

NEWSLETTER OF THE

Silicon Valley Accordion Society

September 2014

SVAS NEXT MEETING:

October 5 , 2014 at Harry's Hofbrau

Richard Noel is a retired Professor of Psychology from CSUB. He played in numerous accordion contests as a youth, culminating in a first-place solo trophy at the American Accordionists' Association contest in New York City at age 18. During his career as a professor, he played just enough to maintain his "chops" and he took a few classes to better understand music theory. Few people knew that he played the accordion until after he retired.

After retiring, technology was largely responsible for his shift into a music career. His Youtube channel at "Bakersfielddaccordion" consists entirely of performances using the various Roland v-accordions. Due to advances in the digital accordion field, and the popularity of Youtube, his retirement became dominated by music. His Youtube channel has 2 million hits and nearly 3,000 subscribers.



Much to his surprise, in retirement he soon realized that by working on the process, he could quickly retain hundreds of songs in memory. At the same time, he realized that it was far more enjoyable to play without music, which encouraged him to improvise and to maintain better contact with the audience. He can play at least 800 songs without music, and almost never uses music on gigs.

He also was surprised to find that hundreds of digital accordionists around the world were desperate for someone to provide programming and consultation for their instrument. That led to an active internet business, thanks in part to Youtube.

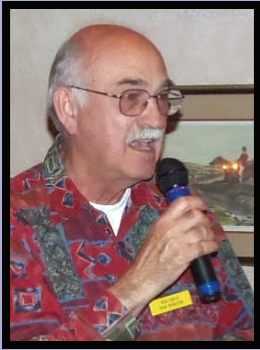
On gigs he has played just about every type of music—classical, jazz, pop, Italian, French, German, Irish, Scandinavian, Latin, Tex-Mex, Asian, Country, Rock, and more.

Bring your accordion for the **OPEN PLAY** session at 1:00pm. We are counting on **YOU** to entertain us the first period.

THE SUNDAY SEVEN BAND
Will entertain us from 2:00 to 3:00 pm

VISIT OUR WEBSITE at SVASociety.org and visit us on Facebook
[Watch our Videos on: youtube](#)

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE



Ken Caple,
President

September came fast this year. Soon Oktoberfest will be on us and we'll all have to go out and have a beer if we are up to it. Remember to visit your SVAS Bands at the downtown Campbell Oktoberfest on Oct 18 & 19.

We started out our day at Harry's with a full preprogram. We had individual players, and groups for the entire hour. I am happy to see that our OPEN PLAY preprogram is so popular and festive. It gives everyone a chance to play and provides a wide variety of music.

For the second part I was impressed at how the Button Box and the Piano Accordion mixed so well. Herman and Ernie sounded great as a duo both of them playing a separate arrangement.

Janna again played beautifully for us. I liked her multi-language version of the Tic-Tock polka.

Finally we were flanked by a whole herd of Great Morganis. I didn't know there were so many of them. All in all it was a fun time.

A special thanks for the folks that brought all the goodies, cookies, cupcakes and more. We all would like to keep this tradition alive and well.



Bill Tapogna
Master of Ceremonies

September 7 was a fun day for music at the Silicon Valley Accordion Society. The Pre-Program started promptly at 1 pm, with **Eric Scheel** playing four songs (When You are Smiling, Give My Regards to Broadway, Bogalusa Strut, and Por Una Cabeza). He was followed by **William**



DeMichelis and **Garland Chatham**, who played several songs together (Baby Face and Roll Out the Barrel). Then Garland continued on with a medley of tunes honoring the Army Air Corps, the Marines, and the Navy. He followed these with Jelly Roll Blues, Lady of Spain, It's a Small Small World, and a reprise of Baby Face. Both William and Michael did all this playing without the benefit of any sheet music, which is always impressive!



Next **Sue Douglas** took the stage and started out playing a song that she hears on a ride at the Santa Cruz Boardwalk (a song from the Ghostbusters movie). She continued with songs from the early 1900s (By the Light of the Silvery Moon, In the Good Old Summertime, and Put on Your Old Gray Bonnet). She finished up her set with four other delightful songs (Neapolitan Nights, Featherlight Waltz, Let Me Call you Sweetheart, and Baby Face). The last two songs had many of us singing along.



