



The San Francisco Accordion Club



World's First Accordion Club 1912-2009



Newsletter for September 2009

*The
official instrument of San
Francisco!*

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Newsletter

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Message from our
Vice-President



Lark Camp

Our wonderful presi-
dent, Frank Montoro,
asked me, Lynn Ewing
(your fearless VP) to
write an account of my
musical experiences
this summer at a camp
called "Lark Camp." I'm
sure many folks are
familiar with the "Lark
in the Morning" music
store in San Francisco.
Let me quote a bit from
the website: *"Lark In
The Morning Music &
Dance Celebration was
started in 1980 to pro-
vide a venue to allow
traditional musicians
and dancers to get to-
gether and share their
music & dance (A music
& dance party with
highly educational over-
tones.)"*

Lark Camp is a

weeklong open forum for
musicians, singers &
dancers to exchange
ideas and learn without
being in a rigid school
structure, that takes
place in the beautiful
Mendocino Woodlands
Redwood forest. You
are free to take as many
or as few of the work-
shops offered as you
like; there are jam ses-
sions 24 hours a day, and
2 different big dances
every evening. Approxi-
mately 700-800 campers
participate in this event
which has plenty of good
food, new friends, and
musical stimulation
(although VERY primitive
accommodations!)

As many of you know,
I am an avid participant
in accordion events. So
much of what I have
learned has been from
the Galla Rini Camp, and
I have also been fortu-
nate to attend several
other accordion focused
events and workshops,
including the Frank Ma-
rocco Accordion Event,
The Blakely Gathering of
Friends, the Coupe
Mondiale, and the Las
Vegas Accordion Conven-

tion. And next year, I
hope that MANY people
will join us at the Accor-
dionists and Teacher's
Guild Convention, which
is being held in San Jose!
The big hole in my per-
sonal musical education
was playing with other
instruments.

I arrived up in Men-
docino after leaving
Galla Rini Camp that very
morning—a marvelous
camp directed by maes-
tro Joe Smiell. I had
sent my new Bugari home
with my husband, fearing
for its safety in what I
knew to be a damp and
dusty venue, and brought
two small accordions
with me for I didn't
know quite what. I was
prepared to spend most
of my time singing, danc-
ing, and playing recorder
with a hoped for occa-
sional jam on the accor-
dion. I imagine my sur-
prise when I discovered
that accordions, in gen-
eral, were one of the
most popular instru-
ments there!

The camp is focused
on "World Music". That
means that there are
huge contingents of peo-

Lark Camp (continued)

ple who are doing Irish music and dance, French music and dance, Balkan and Klezmer music and dance, Middle Eastern music and dance, Conjunto/Tex-mex, Choro (Brazilian), Tango, Hawaiian and many more too numerous to mention. At any given time, there were approximately thirty or forty workshops going on in everything ranging from playing Marimbas from Zimbabwe, to singing Medieval & Renaissance sacred music, to Morris and Sword dancing.

I was totally overwhelmed at **first, and didn't even know where** to show up with my little piano accordion! **I wasn't sure whether** a piano accordion was appropriate at all the button accordion venues or whether I would be welcome in **the "all instrument" ensembles** of various sorts. However, I swallowed my nerves, and began visiting the various classes. Probably the most common instrument at the camp was the violin, then the various strumming instruments like guitars, banjos and mandolins, and after that, accordions! Button accordions and piano accordions were everywhere. But there were also harps, tubas, cellos, percussion, bagpipes, brass and reeds of all sorts.

The first day I looked in on the Brazilian Choro orchestra, which was fast and furiously sight reading, directed by pianist Richard Cooper. I was one of 3 or 4 accordions in an orchestra of probably 30 instruments, and it

was terrific fun. Next I decided to do some tango dancing, and there was a lovely piano accordionist, Lorna Brown from Eureka, playing her Petosa with the piano accompanist, Richard Cooper (above.) After that I visited **Lorna's workshop "Sleazy French Café Tunes for the Piano Accordion" and when Lorna discovered** that I teach accordion, she immediately suggested that I play with the Tango pianist the next day. I did, and loved it, although it was **nerve wracking when he'd say "take it!" and there I was doing** the melody while he improvised behind me.

