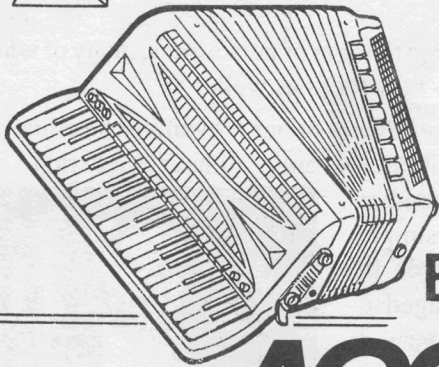


Newsletter of the

SAN FRANCISCO CALIFORNIA U.S.A.



BAY AREA

# ACCORDION CLUB

OCTOBER, 1996



Upcoming in November:

## Dessert Meeting with Featured Artist, Friedrich Lips!

Ready for another yummy dessert meeting? Well, it's coming right up.... in November. Everybody enjoyed our previous dessert meeting last year — do you remember? We knew then that it should be an annual event and, since this year is slipping away fast, we've scheduled Dessert Night for our November general meeting.

Here's the plan, in case you didn't attend last year: eat a light dinner that night, and bring a dessert with you to the meeting. (One dessert per family group.) All the desserts will be displayed on a big table on the side of the room. Visual inspections and oohing and aahing will be encouraged, but early sampling will be strongly discouraged! We will schedule a long intermission, during which everyone will be able to sample as many desserts as they wish!

BAAC will supply tableware, coffee, and sodas....we ask you to supply just the calories and a curious palate.

The world-renowned Russian accordionist, Friedrich Lips, is our guest that evening, and the long dessert intermission will give everyone a chance to

make him feel welcome at our wonderful accordion club. We will probably be joined by some first-time non-members who will attend specifically to hear him play....please introduce yourselves to newcomers that evening and welcome them.

Professor Lips is on a whirlwind tour arranged by his former student, Stas Venglevski; this is likely to be the only chance most of us ever have to listen to him play in person. You won't want to miss this opportunity to hear one of the world's finest accordionists!

Friedrich Lips, born in 1948, has highly impressive credentials. He has spent his life in music, doing graduate and post-graduate work in Moscow, performing around the world, and teaching. His first post at the Gnesin Institute in Moscow in 1971 was as a lecturer; he is now a professor there. He has published several articles on the theory of playing the bayan and is the author of a book, The Art of Playing the Bayan, originally published in Moscow, subsequently translated into German by Intermusik Schmölling. He has published many arrangements and transcriptions of organ and piano works

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS

**November 4th, Monday.** BAAC General Meeting. "Dessert Night." Our guest is renowned bayanist Friedrich Lips Donworth Hall, 22nd & Eucalyptus, S.F., just north of Stonestown Shopping Center. 7 P.

**Nov. 6th, Wed.** BAAC Board Meeting, 7:30 PM at Ed Massolo's, 612 Lassen, So. S.F. Guests welcome. Call Ed at (415)589-8409 for directions.

**Nov. 7th, Thursday** and EVERY Thursday..Lou Casalnuovo plays at the Dunfey Hotel with the Nob Hill Knights. 1770 So. Amphlett Blvd, San Mateo. Small door charge.

**November 11th, Monday.** BAAC Accordion Band (Fun Band) practice. House of Parties. Call Domenic Saso, (415) 587-7557.

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

**December 2nd, Monday.** BAAC General Meeting our Christmas party. We'll all play and sing Christmas songs. Bring and play your accordion that night and (are you sitting down??) pay NO door fee.

*Please send Calendar Information to Your Editor, using the address on the last page. Thank you.*

cont. on p. 6

## October Board Minutes

### Synopsis

- Our special guest for the November General Meeting, Frederich Lips, arrives and leaves on the same day, so we will be unable to schedule an organized BAAC welcome for him. All members are encouraged to help us make him feel comfortable here at the meeting.
- A discussion was held concerning the recent lack of member participation at various events, including meetings. Several partial "fixes" were suggested; this will be an ongoing subject.
- Gift certificate memberships will be offered for Christmas giving. A special 6-month for \$10 gift membership rate for new members will be available.
- Bring your accordions to our Christmas meeting....we plan for everyone to play Christmas music.

### OLD NEWSLETTERS, PLEASE!

BAAC Board Member, Frank Schlotter, is preparing a bound permanent record of the BAAC Newsletter for 1990-1992. He needs November 1990 and earlier, Jan '91 and Jan., Feb., May and Aug. '92. If you have donable copies of those issues please contact Frank at: 1762 Indian Way, Oakland, CA 94611. tel: (510) 339-8657 or internet: colcordi@netcom.com.

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 Frank Schlotter(510) 339-8657  
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 Please use these numbers to give ideas, reactions, suggestions to our Board.

