

Silicon Valley Accordion Society

April 2020

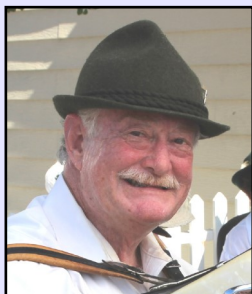
It is quite clear that the Corona virus crisis will force cancellation of the Society's meetings for many months to come. Fingers crossed that some easing of restrictions will begin soon. But our membership and visitors include many in higher-risk categories. For them, restrictions will continue, probably until true treatments and vaccines emerge. Breaking the transmission chains by self-isolation and social-distancing are primitive responses. But, they seem to be the only options that actually work. The end result is going to be continued restrictions on our meetings for many months (think next year, and hope that is too pessimistic.)

NO SVAS MEETINGS FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE.

The Board has discussed the status of the monthly Newsletter, via e-mail. It seems that we have three options:

1. Continue, somewhat along the lines of this April issue, with general articles about accordions, performers, an occasional sheet of music (from copyright-free sources!), guest articles, items of interest to our membership, and lighter articles, as you'll find in this edition.
2. Reduce the Newsletter to a two-page (one sheet) version, that includes a few of the above items.
3. Put the Newsletter into hibernation, ie stop production pending the resumption of monthly meetings. We could send out an occasional e-mails to the members (and letter mail to members with no e-mail address) as occasional interesting items arise. We are leaning towards this option.

Can you let Bill or another Board Member how you feel? There is more news about the immediate future on page 2. Stay patient, and safe!



The Prez says: "Stay safe and well."

Hi, everyone! We surely missed our monthly get-together on April 5, and I especially missed the opportunity to wish everyone a very HAPPY EASTER!!! I hope yours was as enjoyable as the current restrictions on travel and other social gatherings would permit. For many, myself included, Easter is a special and favorite time of the year. The religious observations, the beautiful weather and flowers and of course, the Easter Bunny! And chocolate! And the music ("*Easter Parade*" comes immediately to mind). I am writing this on Easter Sunday, so all this is uppermost in my mind. (Gloria is baking---a *Chocolate--cake!* Can't wait!)

We will also be missing our May meeting, which was scheduled to be our annual "Spring Fling" featuring entertainment by all our membership. I sincerely hope that we can catch up with that later in the year, if this health crisis will permit. All of our music activities, including SVAS meetings, Sunday Seven and Happy Days band activities, as well as "Vic & Friends" entertainment venues have been suspended until the Government and our host Church allow resumption of these activities. Well, actually, until the virus allows.

There's a question about the immediate future of this Newsletter. It ain't exactly free to print and mail, and to preserve the Society's finances until such time as we restart, we are planning to put the Newsletter into hibernation. **This will be the last full version until we restart.** We may have an occasional single sheet mailing, and emails, especially as restart approaches. Please let me or any Board member know of any suggestions, or how you feel on this topic.

Please do everything you can to stay safe and well!

This is going to be a most memorable year, not only because of the SARS-CoV-19 pandemic, but also the Presidential election coming up *really soon!* and all the drama that will unfold leading up to that---and afterward!

In 1918, just as WWI was coming to a conclusion, the whole World and the United States experienced a most devastating flu epidemic, with over a half-million deaths! But then, as now, we ultimately, prevailed. WE ARE AMERICANS, AND WE SHALL PREVAIL NOW AS WE DID THEN!! We will defeat this crisis!

Music is a great healer, and I have read many stories about folks playing their instruments in their front yard, and dancing and singing. (Note the photo of our own **Barbara Corsiglia** playing her concertina in her driveway!) **Misha, Colette, Marybarbara, Tseli and Roy Helsing** (Ken Caple's newest addition to his Happy Days Band) are collaborating on an audio-video presentation of a couple of 2-3-4-part renditions of tunes provided by Colette! "*Necessity is the Mother of invention*" they say, and this is a great example of it. Of course, it helps if you are computer literate and "Tech Savvy", which I am not! And, **Jim True**, a long-time (think grammar school!) friend of mine, (who I haven't seen in quite a while,) is a guitar player. Jim just got in touch with me. He told me that he has taken up the violin. We are anxiously looking forward to getting together and, who knows, maybe playing together at a future SVAS meeting. Some examples of some good and fun things coming out of this unpleasant situation!