The French Café Tune workshop was not the right fit for me, as it was mostly beginning accordionists who didn't even read music, so I decided to check on the Klezmer ensemble. That was a marvelous learning experience, with a fabulous teacher, Ty Rust, who played tuba and bass. There were three piano accordions, a cello, several clarinets, mandolins, violins, and trumpets. I really enjoyed playing the unusual Klezmer scales, and we also did Balkan music with interesting time signatures.

I spotted Nada Lewis (Miss January 2010 of the 2009 Accordion Babes Calendar) giving workshops in Macedonian music, so I popped in, and again found myself one of 4 or 5 piano accordions along with the usual violins, etc. Nada, of course, uses the accordion as her main instrument, and asked us to

give heavy bass for a percussive effect, as well as singing in the language. After a couple of days of playing 5/8, 7/8 and 11/8 time signatures, I felt like I was finally getting the hang of it. I never had tried anything like that before, and it was a real work out for the brain. She promised us we were building new brain connections like crazy doing this!

Then I saw a handsome guy with a Sonola AA20, just like the one I played for so many years, so I struck up a conversation with him (based solely on the accordion connection of course!) He turned out to be Simo Tesla, from Atlanta, and was leading two workshops in Serbian music, which I joined. Simo was born in Serbia, then moved to Canada, and finally, to Atlanta, so he was truly an international citizen. He has been playing the accordion since childhood, and was a very fine player who had lots of good tips.

I had a lot of fun singing and dancing, bought a ukulele, and visited the Conjunto button accordion group which was a totally "by ear" experience, and dropped in on the French button and Hurdy Gurdy groups as well. I met lots of accordionists and of course encouraged them ALL to check out their local accordion clubs!

The final experience I want to tell you about was the "all instrument" midnight Bolero performance.

Prior to the camp, I had gone

Lark Camp (continued)

to their website and discovered that there was a performance of **Ravel's Bolero**, to be held with one rehearsal. I printed out the first violin part, and showed up to see what might be possible. Directing was Rebecca King, who had orchestrated the piece for a varied collection of instruments. She had inserted solos here and there, not knowing what instruments would actually show up. There were probably 50 players in this "pick up" orchestra, including recorder, banjo, vielle and other non-traditional instruments, but I was the only accordionist who dared to go where no accordion had yet ventured at this camp.

There were solos for violins, clarinets, etc, and she asked for solo volunteers. When it came time for the bassoon solo, it turned out there were no bassoons. She made some suggestions, and then said "an accordion?" So I decided it was fate and agreed to it, but then got chicken at the last moment and asked the first violin to play with me. This turned out to be a mistake in terms of the performance, as the timing was very tricky and we didn't quite stay together. But in terms of the experience, it was wonderful. I rehearsed separately with my violin partner, and he was such an interesting man and a very good player.

Playing in a big orchestra of varied instruments really was ex-

citing. The slow build up in volume was thrilling. The conductor was incredibly calm, gave encouragement and made suggestions that were very effective in bringing the whole thing together. When the 1 hour rehearsal was over, I thought "oh, my gosh, that's IT???" I had no idea how the performance would actually turn out. Although I hoped my "solo" would be perfect so that the accordion would really shine, it was not; but - it wasn't a disaster either. The place was absolutely jammed on performance night, and we received a very enthusiastic response from our audience of musicians and music lovers.

If you have never been to a music "camp", I highly recommend that you consider it. There is so much to be learned, some risks to be taken, so many wonderful people to meet, and a huge broadening of musical horizons.

Thanks for reading this lo-o-o-ng article, and thanks to Frank for encouraging me to share my experience! See you at the club meeting!