Don Savant started his set with a sprightly version of Rock Around the Clock. He introduced the second song as appropriate for the folks at Lupin Lodge (nudist colony in the Santa Cruz Mountains), who are in the news lately because of their water shortage. That song was Hey Look Me Over! He continued with two Elvis Presley songs (Love Me Tender and a jazzy version of Blue Suede Shoes). Many of Don's songs were played in a wonderful jazzy style. For his closer, he played a different style and entertained us with When Sunny Gets Blue.



Georgia Sutherland
SVAS Reporter

Did you miss a meeting performance? You can view some of it on youtube. To View Pam's Videos from past meetings: Go to youtube.com, type in accordionpam in the search field (next to the magnifying glass on top) for videos from the club .

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Marian Kelly: Portola Valley (650) 854-1896
Richard Yaus: San Bruno (650) 832-1740
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Norma Zonay-Parsons: San Jose (408) 244-2762
Aaron Wayne: Santa Cruz (831) 332-0589
Sheri Mignano, Petaluma (707) 765-1657

Don was followed by Sandy Walters, who hasn't been seen at the club for a while. Ken Caple promoted her performance by loaning Sandy his accordion. Her first song was an Italian tango of unknown name (even to Sandy). This was followed by Via Con Dios, a song I haven't heard in quite a while, but enjoyed very much. She concluded her set with Tick Tock Polka and Paper Roses. We enjoyed her performance very much.

Then all of a sudden, we were treated to a pick-up accordion quintet, composed of Ken Caple, Bill Tapogna, Bob Stanfield, Ernie Beren and Jana Maas. It was interesting to see these five accomplished players joining together. I can report that Ernie has the most "flying fingers" and Jana plays interesting variations. Their songs were the ever popular Tik Tok Polka and Beer Barrel Polka/Roll Out the Barrel. After Ken and Ernie exited the scene, Bob, Bill and Jana played La Campagnola.

Bill Tapogna, Master of Ceremonies, then took over. We had two first timers in the audience, Karen and Vlad from Campbell. Karen is the daughter of Sandy, a frequent attendee at SVAS functions.

The First Half Program was launched by a duet composed of Ernie Beren, with his accordion, and Herman Schmalzried, with his button box. These two men have been working on duets, playing mostly music written for these instruments by the late Joe Smiell. All the music was Alpine music, and very pleasant.

The first song (the only one not written by Joe Smiell) was

"Der Summer is aus," a traditional Austrian folk song (translation: The summer is over). This was followed by seven of

Joe Schmeill's songs which included a couple of delightful waltzes, some polkas, and some other dance numbers known as "landlers." Bill got Hermann up to describe his button box, a diatonic instrument (different notes depending on the direction of the bellows pull). On the right hand, there are three different buttons for each of the notes. The button box came to the US through New Orleans, where it is associated with Cajun music. The button box is also used in Mariachi music, but typically those instruments have only the treble (right hand) and no bass buttons. Some players have different button box instruments to play in different key signatures. Special music needs to be written for button box players! Personally, I find it fascinating to watch the fingering on the right hand buttons – so foreign to us who play piano accordions!

After their very nice duets, Ernie continued playing as a soloist, again displaying those "flying fingers" (both left and right hand) that I observed when he was playing with the pick-up quintet. He played a medley of Italian songs starting with Santa Lucia, continued with a French-sounding song called Okay. He played a couple of tangos (one was La Cumprasita) and finished with a lovely rendition of Tenderly. Ernie now plays every Saturday night from 6 to 9 pm at the Tyrolean Inn in Ben Lomond. He is delighted with this opportunity.

With a little time remaining in the First Half Program, Bill introduced Paul Cain who told us a story of buying a garage full of accordions and finding among the collection a special one with built in lights that shone in a particular color for each of the notes. He refurbished this accordion, and then later happened to meet the original owner of the instrument, Donna Dee Ray. She had sold the instrument decades before to get money to buy her wedding dress, and had always wondered what had happened to it. Paul met her at the ATG conference recently and she talked him out of it. He now refers to it as "the homing accordion!"