## October General Meeting

by Bob Berta

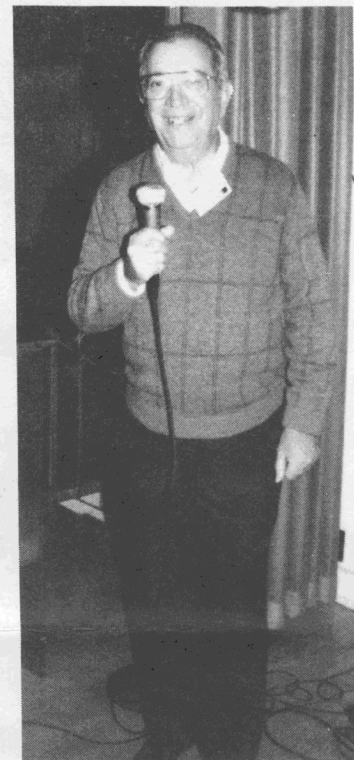
The October meeting was a treat in the large number of performers, many of whom we hadn't heard from recently...and a few new faces as well.

President **Bob** told everyone about Dessert Night at our November meeting (see p. 1) and the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that evening to hear Friederich Lips. Then he spoke of the plans for our December meeting. Members will be provided with simple music for a selection of holiday standards in advance (in the newsletter). All are encouraged to bring their accordions to this meeting, and we will stage a large Club Holiday Jam Fest. Additionally, everybody who brings **and plays** an accordion that night will get in free....no door admission charge.

The full night of entertainment started with **Reno Pucci** returning for a selection of arrangements by Magnante and Deiro plus a few marches. There is nothing like a good march to get your blood going!

**Algis Ratnikas** was next up for selections of Balkan music. **Algis** is currently playing with a couple of bands, one of which features Balkan. It is challenging, interesting music...many different time signatures other than what we are accustomed to. **Algis** did a great job...maybe he can talk his entire group into playing for us at an upcoming meeting!!

Next up was the BAAC band. This is a group which has been increasing its membership to the current seven people (**Mary-Alice Eldon, Lynn Ewing, Sharon Walters, Frank Montoro, Val Kieser, Bob Smith, Nora Mazzara**). Every



Dominic Saso



Clyde Forsman, Sigurd Ostrom



BAAC Banc: Sharon, Lynn, Mary-Alice, Bob, Val, Frank, Nora



## October General Meeting, cont.

time we hear them they sound better and better! Guess it helps to practice a lot. Their hard work was evident in a wonderful waltz by one of my favorite composers, Henry Purcell.

Duets were performed next by that infamous Those Darn Accordions! star, **Clyde Forsman** and his guest, **Sigurd Ostrom**. They played a series of Swedish tunes, and **Clyde** sang a few of them in his powerful voice. **Clyde** informed everybody that he would "go for broke" in his efforts to win this year's "San Francisco Squeeze" contest at the Anchorage Festival in October.

**Tom Cordoni** next took center stage with a series of numbers that were, as always, excellently performed. The final number was his "Macaroni"...(closely related, of course, to the Macarena). We even had a few people dancing to **Tom's** Italian version.

The Bay Area Button Boxers, a great group of musicians, were next up with some terrific button box music. The group includes several old friends..**Renate Bixby, Walter and Terry Traverso, Kay and Tom Newburg, Connie White, and Harry Cannata**. Elaborate ethnic costumes added considerably to the effect. The audience responded with a lot of appreciation for the group, and it was evident how much fun they were having.

**Frank Montoro's** daughter, **Barbara Swan**, on string bass and new member **Carolyn Cirimele** on accordion and vocals next created a really neat duet. The music was all original composi-

tions which was great fun. The audience loved the enthusiasm which they showed!

The final artist for the night was a surprise guest from Seattle, **Jon Persson**. **Bob Berta** "met" **Jon** via the Internet in the accordion newsgroup. **Jon** was down for a few days and took the opportunity to get together at **Bob's** house for an evening of music and trying out each others' accordions. **Bob** was impressed with **Jon's** talent and asked him to extend his vacation a couple days to attend our meeting. **Jon** agreed to come and to play a few tunes for us. **Jon** played a selection of standards and classic music, but the most impressive thing about his playing was that he was equally at home playing piano accordion or bayan. Each instrument had a stradella/free-bass converter. However, the piano accordion's free-bass layout was just the opposite of the one on the bayan. (This was in addition to the difficulty in switching from one instrument to the other. I don't know how he could keep the different systems straight, but he did, and with wonderful virtuosity. **Jon** is a professional musician who plays on cruises....what a hard life! Hopefully we will see more of **Jon** in the future.