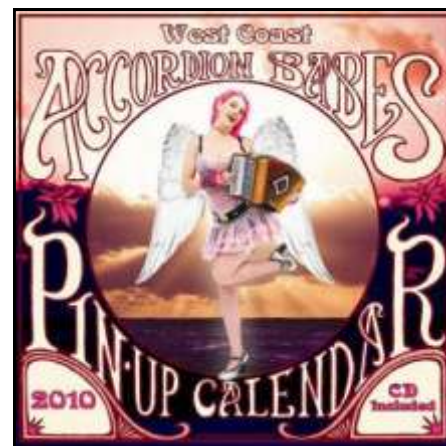
Lynn Ewing

Thank you Lynn for this fascinating account of the Lark Camp. One can feel the excitement that must have been in abundance, from your narration. To learn more about the camp, you can visit their website: www.larkcamp.com.

Randy

2010 Accordion Babes Calendar

Now on Sale!



Get your new *West Coast Accordion Babes Pin-up Calendar* for 2010 available at our monthly meetings.

For the minimal price of \$20.00 you will not only get a calendar tastefully featuring some of our own Bay Area accordion babes (some of whom are even club members), but also a CD with a song from each babe.

Don't wait! Last Year, the Calendars were sold out in almost two weeks!

CLUB BARBECUE—August '09'

The weather cooperated and camaraderie prevailed at our Second Annual SFAC Barbecue at Oyster Point Yacht Club. Tuti's barbecued chicken and all the trimmings were, as always, excellent.

Thirteen people signed up to play for "open Mic." and the music was varied and entertaining—topped off by Mario Pedone, visiting California from Texas, who wowed the crowd as he always does. Much to my (Val) delight, Mario even offered to play along on a couple of songs with me, and some others who played that day.

Open Mic. players were Val Kieser, Bob Smith, Marian Kelly/Lynn Ewing duo, Skyler Fell, Roger Cromwell, Algis Ratnikas, Ron Harris, Vince Rinaldi, Sol Fenster, George Johnstone, Jerry Choate—AND Mario Pedone. We heartily thank all those brave souls who signed up to play. You are always welcome to play at any meeting, so don't think you can only play when we have "open mic."!

This year's barbecue was terrific—just wait till NEXT year—we have plans to make it even better!



Barbara Winter, Lou DiMaggio and Michael Sanossian
Strolling musician Dennis Stoscher, in the background

Val



Jim Holliday, Barbara Winter, Michael Sanossian
and Evelyn Baulch



Ron Harris, Aldo Argenti, Mary Jo Harris & Marilyn Argenti

*Members enjoying
refreshments,
great music and
camaraderie!*

CLUB BARBECUE—August '09' - More Photos!



Mario Pedone— Our surprise guest!



Jerry Choate and Mario Pedone performing together



Bob Smith

*Some of our
entertainers for
the afternoon!*



Algis Ratnikas



Lynn Ewing and Marian Kelly



Roger Cromwell

News and Announcements

More performers at the Barbecue!



Sklyer Fell, Melody Guzman and Walter Traverso

Walter Traverso was in for a surprise. He recognized an instrument he had made many years ago—**being played by Melody Guzman in Sklyer Fell's act.** Walter was delighted to see his handiwork still in use and sounding great!



For Jim Firpo (seated) the Barbecue was a family affair. Judging by the smiles it looks like everyone had a great time!



The San Francisco Accordion Band Out and About!

You can often find the San Francisco Accordion Band playing at varied and diverse venues around the Bay Area, serving as ambassadors for the Accordion and for our club.

Below, the band received a letter of thanks from **Tom Cordoni, the founder of the annual "Celebrate the Accordion" event in Petaluma, for their participation this year.**

At the beginning of August, the band played at the memorial service for Clyde Forsman, and later in August, the band performed the final concert of the Corte Madera Summer Concert Series at the Piccolo Pavilion in Corte Madera. Each year the band is asked to play in the Concert Series, and each year the audience is larger and more enthusiastic.

Keep up with the SFAC Band News in our Newsletter to find out where they'll be playing next!