Another comment on this strange edition of the Society's newsletter: we finally have a chance to thank our Reporters! Every month they write up a memorable account of the recent meeting. I know that it brings back memories of what I experienced, and on the (very) rare occasions when I was absent, I can see how it all went down in my mind's eye. Thanks to every reporter.

On a final note, we received a nice Thank You note from **Bob and Kris Stanfield** expressing their thanks and appreciation for the flowers, notes of condolences and well-wishes from SVAS members following the tragic death of their son Scott.

That's all, Folks! Bill Tapogna

**VISIT OUR WEBSITE at SVASociety.org and visit us on Facebook
Watch Pam's Videos of SVAS meetings on YouTube at: [accordionpam](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCv8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8)**

Playing
LIGHT
has never
sounded so
good!



- *Compatto*: 34/96 - 4/4 LMMH or LMMM
Only 20 pounds
- *Little Pro*: 26/72 - 3/4 LMM
Only 14 pounds and sounds like a full sized accordion!
- Amazing projection and tone
- Superb compression and balance
- When was the last time your accordion inspired you? These will every time you pick them up - and your back will thank you!

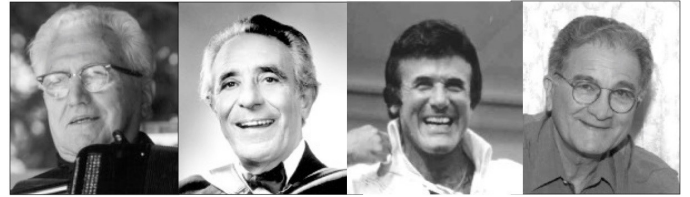
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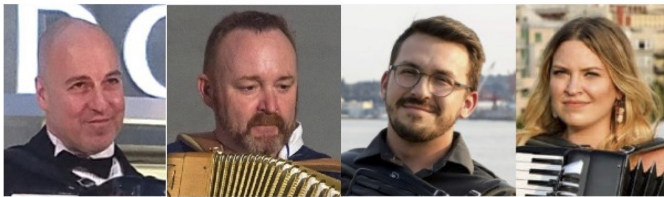
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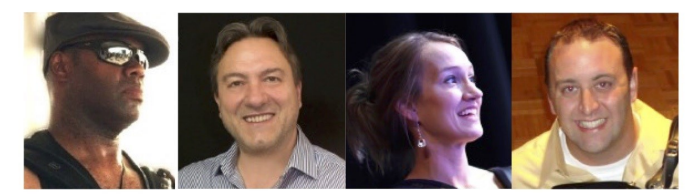
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THE SILICON VALLEY ACCORDION PYRAMID

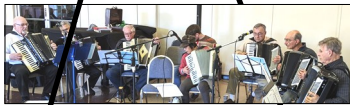
Maybe you've seen the "Berkeley Food Pyramid"? It's a tongue-in-cheek version of a food pyramid, skewed by the priorities of a supposed Berkeley resident. Coffee (organic, fair-trade) at the top, red wine and dark chocolate next, then garlic, artisan bread and cheese, and so on. In the same vein, here is the Silicon Valley Accordion Pyramid:



We love every kind of accordion, but we prefer non-digital, at least 50 years old, and made by companies whose names end in -ari, -oni, -ini, -ape, -ior,



"Any music you like, as long as it's Italian."



Spirited jam sessions with opposite ends of the group playing at their own preferred pace.



A treats table groaning with goodies



The Society ALWAYS encourages shy players to go out and play for an audience, like this young Irish lass playing concertina and attracting a herd of cows. And an SVAS member (yes, it's true) plays for a peacock at Filoli Gardens. And, not-so-shy Barbara Corsiglia plays concertina from her garage for passers-by on March 17th, this year.

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE:

After a really good St Patrick's Day gig, the club owner corners the accordion player, and asks:
 "Can we reserve next year's St Patrick's Day for another performance?"
 "Sure, it's a deal. Anywhere I can park the accordion until then?"

