

IT'S RENEWAL TIME AGAIN! IMPORTANT: See bottom of page 8 !!!

Newsletter of the

SAN FRANCISCO



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ACCORDION CLUB September 2006

*Official Instrument of San Francisco
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President's Message

Summer is ending, and plans are underway for the fall season at The San Francisco Accordion Club. The summer had a lot of great accordion activity, too many to list, but there was a wide variety for every accordion lover.

The **Cotati 2006 Accordion Festival** was one of the best ever. I was there for the Sunday afternoon session, and enjoyed every minute of it. Perfect weather, mid-70's, clear,

blue skies, slight breeze, terrific entertainment, and especially good to see the younger players taking the stage.

Master accordion tuner, **Vince Cirelli**, was singled out for a special honor from The Festival. Skyler Fell, also an accordion tuner, presented Vince with a nice plaque from The Festival. The plaque thanks Vince for his lifelong devotion to the accordion, and speaks for all of us who know Vince, and join in with our sincere thanks. (See photos, page 8)

Dick Contino was electric, and as his performance continued, the lawn immediately in front of the stage became jammed with so many people that no one else could squeeze in. His super high-energy performance lasted over an hour and fifteen minutes, and he stood the entire time. He played so many of his greats that it was impossible to pick a favorite. When he concluded, everyone stood up delivering a thundering applause that continued for several minutes. Not only is Dick a great entertainer, he is

SEPTEMBER MEETING

Sunday, Sept. 17 at 2:00 p.m.

*Featuring, again by popular demand,
TOM BRUNO from Pennsylvania*

Also Pres. PETER DI BONO with Vocalist LINDA WENDSTRAND. And another special treat: BONNIE BIRCH and NICK HEITING from Seattle!!

one of the nicest people I've had the pleasure to meet.

At the end of the day a large group of us Cotati-goers converged on Volpi's Italian Restaurant in Petaluma. The dinner was superb—and then we all headed to the circa 1930's bar in the back of the building and carried on into the wee hours, playing, dancing, and having an adult beverage (or two).

Rosemary Armanino has served The Club as Secretary for two years, and is now stepping down from that position. Everyone thanks "Rosie" for her tireless energy and ideas that have brought the Club to the successful place it now occupies. **We need to find a new Secretary**, so, don't wait for someone else to volunteer! Please give me a call, (415) 753-1502.

Play that accordion every day, and remember:

REAL MUSIC IS LIVE!!!

Peter Di Bono

NEXT MEETING: Sunday, September 17

2:00 p.m. SHARP

The Oyster Point Yacht Club

911 Marina Blvd., South San Francisco

From 101 South or 101 North take Oyster Point exit. Go east on Oyster Point Blvd. 1 mile; turn right on Marina Blvd. (look for blue Marina sign) and continue to the end.

August Meeting—a Nice Variety

Our very pleasant warm-up player was **Jim Firpo**. I really enjoy Jim's playing of all the good old songs we have loved forever.

MC until Pres. Peter's arrival was **Ed Massolo**. Ed reiterated the message that by now everyone knows: that our **regular dues**, beginning in October (membership year), will be \$30, whether for an individual or for a family. Family members will be considered club members at meetings. The **door fee** at meetings will be \$5.00 for club members and \$8.00 for guests (non-members) be-

ginning next month (September).

The first player of the day was one of our all-time favorites, **Frank Montoro**. Frank's Colombo accordion has a wonderful mellow tone, which he subtly and tastefully blends with his MIDI sounds and rhythm backup on some of the pieces, so that the electronic sounds do not overpower the reed sounds. It makes for a very pleasing combination. Pieces that Frank played: *Here's That Rainy Day*; *You Belong to My Heart (Una Vez, Nada Más)*; *Traces of Love*; *Granadinas*; and a blues/boogie of which I missed the name.

Next up was **Bruno Bianchini** who came up from the South Bay. Bruno has played for us before, both alone and with **Norma Zonay-Parsons**, so it was fitting that today he joined our club as a regular member. Bruno played, among others: *Tell Me You Love Me (Parlami Amore)*; *As Time Goes By*; *Waltz for Vinnie (Marocco)*; a French-sounding fast waltz (I didn't get the name), *Tea for Two*, *Dark Eyes*

(Arr. Magnante), *Body and Soul*. Lovely, Bruno.

