



MASSACHUSETTS ACCORDION ASSOCIATION

Volume 7, Issue 8
October 2013

The MAAA is a group of accordion enthusiasts that welcomes players of all skill levels and accordion types, as well as interested non-players.

Join us! Open to the public!
4th Sunday of every month
1:30-4:00 p.m.
Ciociaro Social Club
144 Bridge Street
Newton, Massachusetts

Next meeting
October 27, 2013

Mark your calendar
November 17, 2013
December 15, 2013

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www.MAAccordion.org



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coleman@gmail.com](mailto:catherine.coleman@gmail.com)

Nils Flacke, Swedish accordion king, reigns at MAAA September meeting



[Nils Flacke](#), one of Sweden's kings of accordion, performed at the MAAA meeting on September 22. A master of old types of accordions, Flacke is dedicated to sustaining the tradition of Scandinavian folk music. His concert included many traditional works, Sibelius' Finlandia, his own "Memories from the Silent Movies," and many others.

Nils was one of the founders of the Jularbo Museum in Avesta, Sweden in 1984 and has donated dozens of rare antique accordions to the museum's collection as well as posters, photos, and other memorabilia.

Nils' performance was a fitting inauguration for MAAA's new Bose sound system, which did justice to the magnificent music that was performed.

Many thanks to Donna Maria Regis of the New Hampshire Accordion Association for helping MAAA arrange this exciting opportunity to hear a master of the instrument and champion of the accordion's history.

The meeting began with the best kind of open mike session, which featured professionals and accordion student debuts.



Photos: Tony Marini

After his performance, Nils Flacke and members of the Central Massachusetts Accordion Club (CMAC)--some of whom are also MAAA members--played Scandinavian dance music.

More about CMAC on page 4.

Honoring Bob Guenther

MAAA's President, Bob Guenther, passed away April 22, 2013 at the age of 57. "We respected Bob and his dedication so much that the MAAA Board decided not to fill the Presidency until the October meeting," said Jim Avedisian, MAAA Vice President.

In remembrance of Bob and his many contributions to the Association and the people who knew him, we reproduce here an article that he wrote for Lenny Feldmann's Cordeen Man newsletter. Thank you to Dave Magliozzi for providing link to the article.

MAAA Board elections and bylaw changes

The Massachusetts Accordion Association is a volunteer-run nonprofit organization. Elections will place at the October meeting. The following slate of officers has been nominated:

President: Tony Marini
Vice president: Jim Avedisian
Secretary/Treasurer: Patty Simmons

Board of Directors

Al Bacchiocchi
 Jan Borelli
 Carmen D'Angelo
 Gary Morin
 Ed Wawrzynowicz

More information is available in the July issue of the MAAA newsletter, available online:
www.MAAccordion.org.

My Accordion Life

by Bob Guenther

When asked by Lenny to write a little about myself, I found it difficult to start. Being the newsletter editor for the MA Accordion Association for almost 4 years, it's always easier to write about someone else.

Back in the early 60's, my mom and dad thought it would be good if I learned an instrument (they also thought it was good for me to learn ballet, but that's another story for another time). I wanted to learn a "cool" instrument back then, like the guitar or trumpet, but instead, one day dad came home with an accordion. My heart sank when I saw that box instrument. Mom enrolled me with my first instructor in Linden, NJ.

It was a struggle to learn and I seemed to learn a lot slower than the others taking lessons at the time. Mom would keep on me to practice every day and, the strict Irish Catholic disciplinarian that she was, I did. After awhile, I would start playing some songs and then the embarrassment would start – playing in front of others, especially relatives.

So, my early years with the accordion were a struggle. Eventually I began to enjoy playing as I continued trying to play. In high school I met a friend who was also an accordion player and invited me to a practice session with the Strummers, who he was



involved with. My schedule did not allow me to take the long trips to practice with them on a regular basis, but it was an experience I will remember forever. Kind of turned things around for me with my developing my playing of songs from the Sound of Music and some rag time songs, like Hello My Baby.

Then college came. It was not "cool" to play an accordion in college in the early 70's. I did not play again until my mid 20's when I met my second wife. Her mom was probably the first person that I met, other than my parents, who really liked the accordion. I began playing again and would perform at Christmas time in her hair salon for her customers. I was truly enjoying playing the accordion for the first time in my life, but I was stagnant with no new music other than my earlier high school repertoire.

Tragedy struck in 1986 when the flooding of our home in Billerica, MA destroyed my accordion. We lived on a hill, so my practice area was in the basement. The rain was so hard for so long, our basement
Continued on next page...

