



## ♪♪ April Accordion Circle Review ♪♪

by Lynn Ewing

We were delighted to have Jana Maas here at the April meeting, presenting her workshop, "Tips and Tricks for a Better Accordion Performance".



First, Jana gave some basic information on use of the bellows. The main point is to treat your accordion bellows like you are singing or playing a wind

instrument - in other words - let the listener's ears breathe! Change bellows at phrase points, which are generally every 4 - 8 measures. Don't turn bellows in the middle of a phrase, or when holding a note. Lift your fingers when changing bellows, so that you avoid a "hiccup". Some helpful hints to achieve phrasing are: 1) Mark your music at change points. 2) Drop your right hand or play softer to conserve air. 3) Know your bellows capacity - how far can you pull out and keep control before you need to turn the bellows.



Jana also discussed Dynamics and Tempo, suggesting that it helps to change things up! Use your bellows and dynamics for

maximum feeling and take liberties with tempo when performing solo. Keyboard articulations are the key to clean playing, and she demonstrated non-legato, legato, staccato, slurs, and accents. If anyone has questions about this, please feel free to ask Lynn Ewing or Mike Zampiceni.



Additionally, Jana taught some pattern replacements on basses, and discussed how you can give the impression of an accent by lengthening the bass note. On Tangos, she suggests using a

regular tango bass for the major key portion, and on the minor section, for more drama, play the chord bass and the fundamental bass together.

The workshop portion ended with demonstrations of embellishments, which she wrote out in the piece *Bionda*. Finally, Jana gave us some tips on Tex Mex fills. In order to use fills effectively, you need to know your chords - but you can truly accomplish a lot with being solid on F, C, G, and D, chords, major, minor and 7th. Then, suggestions such as "arpeggiate the chord" or "use chromatic patterns extracted from the chord" will make sense!



After the break, with coffee again generously provided by our neighboring Starbucks Millbrae Square, we invited solos from those present, and Don Savant serenaded us with *In a Sentimental Mood*, a piece which he has come to think is one of Duke Ellington's best! We encourage you to start practicing and get solos ready for our June meeting!



We prevailed upon Jana to play a few tunes for us, and she responded with these six songs before we said goodbye till next month! *Besame Mucho/Sway*, *Upali Upala*, *Crazy Accordion Polka*, *Por Una Cabeza*, *Tic Toc Polka* and *Black and White Rag*.

April meeting coffee kindly provided by Starbucks® Millbrae Square



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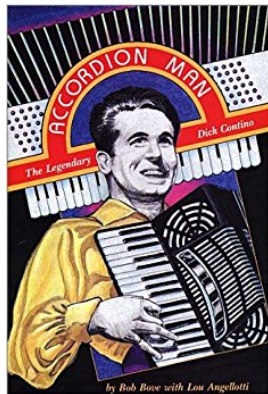
# Dick Contino, 1930-2017

Beloved superstar accordionist Dick Contino, Las Vegas lounge mainstay and the man who made the accordion hip in the 1950s, died Wednesday, April 19, 2017 in his native Fresno, California. He was 87 and will be missed by accordion fans everywhere, including the SFAC where he held Honorary Membership. Many SFAC members had been privileged to see him perform several times – and as recently as 2014 - at the nearby Cotati Accordion Festival.



Dick Contino emerged as a bobby-soxer idol after winning Horace Heidt's "Youth Opportunity Talent Show" in 1946, and he was said to have played the Ed Sullivan show a record 48 times. Starring in the 1958 B-movie "Daddy-O" was evidence of Contino's teen-idol status in an era

when the accordion was still a popular-music instrument. "He put it in another place," his son Pete, a Las Vegas musician, said. Paul Pasquali, founder of the International Accordion Convention, once noted, "There were young icons and television stars who made (the accordion) popular then, like Dick Contino. He was the teenage sex symbol before Elvis."



