti-

vate modules, sequencers, programs, digital recorders and drain off most of his neighborhood's current which was sometimes hard on the guy in the iron lung next door.

He was insatiable. He mainlined a fortune in electricity and had a house full of instantly out-of-the-box obsolete hardware. His family stuck with him through all this. What could they do? They loved him. Many a night Rob's wife Karen cried herself to sleep while the walls of the house pulsated like jello on a jackhammer. His children, Brian and Amy, promised any gods that would listen they'd eat spinach six times a day, if their father would stop. But Rob was beyond divine intervention. he had to have more, MORE! MORE artificial, imitation, electrocuted sound. Then came samplers! Devices that took natural sounds and fed them into a keyboard and arranged them into a scale. He started to make "music" out of sounds ranging from buzz saws to Howitzers. One night, while he was trying to cross patch the sounds of torn cartilage and moose flatulence, his young son Brian found something in the closet.

"What's this, dad?" the young man asked.

"It's an ancient musical instrument," Rob answered. In truth the young boy had

uncovered a dark secret. Rob had once played the accordion. He played it when he was a mere child no older than Brian. And later, he played it in college, briefly and secretly. Then, he relegated the 80 bass objet de ridicule to a closet and never told his wife he played.

"Where do the wires go, dad? How can you hook it up to the blender and the computer so it'll play?" the boy wondered.

"No, son, it doesn't need electricity to play."

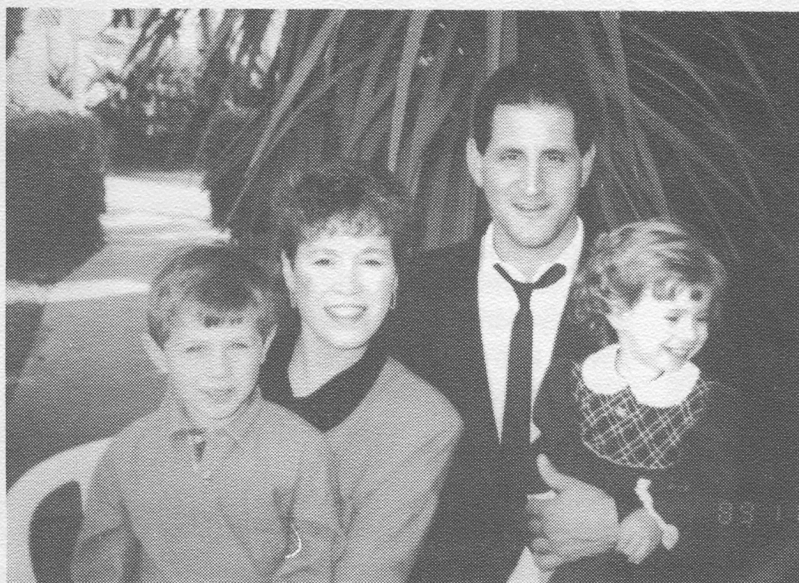
"It doesn't?" they boy said. He wanted to believe his father, but it was difficult. He'd never known music to emerge without wattage. He'd spent his young life avoiding the high voltage lines running across the floor of the house. He'd seen the family cat turned to toast during his father's attempt to compose his "Sonata For A Jet Plane Crashing Into A Weed Whacker."

"Then, how does it play, dad?" the boy asked quite naturally.

Rob tries to be a good father. He resisted swatting at his offspring with a solid body Fender and demonstrated by putting on the pitiful fiscarmonica antiqua and stroking the bellows and holding down a key, maybe two. Sound came out. It frightened the young boy. He ran to his mother crying about the strange

phenomenon he'd witnessed. It was witchcraft, unholy – sound without wires and electricity. Dad had sold almost everything to PG&E and now, he sold his soul to the devil.

Karen calmed her son and took him and her little daughter Amy back to the room. Although she was shocked that Rob had concealed his shady accordion past from her, she recognized the instrument for what it was and calmed the children.



The Campanella Family: Brian, Karen, Rob, Amy



"Can you play it, Dad?" Brian asked.

Rob blanched.

Brian, relentless little creature that he is, said, "Play something, dad."

