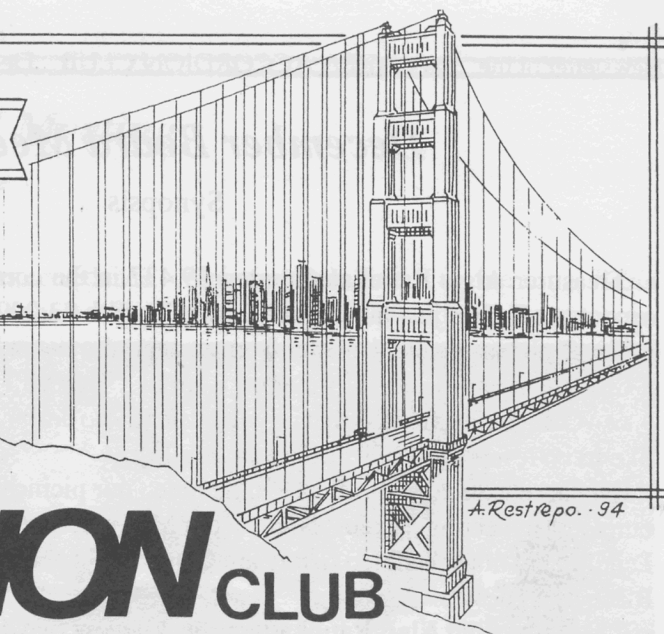


BAY AREA

ACCORDION CLUB

DECEMBER, 1995



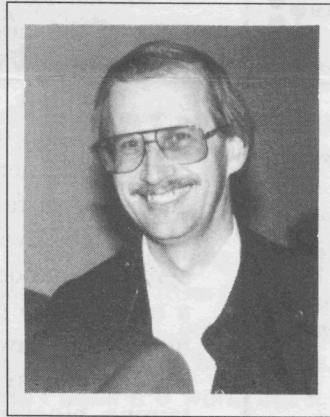
PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Bob Berta

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

You know how it goes. The New Year's Resolutions are broken on the first day of the new year. I for one would like to make a few resolutions that I WON'T break. And since I am writing them down for all to see you will be my support group.

1. I will encourage each of our members to try to find some closet accordionists to join our club. If every member found a couple of new members our club would grow beyond our wildest dreams.
2. I will spread the word that 1996 is "THE YEAR OF THE ACCORDION".
3. I will encourage ALL members of our club to play for us in some capacity. I am always amazed at the quality of members we have but am discouraged that there aren't even more of them playing for us. We don't care what type of music you like, what your skill level is, etc. We want to SHARE your love of the accordion and the only way to do that is for you to play for us.
4. I will seek new ways to improve our



club. We aren't perfect....but we are getting there!

5. I will spread the "religion" of the accordion to other members of the community. We know how great the accordion is but we need to get beyond "preaching to the choir." Let's develop new ways to let others hear our music.
6. I will explore other cultures/music styles that use accordion. Latin, Tango, music of the British Isles, these are just some of the areas left for us to tap.

Achieving success in my resolutions needs support. You are my support. Together we can make this club even better and the envy of clubs throughout the world.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

January 3rd, Wed. BAAC Board Meeting, 7:30PM at Ed Massolo's, 612 Lassen, So. S.F. Guests welcome. Call Ed at 589-8409 for directions.

January 8th, Monday. (Note the date....the *second* Monday.) BAAC General Meeting. featuring Rick Bez, Curt Van Neck, Ted Varga, first-time players Bill Dickey, Ken Chambers and Joe Domitrowich. Previously announced guest Ken Olendorf will be unable to attend. Donworth Hall, 22nd and Eucalyptus, S.F., just north of Stonestown Shopping Ctr. 7PM.

January 10th, Wednesday 7:00 PM. BAAC Accordion Practice, House of Parties. Call Joe, 510-832-6938.

February 5th, Monday. BAAC General Meeting with the new duet of Sev Garcia and Bart Beninco. More later.

March 8 - 10, 1996. Texas Accordion Association Convention in Fort Worth. Call Norman Seaton at (214) 270-3791.