Tom Cordoni "Music You Will Remember"

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August 8, 2009

Dear Val and the San Francisco Accordion Band,

GRAZIE! GRACIAS! THANK YOU!

I would like to thank each of you for participating in this year's "Celebrate the Accordion" event. Once again, your talent, enthusiasm and love of the accordion brought a little something extra to the day. This year's event was one of the best we have ever had.

Each celebration, for the past seven years, has had its highlights. The highlights were your dedication and wonderful performances along with all the other talented men, women and children who have performed so well. Each year I wondered why so many of our "accordion aficionado" friends were missing.

This year we were fortunate to have Gary and Preston, marvelous sound techs, who monitored everyone's performance and added that extra punch to all of our acts. We were also fortunate to have Soordough Slim join us this year. If you were not able to enjoy his performance, you missed a great show.

As someone once said, "Volunteers are not paid – not because they are worthless, but because they are priceless."

Sincerely,



Tom Cordoni

News and Announcements (continued)

Coming Soon

We are working to make the SFAC Newsletter available to members via on-line access.

Members electing to receive their newsletter via online access would no longer receive a printed copy mailed to them, but instead, would receive a monthly notice via email, when the newsletter is available, along with information on how to access and save the newsletter locally.

Because the newsletter is one of the benefits funded by your annual dues, access to the recent and current monthly newsletters would not be made available to the general public, and would require a special User Name and Password, included in your email notification when the new Newsletter is ready.

The newsletter is delivered in the popular PDF format and the PDF viewer is free and is already installed on most computers. Download time to view the newsletter takes from 10 to 75 seconds if you have DSL or Cable (Dial-up will be slower), depending on the speed of your connection and computer.

Signing up to receive your newsletter via online access has the following benefits:

1. You can view the newsletter in color. Almost all of the photographs in the newsletter are actually in color, but to contain printing costs, most of the newsletter issues are printed in black and white.
2. You will have earlier access to the newsletter. There will be no waiting for the postman. As soon as you receive the email notifying you that the newsletter is ready, you may access it. Notification to you can come as soon as the newsletter is sent to the print shop.
3. You can save a copy of the newsletter to your computer. Once you have saved the file to your computer, you no longer have to go on-line to view it. It is readily available for you to quickly view and/or print at any time. There is no need to worry about a misplaced printed copy.

4. You will help save the club money in both printing expense and postage fees. It seems printing costs and postage fees are continually increasing. Saving the club money helps to keep annual dues as low as possible.
5. You are saving the environment. The less paper we use, the less trees cut down, the less printing chemicals introduced into the environment, and the less refuse generated.

Take a test drive!

We have set up a "demo" of sorts, so that anyone interested can take a test drive ahead of time to get an idea of how the on-line Newsletter access will work. We have posted the June newsletter in a members only location. Since this is a prototype, we have not added all the bells and whistles or made it pretty—that will come when we actually go live.

To take the test drive, type or cut and paste the following web address into the address box of your internet browser (e.g. Explorer or Firefox), and press the enter key:

www.sfaccordionclub.com/members

A dialogue box will soon display asking you to enter a User Name and password. For this test drive only, for the User Name, type in randallh and for the password, type in valerie. Press OK.

Next a page will display with a listing of the available Newsletters (in the test drive there will only be one). Click on the link [SFCA-June 2009 NL.pdf](#).

In 10 to 75 seconds, the file should display on your monitor. If you receive a message about Adobe Acrobat reader being required, you will need to download the software, but it is free and the message will instruct you where and how to do so. From **then on you'll always have this useful tool for reading** any file in PDF format.

If you have questions or to enroll, please feel free to contact Randy Hicks by email at: hickr01@sprintmail.com.

News and Announcements (continued)

Our Sincere Thanks!

To those who so generously donated to our club this past membership year. Those who donated are: Randall Hicks, Bruce Kirschner, Grigoriy Krulik, André Paris, Alexander Roitman, Maryanne Romanowski and her company Care2.com Inc., Amil Samayoa, Michael Sanossian, Ivan Sarkany & Mark Zhagel.