Rob tried to crank out "Santa Lucia," but the good saint wouldn't appear even in ghostly guise. So, he said the honest thing, what any good accordionist would say, "This instrument isn't very good. How can you expect me to play? Look at the dust that comes out when I squeeze. I'd need a much better instrument, if I was going to really play."

Karen is no fool. She saw her one chance to escape endless reprises of the "Weed Whacker Sonata." She sent out a cry for help, pity, an accordion.

And lo and beholdeth, one arrived. Sometimes God hears. And Rob was stuck. Here was an accordion that pumped fresh air. He couldn't claim fear of black lung disease anymore. He was forced to practice, or pretend to do so.

"You sound really lousy, Dad. Are you sure it's not supposed to hook up to a wall socket?" Brian critiqued.

It came to Rob's attention that an accordion concert was being given nearby. So, with diabolical logic, he decided he'd show his family what the thing was like when played by someone who was pitifully bound by acoustical limitations. He'd disillusion them and get them off his back once and for all. Actually, he was suffering voltage withdrawal and rather edgy at the time. He took them to Veikko Ahvenainen's concert in San Jose.

Well, it all backfired. The thing actually sounded great. It spewed out Bach, polkas, waltzes, Finnish romps through wintry forests, everything. His family liked it because they could listen without holding their ears and biting down hard on a piece of wood. Rob was dumbfounded. It was just a guy, standing up there alone and unashamed, playing the accordion as if there was nothing wrong with it. He didn't even use a microphone!

After a good night's sleep, Rob wondered if he heard what he heard. He decided he'd better check, so he followed Veikko to his next concert, the SFBAAC

concert in San Francisco.

It was all true. A lone man on stage, an unelectrified instrument beautiful music without even a hint of saws, or a moose. Rob was converted. He saw the light. Also, he saw something else – the curious keyboard. Coincidentally, he entered into a conversation with a mysterious stranger. And he confided his deep emotional struggles i.e., he was a recovering synthesizer-addict, who wanted to save himself through the accordion. However, he was now faced with another problem. Veikko, his new-found spiritual leader, played a different kind of keyboard. What should



Heerree's ROB

he do? Since he was beginning all over again, should he think of using this strange, new keyboard? Should he? Should he?!!!

Well, Rob went home and thought about it. There was one immediate advantage. If he shipped his old accordion back to Joe Petosa it could be months before he got a chromatic one. Rob was backsliding. He was hearing the siren call (literally) of his synthesizers. He was itching for amps.

But a chromatic accordion arrived right away. It was even a good one. The prayers of his wife and little ones had been answered. The kids could give up spinach.

Rob began fumbling around without a schematic, a layout, a clue. Her had nothing not even a vague idea where some cunning, insidious Italian, or Slav, or Satan himself had hidden a C scale on the stupid thing. "Buttons! Ha, ha, ha! Little, little buttons! Ha, ha, ha!" He was going crazy.

"You sound so much better," Karen said.

"I do?" Rob said.

"Yes," Karen said, "and the children's ears don't fester anymore. None of us have had nosebleeds or strange neurosthenic twitches in weeks."

Well, the whole nation is looking for better health care, so Rob persisted. He'd also learned about SFBAAC's monthly meetings. So, he came. It so happened that that night, out of nowhere, a young man from the Basque country appeared, Joxan Goikoetxea. Joxan really fandangoed us into rapture that night with – of all things – a chromatic accordion. Talk about serendipity (which Rob does). Or divine intervention (Karen and the children's belief). Later, at Lyons, Joxan gave Rob some pointers – actually showed him where the C scale was hidden, even chords! Then, he encouraged the fledgling chromaticist with these words, "If you struggle for six months it will come – everything will click into place and whatever level you played at on the piano keyboard, you will be twice as good on the chromatic." So, for example, if you were Reno Pucci before, you'd become a Reno-Reno Pucci-Pucci after conversion (it has a beat).

From May to September Rob struggled. Along the way Andy White supplied him with a keyboard schematic. Then, the notes began to click. And last Monday night we heard the beginnings of a wonderful player.