Right after the break, the monthly raffle made four people happy. Dennis won \$80, Linda won a \$20 gift certificate to Harry's Hofbrau, Sue Douglas won a Martin Hergt CD, and Bralio won a copy of The Great Morgani's book.



Our first featured player was Jana Mass, from Modesto, where she is a music teacher and just started the school year with 185 new band and string instrument students! Jana played Star of the County Down (an Irish song), More, Tango of the Night (her own composition), Bionde (a blonde song,

dedicated to her mother who used to hit her with a flyswatter to get her to practice), Black and White Rag, Never on Sunday/White Ribbons medley, Finiculi Finicula, Pur Una Cabeza, Suzie Polka, Spanish Eyes and Tik Tok Polka. During Tik Tok Polka, she had us sing along in English (la la la), in German (ya ya ya), and French (wie wie wie). The fun thing for me when Jana performs is watching/hearing her wonderful embellishments to the various melodies.



Our other featured player was Frank Lima, better known as The Great Morgani. Frank had his eggstravagant body suit and gloves had been left behind, by accident, but for us it was nice to get the sense of the real man, as well as the clown! Frank played lots and lots of songs, ending with many by request from the audience. Rather than listing all the songs, I would rather tell you some of the personal things he shared with us. He took formal accordion lessons from about age 9 until 11, when he was dismissed by his teacher because he wasn't reading the music. He admitted to us that he doesn't read music, but apparently he has the kind of memory that hears and remembers songs (he says he has 2,000 songs in his head), and he can play anything he can remember. For a long time, he had a regular gig at the Gilroy Garlic Festival, and we enjoyed hearing about (and then singing along with) his garlic parody to That's Amore. He finished his very entertaining performance with God Bless America, which he requested that we all sing. Following that, we all sang Happy Birthday to him, as his birthday was the next day (September 8).



Please invite your friends to join our SVAS Musical Event
The more the Merrier
We all love music, especially Accordion Music



COMING EVENTS

Coming Events at SVAS: October 5, Meeting

Doors open at 1:00 pm

1:15-2:00 pm Preprogram: Open Play2:00-2:15pm Presidents Message & Master of Ceremonies Introductions2:15-3:00pm First Half Program : Sunday Seven Band3:00-3:15pm Break & Drawing3:15-4:15pm Featured Player: Richard NoelNovember—Mike Marotta BandDecember- SVAS Christmas ProgramJanuary - Mario Pedone**Remember to bring your accordions for the OPEN PLAY**

Visit SVAS on FACEBOOK and post your photos

SVAS BOARD of Directors / Officers

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 ♪ **Who's Playing???** ♪

William DeMichelis—Music with an accent, 408-375-0001, accordionist.sanjose@comcast.net

Reno di Bono plays the second Friday of each month at **Montavalle** in Scotts Valley, dancing to the **Blue Moon Trio**.

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

Mike Zampiceni - Accordionist 408 734-1565

AbsolutAccord: Schedule Concerts with Norma Parsons (408) 246-3073, www.absolutaccord.com

Sunday 7 : Schedule Concerts with Bob Stanfield (650) 888-3701

Happy Days Band: Schedule Concerts with Ken Caple (408) 892-2760

Due Zighi Baci— Schedule Performances with Sheri Mignano @ sfmignano@yahoo.com

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

WHEN THE ACCORDION CLUBS IN THE BAY AREA MEET?

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

Golden State Accordion Club (GSAC) has three divisions:

1. **The Vacaville Club** meets the second Thursday of the month at 6:30 PM, Pietro's N.2, 679 Merchant St, Vacaville, CA 95687, Starting July 12, 2012, Except for June and December.
2. **The Humboldt Club** meets on the third Tuesday, 7:00 PM., Humboldt Swiss Club, 5403 Tompkins Hill Road, Loleta, CA 95551.
3. **The Sacramento Club** meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 6:30 pm at the Old Spaghetti Factory, 12401 Folsom Rd., Rancho Cordova CA, 95742. Contact for all the GSAC: Carole Enneking (707) 864-2359.

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 Sciarini (209) 545-3603.