What's the most requested song for many an accordion player?
 "Can you play *Far, Far Away*?"

How do you make two accordionists keep time together?
 Offer to buy a beer *NOW* for one of them.

What is the difference between an accordion player and a terrorist?
 Terrorists have sympathizers.

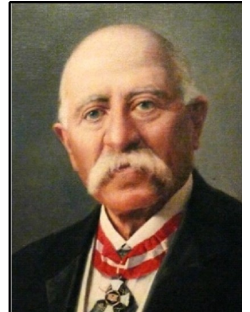
A long court hearing, and a not-so-good accordion player: what do they have in common?
 There is a sigh of relief when the case is closed.

What is the difference between an accordionist walking along the street with his instrument on his back, and a horse clopping along on the other side of the same street with a banjo on its back?
 The horse has a gig to go to.

And lastly, an up-to-the-minute reflection: I've just discovered my 3 favorite things:
Eating out at restaurants,
Visiting non-essential businesses, and
Rubbing my nose, rubbing my eyes, ... in other words, touching all over my face.

ANOTHER LOOK AT HOW ITALY CAME TO DOMINATE THE GLOBAL ACCORDION INDUSTRY

We've written on this topic before (Sep 18, "Who Invented the Accordion.") If you wish, you can dig up that newsletter on the Society's website: <http://www.svasociety.org/index.html> then click Newsletters, 2018, September.) But it is a remarkable saga with lessons for today. In 1863 Paolo Soprani, who kickstarted the whole industry more or less single-handed, was 16 years old, living and working on the family farm near Castelfidardo, Italy. He was given an accordion instrument by an Austrian pilgrim who spent a night at the farm. Almost immediately Paolo glimpsed the enormous musical and economic potential of the instrument. However everything hinged on a major redesign of the accordion, and the use of what we would call modern production methods to make and sell accordions at a reasonable price. Paolo was successful at both. Let's take a look at these items, especially the latter.



Paolo Soprani

At the time when Paolo became involved, the newly invented accordion was enjoying a modest wave of popularity, especially in France. By modern standards, it was a poor instrument, noisy, not easily tuned, and probably required frequent repair. However the novelty factor must have helped. The Soprani firm developed and invented many improvements that brought the accordion much closer to today's instrument. Of course, once it was clear that there was a big market, other production centers began to pop up all over Italy.

The essence of modern production is to reduce every step to a standard procedure that is readily followed by a worker, usually in combination with machinery. That hasn't been completely achieved (yet!) for accordions: some hand craft is still required around the cutting, installing and tuning of reeds. But the Soprani factory took enormous steps towards these efficient production techniques. In craft production, a highly skilled worker basically makes the instrument. But in high volume production, each worker is a specialist at one or a very few steps. And that worker is typically only semi-skilled. The product steadily moves from work station to station. Nowadays, car factories are the epitome of mass production, and there are many videos showing them in action. Accordion production has always been at a lower rate, and uses an intermediate alternative known as batch production. Batches of anywhere from 2 to 50 or more accordions are produced in a run. At each step, all the members of the batch run through a work station, then the batch moves on to the next step. There are several videos on "How it's made: an accordion" <https://youtu.be/zcMHiAxB-jQ> The Soprani factory quickly developed batch production processes that made good instruments affordable to the whole population.



A Russian worker in an accordion factory. You can almost see batches of accordions around her.

What are the lessons that Paolo Soprani has for us today? First of all, he was obviously very clever, technically gifted, he stumbled onto a gold mine, and he was a great business leader. Those gifts are individually rare, and in combination, extremely rare. In our world much of global production where wealth is made has moved to China, (because of its dedicated, successful national development plan.) If we want to leave our children with a reasonable chance of a prosperous life we have to learn to compete. Rare individuals like Paolo Soprani are an enormous asset. His insight and work founded an industry that gave employment to many tens of thousands of people for around a hundred years! We need that! Somehow, must learn to nurture and encourage these (very rare) individuals.

Sources: *Petosa Accordions History of Accordion*, Wikipedia, "A man and his dream. An illustrated history of the Accordion." Publ: ELI - TECNOSTAMPA and the Loreto Cassa di Risparmio Foundation, Personal experience working in manufacturing.