Rob said he finds the keyboard ergonomically far better than piano keys. He



can cover twice as many notes. He has no awkward stretches for black keys. Also, for some reason he finds it easier to memorize music, because the key patterns work like mnemonic devices for him. He can play in any key without transposing, just by using the same finger pattern and starting on the right note for the new key. His five row keyboard is basically set up so that the first three rows cover all the notes and the fourth and fifth rows are repeats of rows one and two to facilitate fingering (see diagram). He's happy he made the switch and he would recommend it to anyone. Or, as he put it, "There's a chromatic player trapped in every piano keyboard player's body."

There are three different chromatic keyboard layouts in use. The Italian/French which has C in the first row, D in the third; the Russian which has C in the third row, D in the first; and a less common system with C in the middle row.

Anthony Galla-Rini who more than anyone has championed and mastered the piano accordion says in the book "An-

thony Galla-Rini - On His Life And The Accordion" by Ove Hahn, p. 93, "If I were to start all over again, knowing what I know now, I would choose the 5-row chromatic keyboard as found in models by Crosio, Hohner, etc. This keyboard has numerous advantages over the piano keyboard....." And the Maestro goes on to list among other things, wider intervals, i.e., a two octave spread, wide open intervals, open four note chords, greater flexibility in repertoire for both classical and jazz, etc.

Well, after all this discussion we felt better. Dominic Palmisano suggested I write it up, but I insisted I didn't have time. We left Lyons wondering where young students might get instruments, materials and instruction in this new way of life. Young Brian concluded that no matter what "I really want to play the accordion!" We all brushed away a tear. Children may yet show us the way to a synthesizer-free world. and if that happens can the eclipse of electric guitars be far behind?

THE END

September Board Meeting

Synopsis

- New Board member Frank Panacci was introduced. Ed Massolo, also new to the Board, couldn't attend.
- Frank Montoro, Treasurer, was vacationing, so the usual Treasurer's report was not given.
- Dominic Palmisano read his letter of resignation as co-editor of our newsletter. He finds that he cannot do justice to both his Presidential duties and the newsletter.
- Marian Kelly distributed a report concerning the BAAC booth at the Cotati Festival. Sales were below expectations, even with a broad variety of tapes and CD's. We did make a \$600 profit, which included t-shirts sold, but Marian didn't feel it was worth the time we all put into it. The question of what to do in '94 was tabled until next meeting.
- We will solicit opinions from our members at the October General Meeting concerning our participation in and rela-

tionship with the Cotati Accordion Festival.

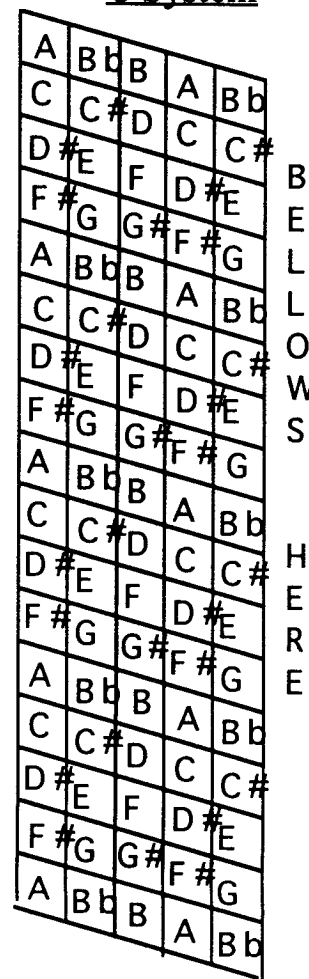
- The Board is still discussing a new site for meetings. Frank offered to investigate one or two possibilities.

- The Board considered purchase of a sound system researched by Bob Delgado. Since it represents a considerable expense, the Board decided to take its time and request that the system be demonstrated to us before we make a decision. Therefore, the issue was tabled.

- Board members were named to head working committees as follows: Administration, Algis Ratnikas; Events, Dennis Stoscher; Financial/Membership, Frank Montoro & Rusty Bartoli; Newsletter, Marian Kelly; Personnel, Josephine Hornbrook.