Northern California Accordion Society (NCAS) meets on the first Wednesday of the month 6:30 PM 6365 Douglas Blvd., Lutheran Church Social Hall, Granite Bay, CA 95746. Contact:

San Francisco Accordion Club (SFAC) meets on the third Sunday of the month 2:00 PM . Oyster Point Yacht Club, 911 Marina Blvd. South San Francisco, CA 94080. Contact Lynn Ewing 650-453-3391.

Silicon Valley Accordion Society (SVAS) meets on the first Sunday of the month, 1:00 PM at Harry's Hofbrau, 390 Saratoga Avenue, San Jose, CA 95129. (between Kiely Blvd. and Stevens Creek Blvd. Contact: Bill Topogna (408) 984-5290.



Sherri Crawford

As a senior accordion player who's been squeezin' for a few decades now, I'm often asked about how I keep up with the "old in and out". I'd like to answer that question as well as some other relevant challenges such as: Where does the desire to practice come from? How can I maintain a level of 'playing pleasure' and continue to enjoy the instrument? And of course, when all the preparation and practice is done, when is a song ready to be enjoyed by others? (I hope to get to all these questions here but if not, I hope there's another opportunity). No one wants to practice but we all want to play the music we enjoy and are familiar with. The trick is to not start with the songs we love to play. Instead, invest 15 minutes warming up with scales on both sides of the bellows! As we get older, our fingers don't function as fluently so you'll need to give those fingers

gentle stretches and run through these scales: C, G, D, F, Bb, Eb. Then, try them in thirds if you can. Tackle your tunes with effortless grace and joy!

I always try to learn one NEW song each month. It needn't be a complex piece—just new to you! Consider the senior brain as a little rat maze of grooved, comfortable pathways. You must be adventurous and not succumb to playing only the songs you know. Learning a song that's outside your comfort zone will challenge you to think! Pick a song that a friend has requested or a song outside your 'normal' area of expertise. Choose something you've always wanted to learn, and after you've learned it, MEMORIZE it! Yep, I try to memorize one new song a month if possible.

Accordionists are full of hot air! Only kidding! However, we often forget that the accordion is a wind instrument. It is a vocalist with powerful lungs: the bellows. If you're not exercising your upper body strength and carefully strengthening your pectoral and lateral muscles, you will lose control of the volume, the phrasing, and well...everything else! This is crucial for senior accordionists (and most especially females) whose pectoral strength is at a disadvantage. If you're not working out at the gym or with weights, the enjoyment level of playing may diminish. You should not end your practice session feeling exhausted. As Plato would say "Sound Mind in a Sound Body". Get to a gym!

There's nothing worse than opening up a club newsletter to find that Joe has a rotator cuff injury, Mary's got golfer's elbow, and someone else has carpal tunnel. These problems are devastating to anyone, and more so when you are a mature accordionist. Preventive care is required. Keep yourself strong to begin with by visiting your local gym and if at all possible, enlist the assistance of a physical therapist who can suggest specific exercises to strengthen muscles that are continually used in playing this musical instrument. If you want to play well, then, stay active.

Everyone can continue to excel and to perfect their playing level. What happens is that many seniors often play an accordion that is no longer appropriate. For example, it may have become too heavy, or perhaps its bellows are leaking and you're pushing and pulling too hard. Maybe the old accordion is in need of repairs. Again, you may be attached to an accordion that no longer serves you well. It's time to investigate the new line of 'light-weight' accordions. Today's models are just as good and some are better. Accordion manufacturers have worked to improve the mechanics so as to accommodate the strength issues associated with seniors. Check 'em out!

The desire to practice and continue playing comes from knowing that you are an unfinished accordionist. We are all capable of making improvements in our accordion routines—at any age. Spend a little time thinking about how to get the most out of what you're doing. There are many benefits to be enjoyed, and you've earned them as a senior accordionist! Take pride in your lifetime of hard work! And get out there on a daily basis and play. If you don't play much anymore, then support the players who do. Try something new and keep on squeezin'!

NEWSLETTER OF THE

Silicon Valley Accordion Society

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FIRST CLASS POSTAGE 🎵



Silicon Valley Accordion Society meetings held first Sunday of each month at Harry's Hofbrau, 390 Saratoga Avenue, San Jose, corner of Kiely. Doors open at 1:00, Music begins at 1:15, Meeting begins at 2:00 p.m. door fee \$5, under 16 no charge.