PUZZLE CORNER (Yes, we've sunk to this level!)
Answers on page 7.

1. Consider the word: MUSICAL. Now drop one letter and rearrange so that the remaining 6 letters spell a new word. Continue this way until there is only one letter left, and it still spells a legitimate word. Obviously the last word has to be either A or I.

2. Remember these? If you don't, You missed a wonderful technology.

Here is a phone message:

38379 222673466 752937
532767 "64 62743"

Decode it back into a short, true sentence. Hint: 64 = Oh.



Did you miss a meeting performance? You can view some on YouTube. To see Pam's videos from past meetings: Go to youtube.com, and type in "accordionpam" in the search field (next to the magnifying glass.)

ACCORDION TEACHERS:

Ernie Beran: Aptos, 831.238.4961
reeds@baymoon.com
 Gary Breitbart: Palo Alto
 650.493.0693, gary@breitbart.com
 Peter Di Bono: San Francisco,
 415.699.8674
 Reno Di Bono: Lessons at Cupertino Senior Center every Tuesday, 1:30pm
 Lou Jacklich: San Lorenzo,
 510.317.9510
 Marian Kelly: Cupertino,
 650.954.3711
 Pamela Tom: Davis,
accordionpam@gmail.com
 Mike Zampiceni: Sunnyvale and Hayward, 408.569.2579
Mikezamp.com

Coming Events at SVAS:

NO MEETINGS IN FORESEEABLE FUTURE.

SVAS BOARD of Directors / Officers

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Who's Playing???

William DeMichele's Music with an accent, 408-375-0001. Or contact William at accordionist.sanjose@comcast.net

Reno DiBono - Teaches accordion lessons at Cupertino Senior Center every Tuesday at 1:30pm.

Joe Domitrowich/AlpinersUSA - see www.alpinersusa.com or www.capricious-accordion.com or call 408-255-1259

Happy Days Band - Schedule Concerts with Ken Caple (408) 892-1000

Ernie Beran - Plays at the Tyrolean Inn Restaurant in Ben Lomond, CA every Saturday, 6:00-9:00 pm

Sunday 7 Band - Plays every first Friday of the month in Los Altos in front of Le Boulanger bakery on Main and Second in the down town area. Schedule Concerts with Bob Stanfield (650) 888-3701

Mike Zampiceni - Plays at O Sole Mio restaurant, Millbrae, 6:00-8:30 on Sundays. Also from April - Oct at the Tee Nee Thai restaurant, San Jose, on Friday nights.

Gloria Gazave and Paul Aebersold, "Il Duetto Musica" - Contact Gloria at 415.845.0772, or email mazurkaman@yahoo.com.

Pam Tom—Plays at Farmers Market and private events in Davis, CA. Contact accordionpam@gmail.com

ACCORDION CLUB MEETING SCHEDULES IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Accordion Club of the Redwoods (ACR) meets on the third Monday of every other month Herman & Sons Hall, 860 Western Avenue, Petaluma CA 94952. Contact: (707) 795-4060.

Napa Valley Accordion Club meets the 2nd Thursday of the month at 5:30 PM, Runway Restaurant, 2044 Airport Rd, Napa, CA 94558. Contact George Bachich for more information, (707) 738-5276.

Humboldt Accordion Club meets on the third Tuesday, 7:00 PM., Humboldt Swiss Club, 5403 Tompkins Hill Road, Loleta, CA 95551.

The Sacramento Accordion Club has just dissolved. Former members are encouraged to transfer to the Granite Bay, and Napa clubs.

Good Time Accordion Club (GTAC) meets on the second Wednesday of the month at 7:00 PM, Escalon Community Center, 1055 Escalon Ave., Escalon, CA 95320. Contact Ed Sorarini (209) 545-3603.

Northern California Accordion Society (NCAS) meets on the first Wednesday of the month at 7:00 PM, 6365 Douglas Blvd., Lutheran Church Social Hall, Granite Bay, CA 95746.