July 14, Sunday. BAAC Picnic. Swiss Park in Newark.

August 17th, Saturday. BAAC Inauguration and Honors Dinner. Plan to attend!

August 24th and 25th. Cotati Accordion Festival. To be held at the same location, the Cotati Plaza.

December Board Meeting

Synopsis

- Treasurer Algis Ratnikas reported \$9,437 in the combined checking and savings accounts. He has just taken out a 6 mo CD with \$3,000 of the money in savings.
- The Club has received a letter from an accordionist in Puerto Rico who is setting up a Club there and wants information from us. Bob will handle.
- Ken Olendorf has told us that he will be unable to be our January guest artist but would like to be rescheduled. April is a possibility.
- Events scheduled so far for 1996 include: our picnic on July 14th, Dessert Night at our August meeting, Ladies' Night at our May meeting, and Swap Night in September. Pending but not scheduled firmly are Cajun Night and either Ken Olendorf or Bonnie Birch as a guest.
- Ed Massolo and Algis Ratnikas are checking out two desirable locations for a dinner on August 17th which will be both an inauguration of new officers and a time to recognize unusual contributions to BAAC. All members will be invited. Save the date!
- Henceforth, the raffle will be held shortly after intermission rather than at the end of the program when everyone has already started to leave.
- Joe Smiell reminded us that "we don't do enough for kids." His recommendation that we set up an achievement award for deserving young people in the form of a \$100

stipend was agreed to by the Board.

- Marian raised the issue of the care and feeding of new members. Currently, we do little or nothing to welcome new members and help them feel part of our club. Everyone agreed. Some ideas are a membership packet including by-laws, and a questionnaire containing biographical information which could then be used in the newsletter. She will follow up.

MK

STAS!!!

I've listened to the CD which Stas sent to BAAC along with his Christmas greetings (see p. 7), and find it of a very high quality. One particularly appealing characteristic is the diversity of music which he has included. When he visited us a bit more than a year ago, he had recognized that his Russian repertoire was a bit heavy for American ears. He need no longer worry about that. He moves from long-time accordion standards as *Jolly Caballero* and *Carnival of Venice* to *Flight of the Angels*, *Jalousie*, *La Violetera*, and *Flight of the Bumble Bee* as if he had cut his teeth on them. Then comes a breathtaking rendition of *Miss Karting* by Andre Astier, and a brilliant *Toccata and Fugue in D* by Bach.

This quality CD was cut in Chicago by Sunlight Records, Inc. To order a copy, call them at 1-800-364-8611. Credit card accepted.

MK



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CELEBRATE THE ACCORDION!!!

1996 IS THE YEAR OF THE ACCORDION!!

December General Meeting

by Denny Huff

Merry Christmas!! Master of Ceremonies, **Domenic Saso**, was already in a festive mood as he welcomed everyone to the Annual Christmas Meeting. First up was President **Bob Berta**, who, unfortunately, had a difficult subject to address. **Bob** asked that we all observe a moment of silence in memory of **Harry Liedtke**, who passed away in November. **Harry** was an outstanding musician as well as a very good accordionist. He loved the accordion and fully participated in the BAAC Ensemble despite the incapacitation of his illness. R.I.P. Harry.

Our first player was **Kelly Koehn**, whom we are lucky enough to hear play several times a year. And each time we see another big improvement. **John Molinari**, her teacher, was with her on stage to turn pages and (I'll guess) lend moral support. She didn't need it. Her first number was a selection which had been arranged for the accordion by John, and it sounded very accomplished. But I was most impressed by her second number, *Waltz of the Flowers* from the Nutcracker. It was a long and difficult piece — not one which most newer players would feel confident playing. **Kelly** did just great. At one or two points she had to pause for a second, after which she con-

tinued on without allowing her confidence or poise to be affected in the least. She provided some fine music and displayed great maturity.