After playing Las Vegas for years at bygone hotels such as the El Rancho Vegas, an offer of steady work in the Tropicana lounge motivated Mr. Contino to relocate there, buying a house near the Boulevard Mall from Las Vegas bandleader Vido Musso, son

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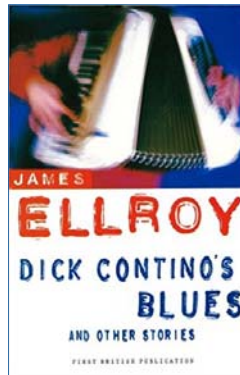
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Pete Contino said. Dick lived in Las Vegas from 1975 to 2015 - except for a four-year spell in the Los Angeles area - raising three children there with his first wife, actress Leigh Snowden, who died in 1982.



Mr. Contino's cult status was elevated with the short story "Dick Contino's Blues," part of best-selling crime fiction writer James Ellroy's 1994 collection "Hollywood Nocturnes." Ellroy's story blended fiction with facts, such as Contino's recording and movie career being derailed after he spent six months in jail for ignoring his draft notice to the Korean War.

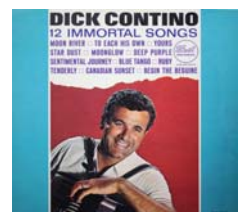
[Contino served in the United States armed forces, was honorably discharged as a Staff Sergeant, and received a Presidential Pardon ([Wikipedia.org/Dick\\_Contino](http://Wikipedia.org/Dick_Contino)).]

Mr. Contino remained hearty well into his 80s and played through 2014 after bouncing back from a broken hip the previous year. Health complications starting in early 2015 caused him to move back to Fresno to be closer to his daughter Deidre.

Dick Contino is survived by his wife, Judy, son Pete of Las Vegas, daughters Mary, of Phoenix, Deidre, of Fresno, and step-children Cathie and Robert.

Adapted by the SFAC from [Accordion's hep cat, Dick Contino, dead at 87](#); Las Vegas Review-Journal; April 20, 2017

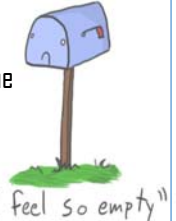
RJ Entertainment Reporter Mike Weatherford covers show business from entertainment news to show reviews around Las Vegas. [mweatherford@reviewjournal.com](mailto:mweatherford@reviewjournal.com)  
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Dear Accordion Club friends:

It has come to our attention that several February newsletters were returned for insufficient postage, which is why many did not receive it. We did check the weight and it seemed to meet first class 1-oz mailing requirements, as it always has; however we had not used our usual post office for that mailing.

In the future we will verify the weight and format of the issues with our post office. We apologize to those who were inconvenienced, and will have printouts of the February issue available at the May SFAC meeting.



# ***SLAYING TWO PROMINENT BELLOWS DRAGONS***

***By Mike Zampiceni***

After several decades of teaching and listening to amateur and professional players, I've observed many bellows techniques, some of which have been stellar and others which have been less so. This article seeks to elucidate teachers, students, and players about problematic bellows issues and how to correct them, as well as provide tools to generate dynamic control and expression for an optimum musical result.

The solutions and suggestions presented here are based on mentoring students for several decades and observing which exercises and techniques are most effective. The information is intended for instructors who want to instill proper playing form to their students, or perhaps instructors, students, and players who are either unaware of some of these issues or are uncertain about how to resolve them.

If these dragons could be accused of committing crimes, the first of these transgressions would be considered a felony, and the second would be a misdemeanor.

## **Egregious Air Changer (a.k.a. cutting air)**

When you hear world-class accordionists perform, in addition to those technically demanding, perfectly executed, and dynamically rich renditions, there's something you won't hear. If you weren't looking at the performer, you most likely could not tell when he/she changed air directions, and the flow would sound seamless. Why is this so? One of the main reasons is because the performer is changing air directions exactly when going from one note to the next (typically on the treble side unless it's a legato bass solo) at the air change, not while holding a note.

I've explained this concept fully in my article entitled "Avoiding Accordion Hiccups" in [our January 2017 newsletter](#) (page 5), but let's review the most salient point. If a singer is singing a whole note, or a trumpeter is playing a whole note, would he/she breathe in the middle of the note, thereby creating two half-notes? Of course not, yet all too many students and even performing accordionists do this with great abandon, even though they are performing with a wind instrument just as much as with the voice, reed, or brass instrument. The difference, of course is that we don't have to physically breathe into our instruments to create sound. If we did, I think the situation

would be considerably different.