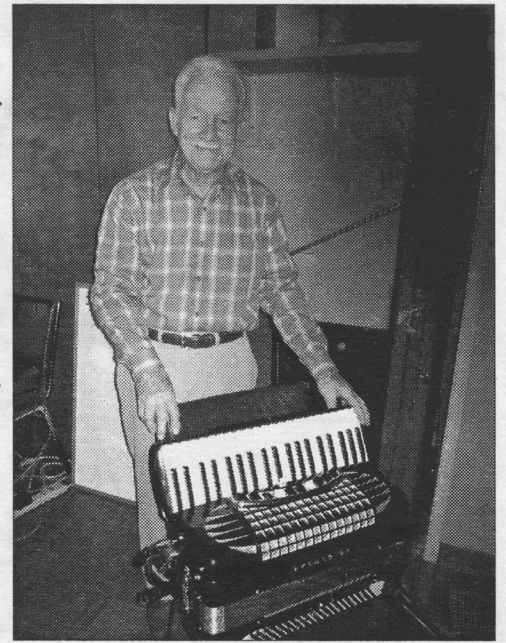
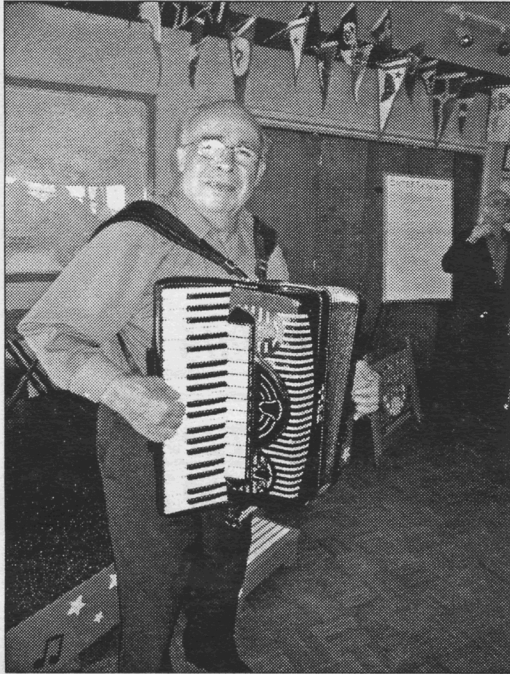
While waiting for the next player, Ed made the announcement that our own beloved **Vince Cirelli** is going to be Honorary Director of the Cotati Accordion Festival! Congratulations Vince—we're so proud of you!

All the way from Chico—a long drive—came **Jerry Choate**. Jerry played at one of our meetings and also at our picnic, and we are flattered that he is willing to come all that distance for our club. Jerry played many of my favorite songs, including *Edelweiss*, *Moonglow* and the theme from *Picnic*; the beautiful Slovenian *Daj Daj* (all of us button box players know that one!), *I Left My Heart in San Francisco*; *Always Happy Polka*; *September in the Rain/I've Got You Under My Skin*; *Jennie's Mazurka* (that Steve Balich wrote for his beautiful wife Jennie); *Canadian Sunset*; *More*; *Spanish Eyes*; *Sentimental Journey*; *After You've Gone*. I'm not sure if I got them all, but the music was beautiful.

The \$75 raffle prize was won by **Doris Solari**—congratulations, Doris!

During the break, featuring a lovely buffet table prepared mostly by **Isabelle Massolo** and **Lucille Creamer** we were treated to more beautiful music by the duo of **Ed Massolo** and **Dick Schiller**.

Val announced that another possible **accordion camp** is in the very early talking stages. It would be put on by **Frank Marocco** and would probably take place in January in Phoenix. Val was asked by Dan and Joan Grauman to find out if there is any interest among our membership. (If there is more to report on this camp. I'll keep you informed. Meanwhile, do let me know if you might be interested and I'll pass on the word. It's just numbers they need now, not names



yet. Val)

Val also announced that we have a new, young Navy veteran with us today. **Nate Hirigoyen** first served on the USS *Constellation* in the Arabian Sea, and later on the Japan-based USS *Kitty Hawk* in the Pacific (Guam, Australia, Hong Kong, etc.)—four years altogether. We are all so proud of you, Nate!



Nate Hirigoyen and Proud Mom Sue

Libertango (arr. Marocco); a lovely ballad *Nothing Ever Changes*; and one of Frank Marocco's loveliest arrangements, *My Little Musette*.