My Accordion Life... continued

leaked from the pressure of the ground water pressing against the foundation, going downhill for such a long period of time. I did not play again for quite a while.

Then in July 2002, I was diagnosed with a stage 4 brain tumor that had metastasized from my lungs. Through the many prayer groups my mom created and the incredible doctor and surgeon who operated and the technology of cancer treatments at the time, I have survived now for eight years (six years longer than predicted). Since it was my brain that was affected by the radiation and chemo treatments for several months, I was truly concerned as to my mental retention to think and function at the levels I had before the tumor. I would try to take tests, do puzzles and read to get my mental capacity to where it once was. Then it came to me that the most challenging exercise when I was younger was to learn to play the accordion. I thought this would be the best way to “heal” and re-build my comprehensive and motor skills since the accordion involves the right hand, the left hand, bellows control and eyesight to hand coordination to read music and play at the same time.

So, with a renewed dedication, I went on my search to replace the accordion that I had lost. This brain tumor thing was the 2nd life changing experience in my life, so financially, things were tough. I went through a couple of cheap, second hand accordions on

e-bay, until I settled on an older Universal accordion that was probably a younger players size, since it had the 120 bass and 41 keys, but was about $\frac{3}{4}$ the size of the one I use to have.

Initially, it was difficult trying to remember the songs I use to play, trying to find the song books “retired” after I lost my accordion back in the great Billerica flood of 1986.

Slowly, after a couple of months of strapping it on and finding a couple of early songs, I began to



regain some of my playing skills. I did find it more challenging since the keys, although 41 of them, were narrower due to the 16” length, as opposed to the 19¼ “ length I was use to. I was focusing on getting better, mentally and mechanically.

Then, in 2005, my wife joined the Red Hat Society, through which, we met our new best friends who happen to also be a karaoke DJ and singer. It is through karaoke that I heard and wanted to learn

new songs on the accordion. Finally, I was really excited to further develop my abilities with the accordion and I was beginning to comprehend again, near to where I was before the tumor.

Back when I was recovering from the surgery and the treatments, I thought that I would like to “give back” to others the joys that I have had throughout my life. I now volunteer playing for assisted living facilities. What a great way to learn how to play in front of others. My first performances were horrible, but again, like everything else, when you keep with something you do get better. Today, I still volunteer at an assisted living facility in Billerica, MA, been invited to play at parties and even have a regular weekly gig at a restaurant in Tewksbury, MA.

I am so thankful for those early argumentative days I had with my mom to practice an instrument that I did not want to learn and that was a true struggle to play. The sacrifice of my mom and dad, the repertoire developed from listening to karaoke and the volunteering at assisted living facilities are the cornerstones of where I am today. Most importantly, if it wasn’t for the accordion, I believe that I would still be rehabbing from my surgery.

My Accordion Life by Bob Guenther was originally published online: www.cordeenman.com/bg/BG-Accordion-Life.pdf

Accordion Friends from Central Massachusetts

by Dan Mackowiak

Several members of the Central Mass Accordion Club (CMAC) attended the MAAA meeting on September 22, drawn by the appearance of Swedish accordionist extraordinaire, Nils Flacke. On the other hand, a few of them may have otherwise been at the meeting because they are also MAAA members.

The CMAC specializes in playing Scandinavian dance music. It is based in Rutland, MA--the location of Sovittaja Park, a Finnish social club that sponsors a dance series during the summer months. The group was founded several years ago by Bernie Nowak with two primary purposes: to provide an outlet for accordionists to play together; and to offer a source of live music for an active Scandinavian dance community in that area. The CMAC membership roster totals about twenty.

The CMAC occasionally performs at other venues, including

locations in Connecticut and New Hampshire. In addition, small groups spun from the CMAC membership play for functions requiring fewer musicians.

The CMAC has an extensive repertoire compiled from numerous sources, including Nils Lundin, who many consider the dean of Scandinavian music in the New England area.

After the Flacke concert at the MAAA meeting, seven accordionists from CMAC, joined by Nils Flacke, played selections from their repertoire. Three MAAA members are CMAC members: George Carlson, Arthur Richard, and Dan Mackowiak.

Dan commented, "It seems the Scandinavian community is fond of the accordion which is the featured instrument in many Scandinavian ensembles. Dancers are very responsive to the music created by the accordion. It is a delight to play for such enthusiastic audiences."