So the bottom line is that if you're holding a note, whether it be as long as or longer than a whole note or shorter like a quarter note, don't change air direction while holding it. Either change before playing this note, or change after playing the note.

## **Trailing Note Value Air Belcher**

Besides the insidious air changer described in the previous section, there's also a less offensive, but equally annoying, bellows transgressor that arises when playing legato passages. It will not occur for detached or staccato passages, because there is space between notes to absorb the directional bellows change.

To synchronize air changes properly at the end of a note value for a legato passage (whether for treble, bass, or both), three things need to happen simultaneously. When you're holding a note and ready to change to the new note, you need to simultaneously:

- Press the bass button
- Press the treble key
- Change air direction

If you anticipate the air change ever so slightly before actually playing the next bass and/or treble notes, there will be an audible hiccup, and it's the kind of hiccup that drinking a glass of water can't cure.

To avoid or correct this problem, try changing air direction between two legato notes, and listen to whether you hear a hiccup from the first note when you go to the second note. For instance, for the notes C and D:

1. Pull the bellows on the C.
2. Connecting the C to D without lifting up on the C, change to the D while pushing at the same time.

If you hear a hiccup on the C immediately before the D, that means that you've anticipated the air change right before playing the D. Keep trying the exercise until the hiccups are gone and you've slayed this pesky bellows dragon! You can initially just alternate between any two adjacent notes until comfort and competency is achieved, and then progress to five adjacent notes, such as from C to G.

# The Chetcuti Community Center

## How we got here — Why we are happy to be here

By Robert Cooperstein

It is not always easy to change something very central to your daily life, such as where you live or the job you have, or whether it's time to retire; and yet that is exactly the quandary that enveloped the Board of the SFAC in mid-2016 when we became aware that changes were coming to the Oyster Point Yacht Club (OPYC) and to the Oyster Point neighborhood. On the plus side, the venue was to be remodeled, but on the other hand OPYC was giving mixed messages as to the viability of our being able to continue hosting our musical programs. OPYC leadership, for example, had suggested we might no longer advance-schedule our meetings based on a regular date — i.e., third Sunday of the month—through a calendar year.

As months went by in this state of limbo, our main goal was to locate other possible venues if the worst were to come to pass and we lost the OPYC, or the conditions of our staying there became untenable. Many hours went into scouting alternative locations, with online searches, phone calls, and in-person visits by board members to possible venues. Each alternative involved doing the math regarding expenses, what days and hours were available, availability of parking, whether catering or bringing in refreshments was allowed, and ultimately (taking everything into account) considering whether our members would approve of the move. Here the board would especially like to thank Ken Schwartz, who spent the most time and effort on this, and ultimately found our most attractive option.



After diligent searching, we were delighted in December when Ken presented the possibility of meeting at the Chetcuti Community Center (CCC) in Millbrae, which we felt offered the best mix of desirable attributes for our new home, should it come to that. We never for one moment thought it would offer the same charm as the OPYC, with its bay views and nautical vibe, but on the other hand we found it charming in another way, by being integrated into a vibrant Bay Area neighborhood. The CCC is within a couple minutes' walk of cafes, Trader Joe's, Safeway, restaurants, bakeries, Starbucks, and other shops; and is of course just yards from the Millbrae Public Library. We saw the long term opportunity to become a fixture in the neighborhood, attracting residents and library visitors to our meetings, expanding the base

of the SFAC. Having spacious parking and easy access to our meetings via public transportation is not exactly "charming" but convenient, to be sure!

In January, with OPYC still "on the fence" with us, the Board decided to commit to 3 meetings at Chetcuti while we continued to negotiate with the leadership at OPYC. However, within the last several weeks we learned that the dominant voice at OPYC had closed the door to the SFAC. We breathed a collective sigh of relief that we had proactively sought out CCC and immediately contracted to continue meeting there through early 2018.