Last on the program was **Roberto Rosa** from the South Bay, with all his MIDI equipment. Roberto is a really nice, smooth player. His tunes included (I might have missed some): *A Day In the Life of a Fool* (bossa nova); the beautiful Italian *Luci e Ombre* (Light & Shadow); *Blue Moon*; *Cuándo, Cuándo, Cuándo*; the well-known French *Pigalle*; *La Biquina* (sp?—Waltz form South America); *Una Mañana* (cha-cha-cha); *Anema e Core* and *Arrivederci Roma*. Very nice, Roberto—thanks!

At this point I'd like to thank all those who volunteered to help out at this meeting, especially with the food and cleanup: **Isabelle and Ed Massolo, Lucille Creamer, Ruby Dezman, Bob Smith** set up the easel, and I'm sure there are others who helped out in other ways. Our warmest thanks to all of you!

Which reminds me: Anyone **wishing to volunteer** to help at meetings and/or contribute food, please feel free to do so at the meeting!

Val

The music program resumed with **Don Nurisso** playing his familiar white Giulietti accordion. In his popular jazz style Don played *Na Gloria* which he got from a mandolin group; *Graciliera* (sp?), also from the mandolin group; a polka by **Joe Smiell**, *Italo-American Mazurka* by Frank Marocco;



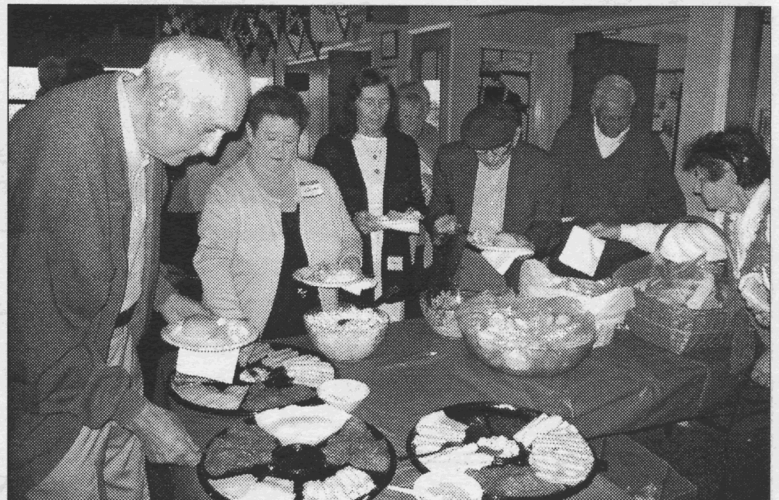
Ed Massolo and Dick Schiller



Don Nurisso



Roberto Rosa



Yummy Buffet

Our Sincere Thanks

To those who have generously donated to the Club since the beginning of this year. Donations that your Editor has heard about:

Jim Holliday (in memory of Ed Zaro)
Frances and Dominic Benedetto
Mark Zhagel

Robert Sprugasci (2 Raffle Ticket Scramblers)

This list is cumulative throughout the calendar year.

Please let me know if you have contributed in 2006 and I did not print it—we want you to be recognized!

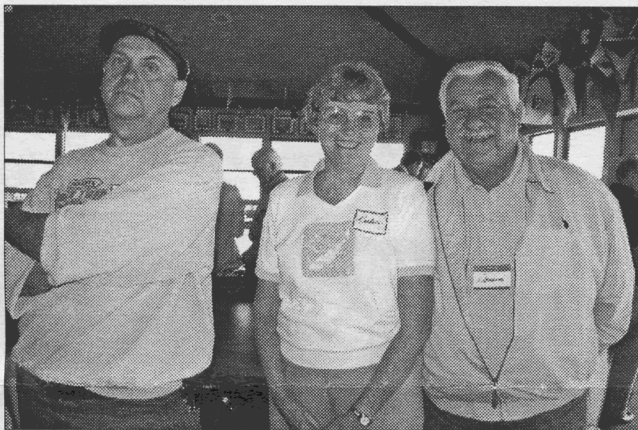
Val (510) 531-4836 vtkacc@ifn.net

AND MORE THANKS . . .