Next was a quintet comprised of **Val Kieser**, **Nora Mazzara**, **Mary-Alice Eldon**, **Bob Smith**, and **Joe Smiell**, who played **Harry Liedtke's** part — and not an easy one at

that, said **Joe**. They played several enjoyable numbers, but the most interesting had to be the first. Table music by Mozart. Whatever that meant. So **Joe** told us. Mozart had intended the music to be a duet, with each player reading the same identical piece of music from opposite sides of a table. In essence, one player plays the music completely "backwards." You wouldn't think it'd work, but it sounded quite good. Mozart really was a genius. Other pieces included a Mozart Minuet from *Don Giovanni*, *Jesu* by Bach, and *El Paso Pierino*. They must have put in a lot of practice sessions, because they sounded excellent.

Bob Smith remained on stage for an additional song. We'd have liked to have heard more, and **Bob** is always game to play, but the program was

long and **Bob** held it to one song, *Basin Street Blues*. It would only be notewor-

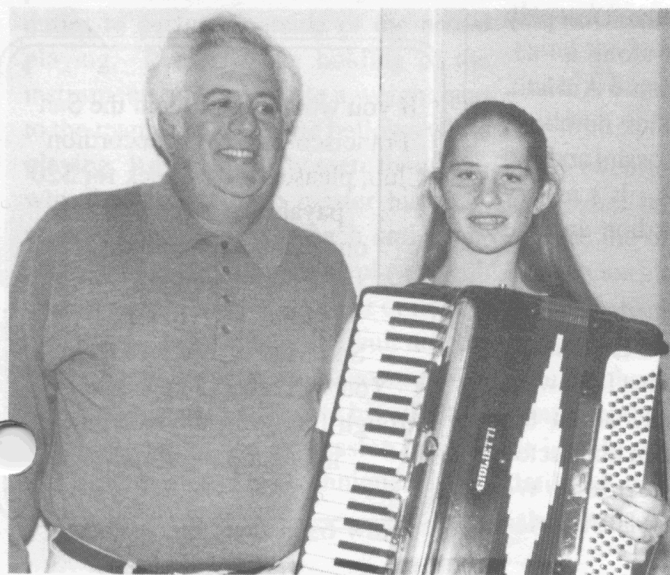


Val Kieser, Nora Mazzara, Mary-Alice Eldon

thy if **Bob** didn't do his usual accomplished job, so there isn't much to report. **Bob** sounded quite at home with the blues although we don't get to hear him play it much. Thanks, **Bob**.

Former Chief Executive, **Frank Montoro**, set up on stage next and gave us another mini-seminar on the MIDI. (I guess that would be a mini-midi-seminar.) **Frank** explained he felt more comfortable with noise in the background and invited everyone to dance. An invitation which was accepted by a number of couples including a few "ringers" which **Frank** had recruited from his delightful family. **Frank** played several dance medleys featuring swing, cha cha and other dance styles. *Besame Mucho*, *Cherry Pink and Apple Blossom White* and *Makin' Whoopee* were a few of the tunes which I especially liked. **Frank** finished up with a great favorite, *Kansas City*. Another good job, **Frank**!

Next was the now traditional **Lou Soper** Christmas Sing-Along. Is it just me or does **Lou's** voice improve each year? He