- The last committee, Program, was a hot potato, since getting people to agree to play ahead of time is both difficult and frustrating. Joe Smiell agreed to handle

C System



the program for November. The Board agreed that we should ask all members to commit to play at one meeting per year. This would give the Program Chairman a good solid base from which to start. We will begin the signup at the October meeting by circulating a sheet asking members which month they will play and which committee they would help on.

- We must change our permanent address. Additionally, we are ready to obtain business cards and stationery and to list the Club in telephone books. Dennis Stoscher has offered his business address, 939 Harrison St., San Francisco 94107 for our use. Algis will investigate charges for installation of some sort of voice mail telephone so we can install a permanent BAAC telephone at the above address and charges for listings in the San Francisco, Oakland, and San Jose telephone books.

MK

Good-bye to Ron Flynn

We are saddened by the news that our good friend and BAAC member, Ronald Flynn, died recently. Ron, you may recall, was the principal author of "The Golden Age of the Accordion."

Ron was born in Ireland and came to San Francisco when he was ten years old. He started playing accordion when he was 14 and continued playing throughout his lifetime. A graduate of San Francisco University with a degree in Business Administration, he worked for the US. Postal Service until his retirement in 1980. Finding he had time on his hands after retirement, he began the work of tracing the history of the accordion especially as it centered around the San Francisco Bay Area. Ron did much of the original research for the book and he asked his two friends, Edwin Davison and Edward Chavez, both of San Antonio, to join him in compiling material. The first edition of "Golden Age" was so successful that the authors decided to revise the book to incorporate information from the entire country. The second edition came out last year.

In the forward of the book is the following referring to Ron Flynn: "He does not regard himself as a professional accordionist; instead, he considers that he is a lover of the accordion who is striving to promote the accordion and preserve its history for future generations."

Thanks to his great devotion and eight years of work, he has left us a legacy in "Golden Age." We honor his memory and shall miss him.

Frank Montoro
Frank Montoro

ACROSS THE EDITOR'S DESK

ACCORDION COMPUTER NETWORK

Dear Accordion Enthusiast:

The Accordion Mailing List has been created as a means for those interested in accordions and accordion music to communicate via computer on the worldwide electronic network, Internet.

Discussion topics include all aspects of acquiring, playing, collecting, repairing, and discography of both piano and button accordions. The general philosophy is that we can all learn from sharing what we know with others. Online files are maintained of accordion related information and addresses.

For those not familiar with electronic computer networks, the following equipment is required:

1. A personal computer
2. Terminal emulation software (most

commonly VT-100)

3. A modem and
4. Access to a mainframe computer or service which is in turn connected or bridged to the Internet.

If you don't have access to an Internet-connected mainframe at work or via a local college, you may be able to "rent" it through some of the commercially available dial-up services such as Compuserve, GENie, BITNET, or NetCom (the latter in San Francisco).

To become a member of the accordion electronic mail list, send e-mail to accordion@marie.stat.uga.edu asking to subscribe to the list. Please include a brief introduction describing your accordion interests so others may know who you are. Everything sent to accordion@marie.stat.uga.edu is automatically broadcast to everyone else on the list.

Alan Polivka
P O Box 061904
Palm Bay, FL 32906-1904

NEW MEMBERS

Sal Bartimioli, Pittsburgh
Rob Campanella, San Jose
Joseph Quilici, Martinez
Simon Shtauber, San Francisco
Jack Stankus, Austin, TX
Barbara Winter, Lafayette

We're delighted to have you with us. We hope to see and meet you at meetings or events and we hope to hear your opinions and ideas.

Send Letters to the Editor, news of where you are playing, or any other message, picture, or news item to:

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Deadline for each issue is the *second* Monday of the month. We welcome your ideas!!!



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NEW CHRISTMAS CD AND CASSETTE

Henry Doktorski has done it again! He's recorded more Christmas music, not only more, but a lot better and more professional than the tape he advertised last year. The title is A Classical Christmas, and it is available either on CD or real-time cassette. (Henry tells us that real-time is not recorded on the usual high-speed dubbing machine, but rather is directly from the digital master; hence the much greater quality than commercial cassettes.)