. . . to **Michael Sanossian** for folding, labeling, stamping and mailing the newsletters; and to

Sue Hirigoyen for

Folding and stuffing the renewal notices this month



In the buffet line: Emil Forsman (Clyde's son), Barbara Corsiglia, Domenic Granelli

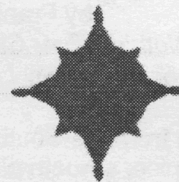


Don Nurisso and Peter Di Bono at Cotati

**PLEASE REMEMBER TO
LEAVE THE MEETING HALL CLEAN
AND FREE OF FOOD, PAPER PLATES,
NAPKINS, CANS, BOTTLES, ETC. !!!!**

September 17 Meeting

**Tom Bruno, Peter Di Bono
with vocalist Linda Wendstrand;
Bonnie Birch and
Nick Heiting**



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Wanted

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

Call Val (510) 531-4836 or vtkacc@ifn.net.

"FUN BAND" PLAYERS PLEASE NOTE:

The San Francisco Accordion Band ("Fun Band") will be on hiatus until October. You will be notified then the time comes! Questions: Call Frank Schlotter (510) 339-1163.



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Word Has It . . .

. . . that **Johan Gullmes** and **Marja Kazarian** tied the knot in Half Moon Bay on September 1! Our heartiest congratulations to you both, and we look forward to seeing you often!

. . . that **Frank Panacci** has come through two operations with flying colors, with one to go! Meanwhile, he is back playing his accordion and it was great to see him and Dorothy at the meeting.

. . . That the ACE Ensemble was honored to play several pieces at the Galla-Rini memorial Aug. 12. ACE thanks **Marian Kelly** and also two ALSI members (also SFAC members), **Sharon Marotte** and **Vicki Eriqat**, and also **Esther Lanting** of Indiana, for helping us out by playing with us.

. . . that **Joe Domitrowich** will be playing at Lugano Swiss Bistro in Carmel on the last Friday of August and October. **Richard Denier**, together with his violinist, also plays at Lugano's on Thursday evenings. Visit Lugano's, in the "Barnyard," when you're down there and hear these musicians in a very upbeat, happy atmosphere.

. . . that the **Cotati Accordion Festival** was about the best ever. Your Editor missed it this year and thanks **Peter Di Bono** for writing it up in his President's Message. We're so proud of our **Vince Cirelli** who was honored as Assistant Director of the Festival (photos, p. 8). I hear that **Morgani** outdid himself again. There was also some very **sad news** coming from the Festival: young accordion virtuoso **Sammy Thomas** lost his dad in an automobile accident during the Festival weekend. We send Sammy and his family our sincerest condolences. **Chuck Berger** was kind enough to fill in for Sammy in the Festival program, so Sammy could leave to be with his family.

A Note from Ed Massolo

On returning home from the Accordion Convention in Las Vegas, I was to briefly write a few words about my four days there. In doing so, I failed to acknowledge one of our own, a great talent, **Joe Domitrowich**, who not only gave an outstanding performance, but also conducted classes in "Digital Magic." My, what he can do with that electronic accordion: Jazz, swing, modern, folk or classic—Joe does it all. Do come and play for our club again soon, Joe. *Ed Massolo*
(Editor's Note: Joe Domitrowich has a busy playing schedule including appearances in Danville, Moraga, Concord, San Rafael and San Mateo—visit his Website at www.capricious-accordion.com for details. For a schedule of appearances by his group, Alpiners USA, visit their Website at www.alpinersusa.com/calendar.html.)



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The SF Accordion Club warmly thanks Hunan Yuan Restaurant for offering us a gift certificate for the raffle at the picnic. To thank them we shall run their business-card ad for six months.

. . . that **Steve Balich** has had successful carpal tunnel surgery on one hand—with another one to go! Hang in there, Steve!

Your Executive Board met . . .

. . . On Monday, August 14, 2006. As of 7/31/06 we had \$4,000 in checking, \$3,900 in savings, and \$1,400 in the Scholarship Fund. Beginning in September, the gate fee will be \$5 for members and \$8 for guests. Beginning Oct. 1, 2006 membership dues will be \$30 per family. Bob Hansen is drafting proposed new By-Laws. The board agreed to move forward and create a Website, to be reviewed by a committee and presented to the board. A membership in the Oyster Point Yacht Club for our club president will be obtained for \$300/year.

PLEASE NOTE

Club members are welcome at board meetings anytime. Board meetings are generally held at 6:30 p.m. at the Oyster Point Yacht Club on the Monday before a meeting. Always check with a board member (see last page) to confirm date & time if you wish to attend.