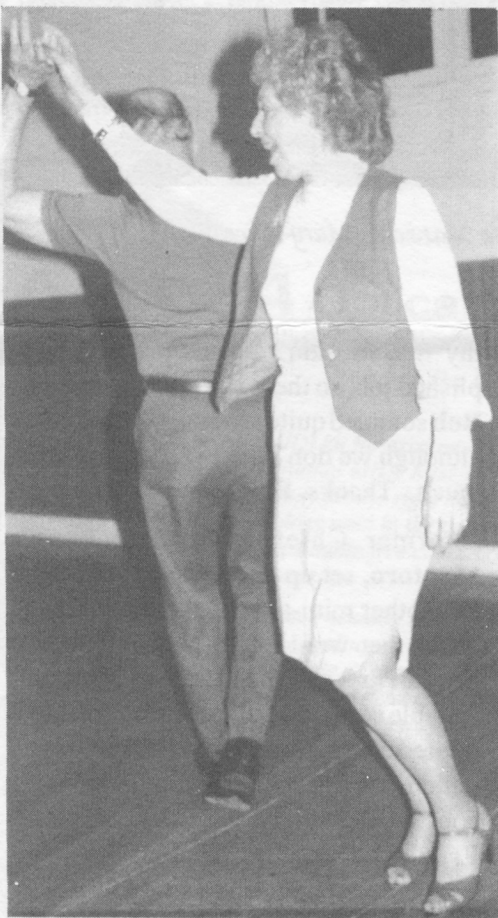


John Molinari, Kelly Koehn

December General Meeting, cont.

sounded terrific, but the real fun was jumping in and singing along. And of course we had a visit from Santa Claus, who handed out candy canes to all the good little boys and girls. We must all be dutifully practicing on our accordions, because he didn't miss any of us. Thanks, Santa!and don't forget I want one of those new Petosa tuba bass accordions. If it doesn't fit in the chimney, just ring the door bell.

Marian Kelly did a short demo of the accordion mounted, mini-MIDI retrofit



Jim Holliday, Evelyn Baulch

module being offered by **Faithe Deffner** of Ernest Deffner Accordions. It's a versatile and clever electronic device which provides considerable added flexibility with obvious ease and without endless equipment. It sounded like more

than enough for the "average" player, if there is such a thing as an average accordion player. But what I really liked was **Marian** playing a few simple and traditional songs to demonstrate the equipment. *Silver Bells*, *Greensleeves*, and *Clarinet Polka*, to name a few. I really like *Clarinet Polka*, and I just struggle to play it half way correctly, but **Marian** knocked it out without a second thought.

We usually see **Don Nurisso** in the Ensemble or a group, so it's nice to hear him play solo occasionally.

Don said that he has recently been playing some music which is a little different from his usual jazzy fare. He started with a difficult number which I've only heard the best players attempt....*Pietro's Return* by Pietro Diero. I suspect there's a good story behind the title, but until **Joe** reveals it to us in one of his classic sessions, I'll be content to settle for listening to great players like **Don** play the piece. **Don** brought along an accompanying violinist, **Cosmo Antista**. They played, among other numbers, *Serenato Primavera* by Rossini and *Everything Happens to Me*. It's a very good marriage, the accordion and the violin.

The crowd pleasing end to the evening was provided by the **BAAC Ensemble**, led by **Joe Smiell**. **Joe** had what I felt were some inspiring words to say about the *National Anthem*, and he then conducted the group in its playing. Great job! We quickly went to some traditional Austrian

music, which has become popular for dancing in Europe. A Boarischer. The following numbers included *Great Gate of Kiev*, *God of Our Fathers*, and Anderson's



Lou Soper, Frank Montoro

Syncopated Clock. It was obvious that the band members took their roles very seriously and had prepared well for the performance. (They didn't mention whether they were planning a group trip to Sweden.) Let's hear them again soon.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, everybody!!

If you would like to join the San Francisco Bay Area Accordion Club, please send a check for \$20 payable to BAAC to our Financial Secretary, Frank Montoro, 1448 Tarrytown San Mateo, CA. 94402. You will receive newsletters through June '96. We welcome all interested persons!

IMPRESSIONS

by Eino Huhtala

While rummaging through ancient papers I came by chance upon a yellowed, torn and dog-eared 65-year old copy of a 45 page edition of "School of Velocity" for the accordion by Pietro Deiro, copyright 1930 by "O Pagani and Bro." "Price \$1.00 net."

This publication, like others by different artists and teachers, was designed to develop the hands and fingers of potential accordionists. After reading Pietro's forward to the publication, I concluded that the philosophy expressed 65 years ago remains valid today. To most old timers this teaching is "old hat"; however our younger prospective accordionists may gain some benefit from it. I am inserting a copy of it into our newsletter with the hope that it will motivate our younger aspiring musicians.