Next month the new membership year begins, and already we are receiving many donations accompanying the renewals. We look forward to presenting a new list of donors for the current membership year in the October Newsletter.

If you have donated and your name doesn't show up in this column, please contact Val at (510) 531-4836 or vt-kacc@ifn.net and let her know. Your donations are greatly appreciated and we want to be sure you are recognized!

Mark your Calendars

La Vegas International Accordion Convention October 19-22 Gold Coast Hotel and Casino. Phone (800) 472-1695 or email vegas@AccordionInfo.com

Accordion Cruise Festival April 17-24, 2010. San Francisco Accordion Club members are invited to

receive a € 25 per person discount on 1 or 2 bed bookings in a double cabin. For more details visit the English language section of www.fisarmonicheincrociera.com.

2010 Accordionists and Teachers Guild Competition and Festival in August, 2010. It is never too soon to mark your calendars for this event being held in our own back yard (San Jose). Specific dates and more details will follow.

Executive Board Notes— Elections September 20th—don't miss out!

Elections for the Executive Board will take place at our monthly meeting September 20. At present, the nominating committee has the following nominations: President—Frank Montoro; Vice President—Lynn Ewing; Secretary—Val Kieser; Treasurer—Marian Kelly; Directors at large—Aldo Argenti, Skyler Fell, and Sharon Walters-Greyhosky. In addition, as the Newsletter Editor, Randy Hicks is automatically appointed to the Executive Board as a Director at Large. Additional nominations can be accepted from the floor at the meeting, prior to taking the vote.

Membership Renewal

Last month, renewal forms were distributed with the Newsletter to those members whose membership is up for renewal (excluding lifetime and honorary members, gift memberships and those members already prepaid). This is a reminder **that if you haven't yet done so, please send in your renewal form and payment to Val Kieser and be part of our club for another exciting year.** If you have a question regarding your renewal status or need a renewal form, please contact Val Kieser at (510) 531-4836 or vt-kacc@ifn.net.

San Francisco Accordion Band News

The San Francisco Accordion Band is busily preparing a program of German music to be performed in a joint Oktoberfest program with the *Deutscher Musikverein German Band* at the Park Chalet Restaurant in Golden Gate Park on Saturday, September 26 from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m..

The setting is out of doors and attendees are encouraged to bring their own folding lawn chair. A BBQ lunch and plenty of beer will be available for purchase. Members are encouraged to attend for an afternoon of great food and music.

SFAC Scholarship Program

Scholarships are awarded each April and October. The new scholarship guidelines have been established and were presented in the August Newsletter. Contact Randy Hicks at hickr01@sprintmail.com if you need a copy. Applications are available at the monthly meetings or from any board member and must be returned by the end of either March or September to be considered for award the following month.

Reminder to teachers: the current deadline for submitting scholarship applications is by the end of September, for awarding in October. Applications should be sent to Aldo Argenti, 836 Hillcrest Drive, Redwood City, CA 94062

News and Announcements (continued)

Who is performing around the Bay?

Steve Balich, North Bay (707) 874-3494

Ron Borelli, Peninsula (650) 574-5707
rborelli@aol.com

Renée de la Prade, **Culann's Hounds**,
San Francisco www.sfhounds.com

Richard Denier, Carmel rdenier@sbcglobal.net

Peter Di Bono, San Francisco
peterdsf@gmail.com

Reno Di Bono, South Bay
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William De Michelis, South Bay
wdd777@comcast.net

Bruce Kirschner and The Klezmakers,
kirschner@aol.com
www.klezmakers.com

Joe Domitrowich, South Bay
www.capricious-accordion.com or
www.alpinerusa.com

Don Nurisso, nurisso@mindspring.com
Mike Zampiceni, South Bay eclecticguy@comcast.net

Due Zighi Baci, (Sheri Mignano) San
Francisco www.zighibaci.com or
zighi@sonic.net



Please Remember!