A CALL FOR HELP !!!!!

We need someone to replace our retiring **Secretary**, Rosemary Armano. The Secretary takes notes at board meetings and writes up the Minutes, and distributes them to board members. The Secretary is a board member and has full voting rights on the board.

The Secretary's job description, in the by-laws, is:

"The Secretary shall keep a complete record of all proceedings of Club and Board of Directors meetings, and give notice of all meetings and other functions. The Secretary shall prepare, with the President, the Agenda for Board meetings, including any items which have been previously unresolved and any future items for which discussion should be initiated."

Sounds daunting but the job is not that difficult. Club activities such as meetings, do not need to be recorded by the Secretary unless an official business matter is brought up.

The advent of E-mail makes the position quite simple compared with earlier days. Please help your club out and volunteer for this job!

Special Memories of a Great Man **Maestro Anthony Galla-Rini**

When Anne Métais and I first heard of the Galla-Rini Accordion Camp at Silver Falls while visiting **Gordon Piatanesi** in 1992, we were floored—we didn't know such a camp existed. We were worried about whether we were "good enough" to go to the camp and play with the group! Well, we took the dive, and I've never been happier with any decision I've ever made! I believe that was the third camp, but I have not missed any since then.



Val and Tony, Escondido, 2003

All the eager campers were assembled in the dining hall at Silver Falls when suddenly a hush came over the room. Everyone's head swiveled toward the door—and in walked the Maestro, with his proud bearing and overwhelming presence. There was deafening applause, while Anthony walked from table to table, greeting all his friends and graciously meeting new ones.

During that camp we were blown away by his beautiful playing, his kindly manner, his gregarious nature, his forgiving but still strict teaching and conducting manner. (He never did stop conducting—even while we visited him last summer—he just couldn't resist waving those arms when we played!)

At my second camp, 1993, on Performance Night, sitting directly in front of the Maestro, I tried my best to play the beautiful *Reine de Musette*. Needless to say I was scared to death as I muddled through the piece. Meanwhile, Anthony kept making funny gestures with his hands that puzzled me. Well, I was so "shook up" that I had forgotten to open the bottom of my bellows! Wow, was I embarrassed!!

On final camp days up in Silver Falls, when Tony would treat us to his playing of his arrangements of *Ave Maria*, *The Lord's Prayer*, or the gorgeous Italian love song, *Core N'Grato*, there was not a dry eye in the house. The truth is, each of us was afraid this might be the last time we'd ever hear him play! But we were fortunate to get to hear him play many more times after that.

Over the following 14 years or so, we developed a special friendship, and I was honored that Tony remembered my name and my hometown anytime we met, whether in Texas at the TAA Accordion Convention, or Silver Falls, or Los Angeles or San Diego even after his 100th birthday. John and I visited Tony and Dolly a couple of times when they lived in a motor home in San Marcos. We would bring them wine and flowers, Tony would play some music for us and then we'd take them out to dinner. Such great memories!



At Tony's 99th Birthday Party. A relative in the middle and Myron Floren on the right.

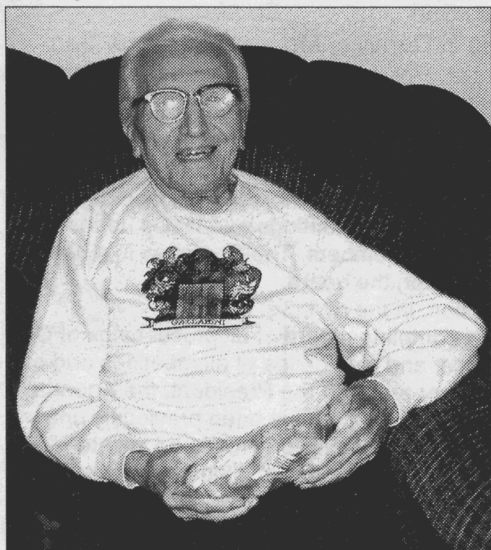
In 2003, I visited Tony and his beloved Dolly at the retirement home where they lived in Escondido. Dolly loved the button box (she used to play it) and asked me to play a few pieces. I was happy to oblige (luckily I had prepared for the possibility!). Both Tony and Dolly were beaming, and it made my day! Then: imagine how I felt when, hardly a week later, Tony himself telephoned me, telling me that Dolly had passed away, and thanking me for helping to make her final days happy. What a feeling and what a friend!