A Classical Christmas was recorded with members of the Pittsburgh Symphony (violin, harp) and the Pittsburgh Chamber Orchestra. A reviewer calls the recording "a tapestry of old and new Christmas carols, where each piece exhibits a high degree of originality, cleverness, and solid musical craft." Selections include the traditional, such as "What Child is This", "Ave Maria", "Carol of the Bells", "We Wish You a Merry Christmas" and three compositions of Henry's, "Sleep, Baby Jesus", the minuet "Dance of the Angels", and the rhythmic gigue "Dance of the Shepherds". The same reviewer talks of Henry's interpretation of "Jingle Bells": "In 1857, James Pierpont wrote the tune for a Sunday school class. Doktorski introduces the piece with a somber *maestoso* in the *Baroque* style. Suddenly a trivial antebellum Southern pot boiler becomes a serious piece of concert music, yet droll in its musical irony, especially so when the dance in five part counterpoint begins".

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To: All BAAC Members
From: Marian Kelly

Subject: *Cotati, 1993*

At our October general meeting, Dominic opened the floor for comments from the membership about this year's Cotati Festival. During the ten minutes allotted, several of you spoke up, voicing comments which were in general quite critical. Individuals complained about the location of the jam tent, with comments such as "It was so far away that it seemed we were being treated like an in-law" and "I couldn't find it." People were unhappy about the third stage because there was no program available so they could know who was playing when, because it was so far from the main plaza, and because there were not enough chairs. One member asked why there were so many booths which had nothing to do with the accordion and why those booths were so close to the action. Another, new to the Festival, had difficulty finding parking.

In general, the membership seemed to feel that the Festival Committee had taken advantage of BAAC by accepting our \$1500 donation but giving us too little consideration. There was consensus that money be given in the future only after vote of the membership.

Many of you may be unaware of this, but I have been BAAC's representative on the Cotati Festival Committee for the past year. As that representative, I have attended between 2/3 and 3/4 of their meetings (it's a long drive for me - 155 miles round trip) which were held monthly from January to July '93, then weekly until the Festival. Part of my purpose was to represent BAAC's interests to the Committee.

I would like to respond briefly to some of the above comments. I hope the membership understands that although Cotati is an "Accordion Festival", the underlying purpose of the festival is *not* to promote the accordion. Rather, it is to promote the city of Cotati as an exceptionally fine place to spend a pleasant musical day. The Committee, therefore, wants to encourage a wide variety of people to attend, and per-

haps especially those who do not have a natural affinity for the accordion. The Committee is concerned about handling ever-larger numbers of attendees in that rather small Plaza. Finances are a significant issue. An admission charge is not feasible in that location, so they rely heavily on donations, on sales of t-shirts, buttons, posters etc., and on booth space rental from craftspersons. Their total expenses this year were around \$50,000 for the Festival. Our \$1,500 was important to them, as is our interest and support, but not vital. I knew where they were planning to put the Jam Tent, but I did not anticipate the Club's reaction, and for that I apologize to all of you. However, the Committee had decided that in order to grow the Festival, it would have to be expanded beyond Plaza Park, across the adjoining streets. And we all thought that having the Jam Tent (larger than last year, did you notice??) over there would give BAAC a spacious area for ourselves, with room to sit outside, and would allow us to play as loudly as we wished, without impacting the music on the stage. The third stage was an experiment. Jim Boggio had more requests from persons wanting to play than he could squeeze into the program, so the idea of another stage developed. However, for lots of reasons, details of location, setup, and program weren't finalized until the last minute, and a program simply never happened. The Committee regrets the oversight.

Your Board believes it is important for us to discuss all of these issues and to decide how we want to relate to the Cotati Festival in 1994. We have invited Clifton Buck-Kauffman (the "Daddy" of the Festival along with Jim Boggio) and Rebecca Browne, who has done much of the administrative work of putting the Festival together since its beginning, to attend our November Board Meeting on November 10th. They will tell the Board a bit about what it's like to run such a Festival, what their concerns are, and will listen and respond to the Club issues as presented by the Board. We hope thereby to reach a mutual understanding of one another's needs and expectations. M. Kelly

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