We have successfully hosted our March and April meetings at CCC. You can well-imagine that there is a learning curve in making such a big life change. Everything is a little different – the way the chairs are arranged, making do without a stage, changes in our sound equipment, our facilities for providing refreshments, and the start and stop times for the programs themselves. Starbucks Millbrae Square has generously supported us by donating coffee and cream for our meetings! So far we are pretty pleased that attendance has not seemed to change much, which tells us that you, our members, seem to be adjusting to the changes our move has made in your lives. Thank you! We are still tinkering with changes from meeting-to-meeting in the sequencing of the program components, including the jam band, short performances, and main performers. Again, changes in our infrastructure require a little trial and error to make everything work as smoothly as possible. We are especially open to your suggestions during this transitional period, and as always we would certainly welcome your help in getting various things done. Don't miss your chance to help with refreshments, have a crack at acting as emcee, help manage the door during programs, and of course by submitting items for the Newsletter. Let us collectively hope the CCC serves, as we it expect it will, as the home of the SFAC for a long time to come!



Three cherubic boys, does it get much cuter than this picture? The brothers grew up musically surrounded with Dad running an accordion school.

The middle little guy travels world wide these days and a few years ago even played for us at SFAC. Do you recognize this famous accordionist? [answer on page 11]



**Have Accordion, Will Travel:** Yes, there are some instruments that are even harder to take on the road, such as an Alpine Horn! But accordionists display an amazing proclivity to take their beloved squeezebox with them to all corners of the world. Whether they are participating in a workshop, attending a performance, or just visiting somewhere off the beaten track, they take it with them.

If you, esteemed SFAC member, should find yourself in just such a position, serving as an ambassador not just for the Club but for the accordion itself, please make sure to send us a little write-up of your experience, including some photographs. In recent issues of our Newsletter, we have been fortunate to have Lynn provide an account of her musical visit to Cuba, and Scott his musical visit to Mexico. They both recounted how whipping out their accordions, often in unexpected circumstances, immediately broke down boundaries of language, politics, and culture. If you were to come across an accordionist or band including an accordion somewhere closer – strolling at a restaurant or winery, playing at an Italian or Polish festival, maybe a local club - tell us about it. Have you attended an accordion workshop or convention, or visited historic accordion sites? Tell us about it! Contribute to your club newsletter, and help your fellow accordion enthusiasts learn about these people, places, and events! When it comes to the accordion, ain't no mountain too high!



### SFAC Scholarships

The SFAC awards two scholarships a year to accordion students studying with teachers who are SFAC members in good standing. Preference will be given to students who demonstrate dedication to pursuing the study of the accordion. Contact Mike Zampiceni for a scholarship application.

Mike Zampiceni, eclecticguy@comcast.net, 408-569-2579

***Our Sincere Thanks** to those who generously donate to the Club. With each new membership year (Oct. 1-Sept. 30) we start a cumulative list of donors. If you have donated and your name doesn't appear here, please contact Elaine (elainedc@sbcglobal.net or 510-921-9323) and let her know. We greatly appreciate your support and we want to be sure you are recognized. We gratefully acknowledge donations from: Chris & Tor Arild, Evelyn Baulch, Karol Blackaby, Ron Borelli, David Braun, Dr. & Mrs. Anthony Bruno, Gail Campanella, Xavier de la Prade, William Demichelis, Lynn & Gail Ewing, John Fiore, Marja Gullmes, Bruce Kirschner, Franco Lucchesi, Mr. Mike Marotta, James & Lee Ann Monfredini, Anna Nicora, Kenneth Nimmo, Gisele Oakes, Paul Pasquali, Douglas & Kay Patterson, Joseph Petosa, Diana & Bruce Prurucker, Vinny Rinaldi, Alexander Roitman, Ed Salvador, Don & Mary Savant, Leslie Selfridge, Hilbert & Hilde Werner, Barbara Winter, & Mike Zampiceni. **Thank you, all!***



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**Helping** with the monthly music programs is a great way to meet new people and make the program run smoothly. We welcome people to help emcee the program, take photos or write a lively report about the music program. You don't need experience—just a willingness to help while you have fun with your club. Discover your inner entertainer, photographer or writer and help us host our monthly events.