I was able to visit Tony two more times after that, when he lived in a home in Corona. One time I was alone and the other time was with Dick Schiller and Joanne Pilgrim (from San Diego—see photo, p. 8).

I also have several precious cards and notes that Tony wrote over the years, on that wonderful old typewriter (see photo, taken at the recent Memorial). On one of them, in response to my specific question, he wrote, "You may call me Tony." I felt like a real friend from then on.

Here are a few photos from my recent memory bank. Needless to say, I have hundreds more!

Val



Notice the Galla-Rini Crest on Tony's shirt



SFAC Members (BAAC at the time) with the Maestro at Galla-Rini Camp 2003



Playing button box for Tony and Dolly (the photo of Dolly was not a good one so I couldn't use it)

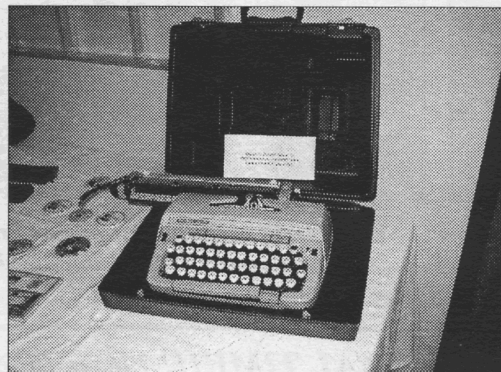
A Beautiful Memorial

Maestro Anthony Galla-Rini's son Ron and his wife Jan, with a lot of help from others, most notably Kjell Holmes, President of the Accordion Lovers Society International (ALSI) of San Diego, and **Kevin Friedrich**, president of the Confédération Internationale des Accordéonistes (and board member of both AAA and ATG), put on a really beautiful memorial for Anthony at the Olive Branch Community Church in Corona, CA on Saturday, August 12. We of the ACE Ensemble were honored to be invited to play. Since a few of our Ensemble members were unable to make it, we were thankful that **Marian Kelly, Esther Lanting** of Indiana, and **Sharon Marotte and Vicki Eriqat** of San Diego were able to help us out.

Anthony's grandson **Miles Galla-Rini** offered a moving homily. Other speakers were Anthony's son **Ron, Kjell Holmes** and **Kevin Friedrich**. The talks were interspersed with some ensemble music, **Lynn Ewing** playing Galla-Rini's arrangement of *How Great Thou Art*, and **Esther Lanting** playing the Galla-Rini arrangement of *The Lord's Prayer*. Such gorgeous music!

At the reception following—a light-hearted, upbeat celebration of Anthony's life where accordion friends from all over had a chance to get together—we enjoyed the lively music of **The Polka Dots** of San Diego as well as some special musical treats from **Frank Marocco**. Another notable attending was **Amy Jo Sawyer** of the ATG.

Val



The Maestro's Petosa accordion, his "famous" typewriter, and the Maestro himself in a light moment.



They Called Him "Tony"

By Richard Schiller

That's what his students and close friends would call him, but to me and most others his name was "Maestro." I first met him in 1999 at my first Galla-Rini Accordion Camp at Mission San Luis in southern California, a beautiful setting that seemed to fit the mystique of this great man's orchestra. Whenever the Maestro would enter the room, whether it be for rehearsal or on concert night, there was electricity in the air for me. To think that I was in the presence of this great, great person, who had such a magnificent life bringing the concert accordion to the public. I remember my teacher, Reno Pucci, telling me years ago, that at a picnic in San Rafael in the 30's with thousands of people in attendance, the Maestro arrived in a limousine with a beautiful woman on each arm! A superstar of his day! At camp, wherever he went he was greeted with a standing ovation from us, his students, who wanted to honor him and show the respect we felt in our hearts for this great man. The pieces he arranged for each camp always included a very touching melody that would bring out the emotion in me, moving me to put my all into my playing as a part of an orchestra rising to its best in a tribute to the legend who was directing us.

I also had a private lesson with him, and boy was I nervous to go to his room, one on one! I chose the piece *La Sorella*, which he had arranged back in 1939. He knew exactly when he had arranged it, and told me a little story about it. I tried valiantly to perform it without error, but could have done a lot better. He was very gracious, and I found that I would rather talk with him about the accordion and his life than play. Imagine a private lesson and conversation with this great man!