*Jon Persson*



*The Bay Area Button Boxers*

## Accordion Publications

by Jim Wadowick

The accordion arrangement on the following two pages, part of a considerably longer *George M. Cohan Medley*, is a sample of music which you can obtain from Jim Wadowick. Jim currently lives in Alabama, but he calls himself a Yankee...from Cleveland. He hasn't found a lot of accordion action in the deep South, so he is busy creating his own. He has a huge list of accordion credentials, including lots of teaching and performing, going back to his earliest days. He does special arrangements for any player who provides him with technical level info. He has quite a variety of arrangements which you may order, and he adds more regularly, so do feel free to contact him and ask questions. All arrangements are copyright cleared. Here are some of his available arrangements:

Bluesette – Jazz Waltz.....	D
Bell Carol (Ukrainian Folksong).....	I (freebase)
Can-Can (Offenbach).....	MA
Variations on Bluebells of Scotland....	D
Czardas (Monti).....	V
Oui, Oui Paris – Polka.....	MA
Russian Sailor's Dance (Gliere).....	V
George M. Cohan Medley.....	I
Smoke Gets in Your Eyes.....	M
All the Things You Are.....	D
Desafinado.....	M
Poor Butterfly.....	M

I=Intermediate; MA=Moderately Advanced; D=Difficult; V=Virtuoso

Arrangements are \$6.00 each. Add \$1.50 per order for postage and handling.

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## Excelsiors Reunited after 41 Years!

by Mike Zampiceni

Last year I was looking for a quality, lightweight strolling accordion so I could retire my deceased father's venerable Excelsior from constant usage. My goal was to find something that had a good, powerful sound (preferably musette-tuned), which didn't require any work and with a price that didn't exceed \$1000. Well, you guessed it. Such an instrument doesn't exist! I suppose if I had kept hunting, something acceptable would have surfaced, but I was getting impatient after several months had gone by. Last October, I contacted Dave Porcella of Porcella's Music Store in Gilroy about an Excelsior that I believed he still had in stock. The story from this point is quite miraculous.

When my folks moved to San Jose from Vermont in 1953, the person who gave my Father his first batch of music students was George Porcella of that very same music store. My Father had two identical rocker action Excelsiors of 40's vintage at the time, the one that I've had all these years and another identical one. Apparently, my Father sold the heavier of the two to George and kept the lighter. The two look and sound the same, so I'm not sure why there are several pounds difference between them. Anyway, George was a sax player, and I played in his orchestra in the 70's, so I had seen the other Excelsior at George's store through the years.

George passed away in 1987 and his soon took over the store. I stopped by shortly after and played a few tunes on that Excelsior. It still looked and sounded like it had in 1954. Over the years, George had installed one of those terrible looking, but good sounding, Electone pickups. For those who haven't seen one, it looks like a black dirigible attached to the grille.

So that brings us to October, 1995. I had assumed that Dave would want to keep the Excelsior as a family heirloom,

but after several futile months of searching for an accordion, I phoned him on a whim to ask whether he'd consider selling it. He promised to talk it over with his mother, since it was part of her estate. Much to my surprise, he called me the next day to say he'd sell it to me! Needless to say, I could scarcely contain myself and hurried over pronto with the agreed funds. It was neat bringing my new acquisition home and placing it next to my other Excelsior, which is the first time they had been together in over 41 years! I considered throwing a party for them.

My plans for the "newer" Excelsior have changed since my search for a strolling accordion last year. Since the newer one is heavier, I've decided to attend to some minor things on it, including bellows work. And of course, that Electone and all of its associated electrical paraphernalia will have to go. This one's going to be strictly acoustic. I plan to debut it at a future BAAC meeting. As for the "older" Excelsior, I'll continue using it for strolling, despite the excessive mileage. At least I don't feel so guilty about it, because I've got its sister ship sitting at home being pampered.

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### *Dessert Meeting in Nov., cont.*

for the bayan. He has recorded about 100 works available on records or CDs.

So, we hope you'll come on Nov 4th, bearing dessert, and help us welcome one of the true wonders of the accordion world, Friedrich Lips!

Thank you for your interest in the Bay Area Accordion Club. We hold monthly meetings and schedule various accordion-related events, and we send this monthly newsletter to all members (currently 340). We encourage your continued interest and participation. Should you care to join us, membership is \$20/year. Make check payable to BAAC and send to 31 Aliso Way, Portola Valley, CA 94028

Kelly Koehn

## at AFNA's August Festival

by Greta Huhtala-Koehn

(Kelly's Mom; Yvonne's daughter)

In August, Kelly Koehn attended the Accordion Federation of North America (AFNA) competition in Long Beach. She received honorable mention as well as inspiration and motivation to keep on practicing! Kelly's mother and grandmother were so impressed by the experience that we wanted to share it with BAAC members.