Contact Lynn Ewing, ewinglynn@gmail.com, 650-867-2633 to find out how to get in on the action!

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SFAC members are invited to list Greater Bay Area performances in our monthly newsletter. Send print-ready information, 100 words or less, at least 6 weeks in advance, to newsletter coordinator Rosemary Busher ([rosemary@busher.org](mailto:rosemary@busher.org)). Size and detail of notice will depend upon space available in the issue.

## WANTED: ACCORDIONISTS

### Il Duetto Musica looking for an accordionist

Many SFAC members heard *Il Duetto Musica*, the duo of singer Gloria and accordionist Paul, at our January 15 meeting. Gloria and Paul have been working together since November 2015 on Italian "street" songs and opera arias, but are constrained by the situation that Paul spends odd-numbered months in the Bay Area and even-numbered months in Washington DC. Therefore, *Il Duetto Musica* are seeking a talented accordionist to accompany Gloria on gigs that come up in even-numbered months. Paul stresses that the key word is "accompanying" because for Gloria's vocal pieces, opera arias in particular, the vocals are the star. In their two-hour performances at Angelicas, *Il Duetto Musica* alternates between vocal and instrumental sets, so the accordionist would be able to star on the instrumental sets. Paul will provide a copy of his accordion music so that a prospective accompanist could work up the pieces with Gloria. Gloria would be very pleased to be able to perform year-round with Paul or another accordionist.

*If interested, please contact Paul at [mazurkaman@yahoo.com](mailto:mazurkaman@yahoo.com) or Gloria at [gloriagazave@gmail.com](mailto:gloriagazave@gmail.com).*

### San Francisco Banjo Band in search of accordionist

The San Francisco Banjo Band is looking for an accordion player. Most all playouts are from S.S.F. to Redwood City with a few jaunts to S.F. and beyond. This is not a "ball and chain" commitment; they focus on having a good time. *E-mail or call Bill Portman (650-333-4720, [williamjportman@gmail.com](mailto:williamjportman@gmail.com)) for more information, or see [www.sfbanjoband.com](http://www.sfbanjoband.com).*

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Contact:

Dominic Palmisano (415) 587-4423 [accord47@gmail.com](mailto:accord47@gmail.com) OR  
Lynn Ewing (650) 453-3391 [ewinglynn@gmail.com](mailto:ewinglynn@gmail.com)

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[www.accordioncelebration.org](http://www.accordioncelebration.org)

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[www.ameraccord.com/festival.html](http://www.ameraccord.com/festival.html)

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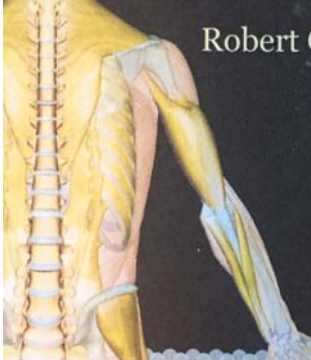
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Hermann Sons Hall, 860 Western, Petaluma  
Contact: Tony Mustaro, President (707) 318-0474  
[dcdacapo@gmail.com](mailto:dcdacapo@gmail.com)

### **Golden State Accordion Club (GSAC)**

[gsaccordionclub.netfirms.com](http://gsaccordionclub.netfirms.com)  
Contact: Jean Stevens, President (916) 872-8081  
[accordionriffs@gmail.com](mailto:accordionriffs@gmail.com)

*Vacaville Chapter*  
2nd Thursday at 6:30 pm.  
Pietro's No. 2,  
679 Merchant Street, Vacaville

*Humboldt Chapter*  
3rd Tuesday at 7pm.  
Humboldt Swiss Club  
5403 Tompkins Hill Road, Loleta

*Sacramento Chapter*  
4th Wednesday at 7 pm.  
Old Spaghetti Factory,  
12401 Folsom Blvd., Rancho Cordova

### **Good Time Accordion Club (GTAC)**

2nd Wednesday at 7 pm. Escalon Community Center  
1055 Escalon Ave, Escalon  
Contact: Ed Sciarini (209) 545-3603

### **Northern California Accordion Society (NCAS)**

1st Wednesday at 6:30 pm. Lutheran Church Hall,  
6365 Douglas Blvd, off Hwy 80, Granite Bay  
Contact: Jim Shoemaker (916) 443-0974

### **Silicon Valley Accordion Society (SVAS)**

1st Sunday at 1pm. Harry's Hofbrau,  
390 Saratoga Avenue (corner of Kiely), San Jose  
[www.svasociety.org](http://www.svasociety.org)  
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GLENN HARTMAN *San Francisco*  
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### Newsletter Layout, Content Coordinator

(Positions open, volunteers needed!)