Gary Morin performance



MAAA member [Gary Morin](#) was recently profiled in the Sentinel and Enterprise newspaper. The article, "Accordion coming back, according to Gary Morin," traced his journey from finding a small Sears accordion in the trash on his way home from junior high school, to his recent performance on September 27 show at the Drawbridge Puppet Theater in Lunenburg as part of the theater's Friday Night Concert Series.

Several MAAA members attended the performance, after which Gary received a standing ovation. The program included songs about autumn, Irish ballads, Italian serenades, French love songs, and German, Polish and Jewish pieces. Gary also played a tribute to his mentor, accordion player Art Van Damme. "Van Damme did for accordion what Benny Goodman did for clarinet," said Morin in the newspaper article. "Van Damme played big band music; he was one of the fastest jazz players ever to live."

Read the full article [online](#).



A special Roland event at [Falcetti Music](#) in Springfield, MA showcased the latest Roland accordion (FR-8x) and a workshop by Don and Leslie McMahon on "Backing a Vocalist."

Thank you to Jim Avedesian for sharing this photo and a [video](#) of Don and Leslie performing a single song in three styles with three different intros and endings.

Cape Accordion 2013

The concept of Cape Accordion was born in 2010 when Dave Magliozzi and James Gerke, both members of MAAA, met on the Cape with their accordions for a few hours, and thought, "Wouldn't it be nice to have a retreat where musicians could meet and hold workshops and trade ideas and play 24 hours a day?"

After connecting online with CD Mazoff of Victoria, British Columbia, who wanted to meet and invite others to discuss tango, french musette, and bellows control, Accordions 2011 was organized. CD unofficially named it 'The Doo.' Accordionists from around the country, Canada, and one from Germany gathered at the Oaks Guest House in Harwich MA, which is owned by James' family. Several MAAA members dropped in during the event.

Cape Accordion 2012, which also took place during the last week in August, was another marvelous event. Ian Fries, MD, presented a lecture



Dave Magliozzi and Cathie Travers at Cape Accordion 2013

on the hand, Guenadiy Lazarov conducted a workshop on accordion repair, and people from around the world (Chico Chagas of Brazil, CD Mazoff of Victoria, BC, and Sandra Figueiredo of Lisboa, Portugal) participated via Skype.

News of CAPE ACCORDION continued to spread through the Facebook group Accordion Friends, which Dave describes as "The ongoing, virtual Cape Accordion event." In 2013, Australia's Cathie Travers and Los Angeles-based Frank Petrilli flew in to join Melody Ben Flah, Len Imbry,



Doug Makofka and Janet Borelli play an Excelsior accordions duet

Doug Makofka, Len Feldman, Don McMahan, Leslie McMahan, Jan and Lou Borelli, Alexei Tsiganov, Roberto Cassan, Fabio Pirozzolo, and Simon Shapiro.

"I personally got to play and practice with Cathie Travers and Frank Petrilli, Frank Morocco's protégé, several times a day, every day of the week," Dave reports. "This was the thrill of a lifetime for me. What a blast! We all have become great friends. Hopefully there will be a 2014 Cape Accordion."

You can view photos from Cape Accordion on the Accordion Gallery webpage:

2011: <http://www.accordiongallery.com/Cape-Accordion-2011.html>

2012: <http://www.accordiongallery.com/Cape-Accordion-2012.html>

2013: <http://www.accordiongallery.com/Cape-Accordion-2013.html>

HONK! if you ♥ accordions

The 8th annual [HONK! Festival](#) takes place October 11-13, when social activist street bands from across the county and the world converge in Somerville and Cambridge. The music is acoustic and mobile, rooted in diverse folk music traditions like New Orleans second line brass bands, klezmer, Balkan, Romani, and Brazilian Afro.



Emperor Norton's Stationary Marching Band

Not everything that's honking is brass!

eHawk, an accordionist in [Emperor Norton's Stationary Marching Band](#), reports that about one-third of HONK!'s bands include accordions and that "A lot of itinerant

accordion players will show up and play with a band. HONK! Becomes a home for wayward musicians who really want to play."

It's a colorful, fun, joyous, and inclusive musical happening. But underlying all the costumes and celebrations are diverse musicians intent on sparking positive change in their communities.

Until she experienced HONK, eHawk was primarily a vocalist who had grown up playing the piano but, as she observes, "Piano is not mobile! As a joke, I picked up a melodica and there I was, honking and blowing into an instrument that had a keyboard! It was a lot of fun but the melodica is quiet--if you put me next to any kind of horn, I am lost. I borrowed an accordion and it was awesome—a lot of fun and a lot more versatile. So I got my own accordion, and I've been playing ever since."