FOREWARD to Velocity Studies

by Pietro Deiro

Technique is a factor which no musician can afford to overlook. The lack of it can be the greatest stumbling block of a musician's career. Although technique is essential on each and every musical instrument, it is particularly necessary when one has chosen the piano accordion as his instrument. While playing the piano accordion one has many additional duties to perform outside of the actual playing. I refer to the holding of the instrument, which is quite a weight, and to the manipulation of the bellows while playing. It can be readily seen, therefore, why the student must master his technique to a point where each and every passage of a selection can be played with ease at a rapid tempo, whether or not the arrangement of notes is difficult and the time complicated. A piano accordionist will never be able to devote his attention to interpretation and expression until he has fully mastered his technique.

Realizing the great need which piano

accordionists have had for special exercises to train them for rapid playing with ease, I have arranged these Velocity Studies for the Piano Accordion. I have endeavored to have this book of studies comprise special exercises for the training of all muscles in both the right and left hand. I urge the student to bear in mind while practicing these exercises that it is not a question so much of reading through the notes, but it is a question of systematic muscle training. Naturally the notes will seem simple and the inclination will be to hurry through the various exercises, but in so doing the students defeats the purpose of the book.

Each exercise should be played through very slowly the first time and while playing, the student should bear in mind that the wrist must be relaxed and the action of the bellows must be gradual and never jerky. After the exercise has been played through slowly, it should then be played at a slightly increased tempo, and so on, until it can be played correctly at a very rapid tempo with the same relaxed wrist and gradual bellows movement. To be more explicit, perfect each exercise until you can play it very rapidly without seeming to make hard work of it. What is more tiresome than to go to any form of entertainment and witness a musician struggle through his performance as though it were about the hardest bit of work he had ever done? There is only one cause for this, and it is lack of technique.

My twenty years of vaudeville and concert work has enabled me to poignantly realize the obstacles which will confront the novice piano accordionist. If you contemplate doing public playing it is essential that you be able to play the selection you are about to present just twice as fast as you intend to play it in front of the public. It is only when your technique has been built up to this point that you can feel absolutely sure of your playing.

Pietro Deiro

INTRODUCING..KEN CHAMBERS

Ken Chambers, a relatively new BAAC member whom we haven't previously heard, has provided us with information about himself and about his BAAC debut on January 8th. Here are brief excerpts from the material which Ken sent.

Born in Santa Rosa in 1948. Music has always been a part of his life, first listening to his parents play the violin and later playing violin and bugle himself. At age 10, Ken began his accordion training with Guido Canevari; later study was with John Molinari. In 1967, Ken also began serious study of the trumpet.

Professional accordion experiences include a dance combo in the 60's and Fiddler on the Roof with Hershel Bernardi in Philadelphia.

Ken feels fortunate to have been able to share his love for the theater and for music and dance with all of his four daughters, who have performed with him in Santa Rosa.

Playing accordion is his favorite avocation, but his vocation for the past twenty-five years has been as President of Jim & Jim's, a Yamaha Dealer in Santa Rosa.

Ken's BAAC program will include Chopin's *Valse in C# Minor*, *Cathedral in Ruins* by Vaclav Trojan, and Stephen Foster's *Beautiful Dreamer*.

Contact Phone #s for Officers and Board Members:

Pres: Bob Berta	(415) 756-8309
V.P. Joe Smiell	(510) 832-6938
Treas. Algis Ratnikas	(415) 587-9910
Record.Sect. Val Kieser	(510) 531-4836
Finan. Sect. Frank Montoro	(415) 574-4757
Mary-Alice Eldon	(415) 366-7819
Marian Kelly	(415) 854-1896
Frank Panacci	(415) 731-1039
Frank Schlotter	(510) 339-8657
Bob Smith	(415) 856-9321

Accordion Art Festival

Beijing, China

August 10 - 14, 1995

The Second International Accordion Art Festival was held in Beijing this past summer. Five accordionists from other countries were invited to concertize, bringing various musical highlights and styles to the Chinese audiences.

We've already heard from Veikko Ahvenainen, who represented Finland. Representing the U.S. was SMSgt William Popp, noted accordionist of the U.S. Air Force Band. Campbell Bettridge and Yogi Martin represented New Zealand, and our friend Barbara Ann Martindale was honored to represent Canada.