San Francisco Accordion Club (SFAC) meets on the third Sunday of the month 2:00 PM. Chetcuti Community Room, Civic Center Plaza, 450 Poplar Ave., Milbrae, CA 94030. Contact Ken Schwartz Kenneth.e.schwartz@gmail.com

Silicon Valley Accordion Society (SVAS) meets on the first Sunday of the month, Christ Episcopal Church, 1040 Border Road, Los Altos, CA 94024. Contact: Bill Tapogna (408) 984-5290.

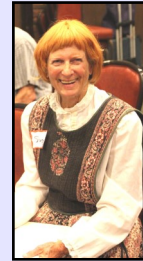
A REPORT ON OUR REPORTERS

We always mention who did the honors by writing up an account of the recent Society Meeting. It is very kind of these four people to help this way. And to be frank, it wouldn't hurt if a man also joined the group— but that's another story. Here is a brief report on our reporters. First (and foremost!) they all play the accordion.



Marcia Coullahan is a member of the Happy Days Band. She has played the accordion for many years. Marcia visited Cuba just after the restrictions were lifted. She wrote a very interesting article for this Newsletter—they had a good time.

Sue Douglas has been a very loyal and hard working member of the Society for many years. I first met Sue at the booth on Campbell Avenue when the Society staged a presence for Oktoberfest. Sue spent two days recruiting new members, and persuaded quite a few to sign up for trial memberships. She regularly performs at meetings. Her favorite piece *might* be Julida Polka.



Georgia Sutherland has to perform a delicate juggling act to be a reporter. She is also a member of the Sweet Adelines, a choral group that travels widely to present performances. For example, Reno, New Orleans, Their regular rehearsal day is the first Sunday of the month—a direct clash with SVAS' meeting day. Georgia has to make special arrangements. She tries to combine the writing role with a jam session. Good idea!

Marybarbara Zorio is an extremely energetic school district counselor by day, and an enthusiastic member of the Happy Days Band (she and Marcia usually sit together.) Marybarbara is famous for being totally organized at writing the meeting notes. She sets up a “home office” and takes notes straight into her laptop!

**SOME SUGGESTIONS ON WEBSITES TO LISTEN TO ACCORDION MUSIC.**

Many, many performers are streaming performances live online, and making videos on Youtube, Facebook, and other media sources. You should be able to access the links below by holding down the Ctrl key and clicking the link.

1. You are probably well aware of this: if you type “accordion” in Google, Facebook, Instagram, ... there will many, many offerings.
2. Don't forget that Pam has videos of performers at SVAS going back several years. You can find these videos via the SVAS website: <http://www.svasociety.org/index.html> or via *accordionpam* on Facebook.
3. In particular, one of our local heroes, Mike Zampiceni features in several of Pam's videos. Mike has a long play list with his videos at: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLGHA0AOKg0b7o9ZSuzqaI6XW6PZ9OMDAy>
4. Among the many, many offerings are short concerts by Gary Blair. Gary hails from Paisley, just outside Glasgow, Scotland. He has played at SVAS in the past. He seems to make a point of live-streaming performances almost every day as his way of staying in touch. Just google “Gary Blair.”
5. Not to be too parochial (about strictly accordion music,) there are also many superb music sites. We have mentioned before that the video of a youth orchestra congregating in a Paris, France shopping mall almost brings tears to your eyes. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eee4-d7FUis> And there are many others that emulate that one: Of course, virtually all of the professional orchestras around the world are making videos of their performances available for free. So don't forget Andre Rieu's orchestra. They specialize in lighter, semi-classical pieces. Their performances are usually in period costume. And their repertoire always includes pieces that tempt some of the audience get up and dance. It is a stunning visual spectacle as well as wonderful music. They have many videos, for example <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vauo4o-ExoY>

NEWSLETTER OF THE

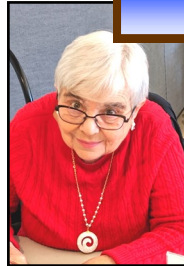
Silicon Valley Accordion Society

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JOIN THE CLUB



**Silicon Valley Accordion Society meets first Sunday of each month, at
CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, 1040 Border Road, Los Altos, CA 94024.
Doors open at 1:00. \$5 for members, \$10 for non members, 16 years and under free.**

- **JOIN THE CLUB**
- **Annual Memberships: Regular \$35, Gold \$125, Platinum \$200**