As the years went by, the Maestro became more frail physically to the point that he couldn't conduct the camp anymore, although he kept arranging music for it. It wasn't the same though, somehow the magic was gone. And so, last year after the last Galla-Rini Camp in San Diego, Val Kieser, Joanne Pilgrim and I stopped by the "home" where



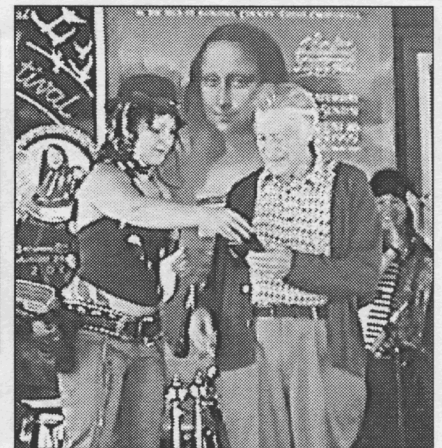
Dick Schiller, Val Kieser, Tony Galla-Rini, Joanne Pilgrim

he was living in Corona. We brought some wine and flowers and played our accordions for him. He came alive with our presence, talking and reminiscing...it was the "old Tony." Joanne Pilgrim, his student, played while he directed and made recommendations. Val played both the piano accordion and her button box and he loved it, a big smile on his face. I played the best piece that I knew, *The Lord Bless You and Keep You*. He paid me an honor, saying that I played with great feeling. I said that I wished I could have been his student. He replied that he would have taught me.

I felt sad to think that the Maestro was alone now, maybe like Guido Deiro at the end of his life, removed from the center of acclaim that once was his. I always meant to go back to visit him again, but never made it.

And now he is gone, the great icon, removed from our midst, my last link to the glory days of our beloved accordion. I'm so thankful that I was privileged to know him, his artistry, and his wit, if only for a short time, much too short. But I am a better person and player because of his touching my life. Thank you Maestro!

RS



Our thanks to Don Pandori for these photos of Vince Cirelli receiving his plaque and honor at the Cotati Accordion Festival. The photos were extracted by Don from the video that he took of the grand occasion. At right: Skyler Fell presenting the plaque to Vince.

It's MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TIME!!! Please fill out the form and mail it, with your check, in the envelope provided if the last number on your label is 6 !!! (If it is a 7, 8 or a 0, you are paid up or are an honorary member!)

SFAC Evening Ensemble Practice

First and Third Wednesday of the month
at Ed Massolo's home, 612 Lassen ST.,
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ON SUMMER HIATUS—members will be notified when we start up again!

SFAC Band Practice

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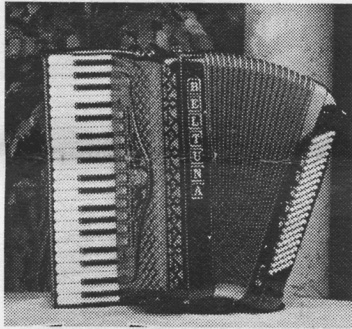
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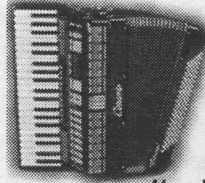
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\$25 per year for individual; \$30 per year for a family
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Admission to Meetings: \$200; beginning Sept. 2006,
admission will be \$5 for members and \$8 for each guest

Ad Policy

A member may place one four-line ad for one month free of charge; after that the charge is \$5.00 per issue; a business-card-size ad will cost \$5.00 per issue or \$50.00 per year; a quarter-page ad will cost \$10.00; a half-page ad will cost \$20.00; and a full-page ad will cost \$35.00. A flyer advertising an event may be included in one issue for \$20. The cost for ads placed by non-members will be twice the above-quoted prices.

SFAC Officers

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NEXT MEETING

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 17

PROMPTLY AT 2:00 P.M.

OYSTER POINT YACHT CLUB

911 Marina Blvd., Oyster Point Marina

**Oyster Point exit from 101; east on Oyster Point; right on Marina Blvd.,
through gate house to sign "Oyster Point Yacht Club"**



**Newsletter of the
San Francisco Accordion Club**

P.O. Box 318175

San Francisco, CA 94131-8175



FIRST CLASS POSTAGE