### Scholarship

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## ***Out and About in the Bay Area PERFORMANCES***

### **Il Duetto Musica**

Wednesday, May 24, 2017 - 7:30PM  
Angelica's in Redwood City

They performed for the SFAC in January, and you can catch them in May at **Angelica's** in Redwood City (ticket information at <http://angelicaswm.tunestub.com/event.cfm?cart&id=259587>)

A delightful mix of Opera & Popular Italian Street Songs featuring the talents of soprano Gloria Mendieta Gazave and accordionist Paul Aebersold. Enjoy a nostalgic tribute to the charm of Italy as you listen to such favorites as *Arrivederci Roma* and Puccini classics from *La Bohème* and other great operas. Gloria & Paul take you on a Gondola ride through Venice with romantic songs, lively music, and colorful costumes for an evening of musical treasures.

### **Mike Zampiceni**

Friday evenings throughout summertime, al fresco dining at **Tee Nee Thai** in San Jose with accordion music played by **Mike Zampiceni** 6:30-8:30 pm

Tee Nee Thai

1423 The Alameda  
San Jose, Ca 95126

<http://www.teeneethaisanajose.com/>

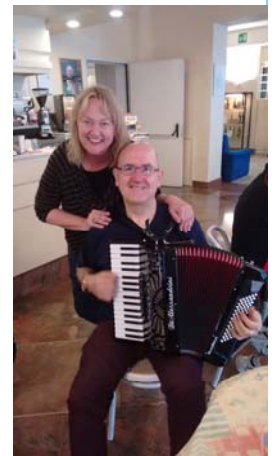
## **Guess Who? Answer (from page 5)**

### **Gary Blair!**

Pictured on page 5 with brothers Malcolm "Malky" (left) Colin (right).



**Gary** started playing the Accordion at 8, taught by his late father Jimmy Blair who ran a huge Accordion school in Glasgow, Scotland. At 17 he won the UK accordion Championship Bell trophy. Today he is a veritable globe trotter and festival "junkie" who remains in high demand. Pictured at right with SFAC member Rosemary Busher, Gary jammed in May 2016 at the Parco Hotel lobby in Castelfidardo, Italy, surrounded by friends in a relaxed and lovely setting. Fun was had by all!



## **ACCORDION INSTRUCTION**

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VINCENT RINALDI (415) 824-7609  
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MIKE ZAMPICENI (408) 569-2579  
NORMA ZONAY-PARSONS (408) 246-3073

Join us the 3rd Sunday of each month!

**SFAC Sunday music program**

**Accordions Live!**

Chetcuti Room, Millbrae

Come for fun and great music!!

**Steve Albini**

*Big Lou and Friends*

*George Chavez*

*Jam Band*

\$8 (\$4 teens, Under 12 free)



**Amp up the fun—join the SFAC!**

Current membership valid through September 2017

Join or renew with PayPal or credit card at:

[www.sfaccordionclub.com/membership.html](http://www.sfaccordionclub.com/membership.html), or send

check payable to "SFAC" to Elaine Cooperstein, 539 Elsie Avenue, San Leandro, CA 94577

- ◆ \$35 per year for individual or household
- ◆ -\$5 discount for online newsletter option

**Millbrae Chetcuti Community Room**

**Civic Center Plaza/Library Plaza**

**450 Poplar Avenue, Millbrae, CA**

Plenty of **free parking**, ramp access.

Close to **public transit**

Directions & Map in March 2017 Newsletter



**LET'S GET READY  
FOR COTATI!**