To leave our meeting hall at the beautiful Oyster Point Yacht Club clean! Please clean up any food or drink spills and toss out paper plates, napkins, cups, etc. before leaving. Thank you!

SF Accordion Band Practice

Wednesdays, September 9 and 23,
7:00 p.m. at Val Kieser's home in Oakland. Please CALL AHEAD in case there is a change. Everyone is welcome to join. For more information, contact Val (510) 531-4836 or vtkacc@ifn.net

Our Neighboring Bay Area Accordion Clubs

Accordion Club of the Redwoods (ACR) meets monthly on the third Monday, 7:30 p.m. at Hermann & Sons Hall, 860 Western Avenue, Petaluma. Contact: Kris Nelson krisnelson@aol.com or (707) 795-4860

Silicon Valley Accordion Society (SVAS) **meets monthly on the first Sunday, 1:30 at Harry's Hofbrau, 390 Saratoga Avenue between Keily Blvd and Stevens Creek Blvd, San Jose.** Contact: Bill Toponga (408) 984-5290

Golden State Accordion Club (GSAC). The Vacaville Chapter meets monthly on the second Tuesday, 6:30 p.m. at Creekside Bar & Grill, 555 Main Street, Vacaville. The Humboldt Chapter meets monthly on the third Tuesday, 7:00 p.m. at Humboldt Swiss Club, 5403 Tompkins Hill Road, Loleta. The Sacramento Chapter meets monthly on the fourth Wednesday, 6:30 p.m. at the Dante Club, 2330 Fair Oaks Blvd, Sacramento. Contact for all three Chapters: Carole Enneking (707) 864-2359

Good Time Accordion Club (GTAC) meets monthly on the second Wednesday, 7:00 p.m. at Escalon Community Center, 1055 Escalon Ave, Escalon. Contact: (209) 545-3603

Northern California Accordion Society (NCAS) meets monthly on the first Wednesday, 6:30 p.m. at Lutheran Church Hall, 6365 Douglas, Blvd, off Hwy 80, Granite Bay, CA. Contact: Vince Cukar (916) 791-3041

Your Club Wants YOU!!

Don't panic— we want you to play for our musical meetings! If you think you aren't ready for the "big time" (stage) just yet, please consider playing a piece or two before the meeting and/or during intermission! Don't be shy—we are a very forgiving, appreciative and supportive audience! Just contact any of our friendly board members listed on the front of the newsletter.

SFAC Membership—the new membership year is about to begin—don't forget to renew!

\$30.00 per year for individual or family membership. Meeting admission is \$5.00 for members and \$7.00 for guests. For membership renewal, please send a check to: S.F.A.C., c/o Valerie Kieser, 3437 Crane Way, Oakland, CA 94602. For new members, please include your name and address along with your check, as well as a phone number and email address, if available.

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SFAC Newsletter Ad Policy

Members may place one small ad for one month free of charge in a given year; after that the charge is \$6.00 per issue. A business-card-size ad costs \$6 per issue or \$60 per year for members; a quarter-page ad costs \$15.00 for members; a half-page ad costs \$25 for members. A full-page ad costs \$50.00 for members. Discount available for ongoing ads. Ads placed by non-members will cost twice the above-quoted prices. A flyer advertising an event may be included in one issue for \$25 for members, \$30 for non-members.

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Our thanks to the late cartoonist:

Charles Schulz



NEXT MEETING:



Sunday, September 20, 2009
2:00 p.m. Oyster Point Yacht Club



Entertainment:

Ron Harris
Frank Montoro
Grigoriy Krumik and Vladimir Zagadsky

Directions to Oyster Point Yacht Club, 911 Marina Blvd, South San Francisco:
From 101 traveling either North or South, take the Oyster Point exit. Turn right onto Marina Blvd. (be careful not to turn right onto Gull Drive, just before Marina Blvd.). Continue past the gate house to the sign "Oyster Point Yacht Club." There is plenty of parking and ramp access.

And come visit us online at our newly upgraded website: www.sfaccordionclub.com

*Newsletter of the
San Francisco Accordion Club*

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