Festival events took place at Beijing University where the opening gala concert was staged in a sold-out auditorium of 2,500 seats and included a mass accordion orchestra of 100 specially auditioned Chinese accordion students. One group had traveled by train for three days and three nights to participate.

BAAC has received an extensive report including lots of pictures from Barbara Ann, whose enthusiasm for the event sounds like it's still holding. She reports

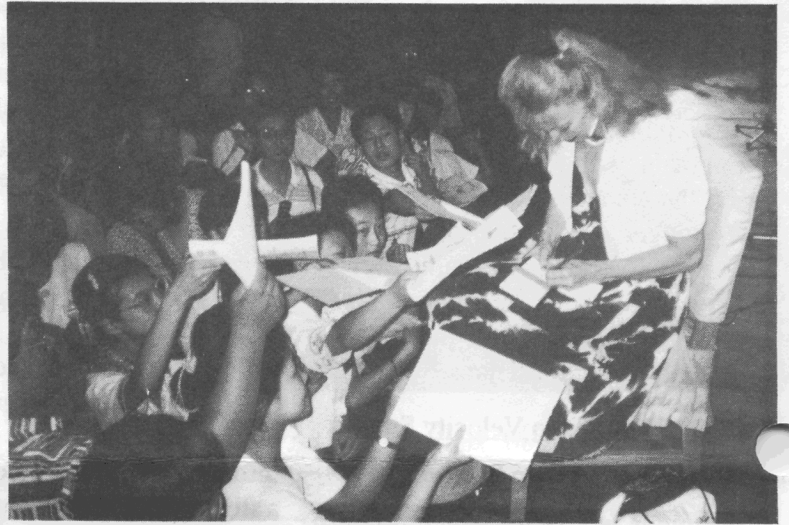
that her own concert took place on August 11th in a "small" concert hall which seated 800 people. She played for an hour and twenty minutes a wide variety of both classical and non-classical pieces and sang with several of them, much as she did when she played for BAAC in May of 1993. This resulted in her signing hundreds of autographs after the concert and for the following four Festival days.

On August 12th, Barbara Ann gave a 1-hour lecture on the status of the accordion in Canada, working with visuals and with a Chinese translator. Another exciting new experience!!

She was greatly impressed by the vast numbers of accordion students in China. The local teacher/conductor, Mr. Jiang Jie, runs a school with 10 teachers and

1,000 students. Accordion orchestras typically number 100 players!

She reports that the five guests were hosted superbly, transported to all the necessary sights in Beijing via air-condi-



tioned mini-bus. One highlight was a trip to the Great Wall, where they all posed on the Wall with their instruments.

Here are just a couple of the many pictures which Barbara Ann sent to us. If anyone would like to see the whole diary, please contact Bob Berta.

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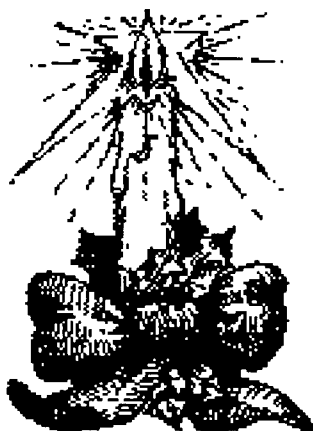
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From Stas (Stanislav) Venglevski (who performed for us and at Cotati in 1994): This is just a brief note to send holiday greetings to you and the nice friends I made in the San Francisco Bay Area Accordion Club. Please extend personal greetings to Frank Montoro and Ed Massolo for me.

My new CD has just been released, and I've enclosed a copy. In addition to some classical and light classical selections, it

includes some Argentinean tangos with string and piano accompaniment. My best wishes for a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Cordially, Stas.

From Veikko Ahvenainen: a Christmas Card which reads: "Christmas Greetings and Best Wishes for a New Year of Happiness to all friends of the Club, Sincerely, Veikko Ahvenainen."

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