Emperor Norton's Stationary Marching Band is made up of "about 17 musicians—it varies," she says. Instrumentation, in addition to her accordion, includes percussionists, sousaphone, trombone, trumpet, saxes, piccolo, violin, and sometimes marimba. "We play a mix of world music in any kind of crazy time signature we can come up with while still being a party band," she says. "People always dance. We play a lot of

club shows, and shows with the Boston Circus Guild."

For eHawk, the activist aspect of HONK is "bringing artistic expression and music to people everywhere. HONK is free, it's outside, it's for everyone. People bond and it doesn't matter what your political persuasion is. It's hard not to fall in love with it!"

One of the best parts for her is the warmth and joy of seeing another accordion in another band. "HONK is a big family. People have meals together and jam together. No matter what the group, people make room for every instrument. They'll lower their volume to make sure an instrument is heard. That kind of sharing is really moving."

How does she handle the two-mile parade that is one of HONK's highlights? "I found the lightest accordion I could. Mine is about 16 pounds. It's small but really versatile. I can walk with it for about four hours."

When not honking and squeezing, eHawk works at the Harvard Museum of National History, "playing with mollusks all day. But I try to play music wherever I can."

Emperor Norton's Stationary Marching Band will be playing at the pre-HONK! Festivities Thursday night in Union Square, Somerville, from 7-10. Check the entire schedule of HONK events, at www.honkfest.org.

Special events

OKTOBERFEST WITH NHA

Saturday, October 19, 2013
Accordion Connection,
Gilmanton, NH
12:30-4:00 PM

MAAA members are invited to meet our New Hampshire "accordion cousins" at their Oktoberfest celebration. If you plan to attend, or if you'd like to play at the open mike or play-along, please email Jim Avedisian (vze2v42i@verizon.net) by October 17.

HONK! FESTIVAL

www.honkfest.org
See related story on page 6.

Saturday, Oct. 12, 12:30 p.m.
Seven Hills Park, Davis Square
Opening Ceremony

1:00-9:00 p.m.
Davis Square, Somerville
More than 25 activist street bands from around the world gather for ongoing, free outdoor performances.

Open-to-all pick-up band
4:00-5:00 p.m.
Winter Street Lot
Pick-up band, open to all. Join other accordionists and HONKERS to make music.

Sunday, October 13, 2013

HONK! Parade
12:00-2:00 p.m.

The parade leaves Davis Square at noon, travels down Elm Street and Beech Street to Massachusetts Ave and concludes in Harvard Square.

For information about the Ladies Accordion Orchestra that is being organized for the parade, email sari.kalin@gmail.com.

2:00-6:00 p.m.
HONK! Bands perform together on the Main Stage of Harvard's Oktoberfest and on smaller stages around Harvard Square.

Gigs & shows

Email gigs and other accordion events to:
catherine.coleman@gmail.com

musAner
Tuesday, October 8, 2013

Regattabar, Cambridge
www.regattabarjazz.com

A ten-person ensemble blends jazz and Armenian folk music, joined by the ethnographic singer Aleksan Harutyunyan.

Echoes of Erin
Saturday, October 12, 8:00 p.m.
Waltham High School, Waltham
www.cceboston.org

The Echoes of Erin tour showcases accordionist Joseph Keane and other All-Ireland champion musicians playing traditional music with champion dancers.

Debo Band
Friday, October 18, 7:30 p.m.
Regattabar, Cambridge, MA
www.regattabarjazz.com
Boston's Debo Band reinvents the golden age of Ethiopian pop with a big band lineup of horns, accordion, guitars, and violins.

Cory Pesaturo and Zulu Time
Saturday, October 19, 7:30 p.m.
Wakefield Unitarian Universalist Church, Wakefield, MA
www.sroconcerts.org

World champion accordionist Cory Pesaturo, violinist Gabriel Solomon, and bassist Richey Tally will play jazz, musette, tango, klezmer, folk music of Bulgaria and Macedonia, classical, and original compositions.

Lou Borelli Octet
November 5, 2013
Nick's, Worcester
www.BorelliMusic.com

MAAA LEADERSHIP

See page 1 for info about upcoming Board elections.

President
Bob Guenther

Vice-President
Jim Avedisian

Treasurer\Secretary
Patty Simmons

Board Members
Lewis Howes
Ed Wawrzynowicz
Al Bacchiocchi
Penny Yunuba

Board Advisor
Tony Marini