AFNA's Long Beach event at the Hyatt Regency included formal competitions for accordion, accordion bands, piano, vocal, and dance, with the main focus on the accordion. Most participants were from 6 to 19 yrs of age. The five days of the event included an Awards Tea for the piano competition, a Jazz Workshop for all students by premiere movie studio musician Frank Marocco, the various competitions throughout each day, an Accordion Awards Banquet where each older class winner played his winning piece and every participant received an award, a dance for the student participants, and the accordion ensemble competition and concert, with a performance by Mr. Marocco. Each entrant had been sent a suggested dress code — suits and dressy dresses for the youngest and long dresses and suits for the teens. Very special!

Kelly's own adventure began when Mom, Grandmother, the instrument dubbed "Ms. Accordion" and she arrived at check-in at Oakland airport. Grandma, worried about Ms. Accordion, had purchased its own ticket so that it would not have to go through baggage check. This created a major problem for United's check-in clerk, who kept insisting it had to go as baggage, was too big to go as a carry-on, and only viols, bass viols, and people were allowed to travel in seats. Eventually, some calls were made and all four





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## *Kelly's AFNA Experience, cont.*

had been coming for about fourteen years, and looked forward every year to the event.

Kelly's competition time was 10:30 Friday morning in the Pacific room. Each contestant is assigned a four digit number, as no names are used. There were about nine other contestants in Kelly's class, all to play P. Gylling's *Scherzo in G*, arranged by John Molinari, Sr. A panel of three judges sat at the table at the front of the room, the accordion chair about five feet in front of the table facing them. Behind the contestant were about 15 chairs for listeners.

Most students waited nervously in the hall with family members. The girls looked lovely in their long gowns; they would wear the same dresses to the awards banquet and dance. This competition was tough, not only due to the difficulty of the piece, but also was a challenge for the youngsters to remain calm and poised for their performance.

The performances I heard were wonderful — each and every one of the competitors played with skill and precision. One false start was allowed. If the contestant stopped and asked to begin again, they could, without penalty. This happened with a couple of the students. I believe that the awards were given to those who were technically very good, without any mistakes, who also exhibited poise, polish, and played with emotion. Kelly played well, considering that this was her first competition (and first time wearing a formal dress!) She started one of the arpeggios with an incorrect hand placement, though, and even though she recovered, it was not an award-winning performance.

After the competition, it seemed like every one of the performers was in the hallway, teary eyed and hugging a parent or teacher, either in relief or dismay. They would all wait until the Friday banquet, though to find out how the judges thought they had done.

The Accordion Royal Banquet in the hotel ballroom turned out to be another inspiring event. There were 63 tables set up, each with 10-12 diners. The head table seated about 30 judges and AFNA officers. Each group of competitors was at their own tables. Families were seated at other numbered tables. Competitors were served hamburgers and fries; families dined on turkey breast and pasta. Elegant! We found people who had come from Canada and the Midwest, from Utah, from Sri Lanka (originally) as well as from all over Southern California and Arizona to attend this program.

All contestants were called to the spotlight stage to receive an award and congratulations — for first, second, and third, and also honorable mention. Imagine, if you were ten years old and you were given a trophy by a man in a tuxedo and a beautiful woman in an evening gown, surrounded by a spotlight, with hundreds of people applauding! Definite encouragement to keep on practicing. Each contestant gave her name, teacher's name, and studio or music school. Finally, a King and Queen were crowned, the winners played, and the Banquet and a lovely evening were over.

The entire event was wonderful for Kelly. This was the first time that she has been with other girls her age who also play the accordion — their performances were a challenge to her, as well as an inspiration. The new long dress, the opportunity to stay in a world class hotel, to travel, to see another part of the state, were stimulating for her, too. It was great to see the crowds of people supporting their kids, and passing on the musical traditions.

And a P.S.: "We really enjoyed the event — wish you all could come along next time."

(Signed) Yvonne Huhtala

of us got to sit in seats. (We had much the same problem coming back — wish the airlines and travel agents would get together on booking non-standard seating.)

At the Hyatt in Long Beach, we found the AFNA hospitality desk in the main lobby, staffed by the most organized, friendly and happy-to-see-us people! Somehow, accordion people, even when you first meet them, seem like you have known them for years. In the lobby, there were kids practicing accordion on every flat surface. Some of the youngest contestants, dressed in Sunday best suits, were sprawled on the floor watching cartoons on the large screen TV near the lobby bar/coffee shop. I talked with a few people; one man said his family

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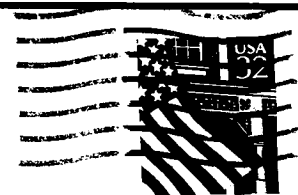
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