



# MASSACHUSETTS ACCORDION ASSOCIATION

Volume 8, Issue 5  
July 2014

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.

1:30-4 pm  
Ciociaro Social Club  
144 Bridge Street  
Newton, Massachusetts

Next meeting: July 27  
Detailed meeting info is available on our website.

Stay connected  
[www.MAAccordion.org](http://www.MAAccordion.org)



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## June MAAA: Jampacked with tunes and treats

The program on June 22 was jam-packed with accordionists and great music, beginning with a rousing play-along led by Dan Mackowiak. Other highlights included a performance by the Bellowers, a student showcase, and a featured performance by Don and Leslie McMahon.

### Student showcase

One of MAAA's goals is to provide a forum for students to showcase their skills in performance in front of other accordionists in order to build confidence and self-esteem. It was fitting that during this season of graduation ceremonies, we were treated to outstanding



Maya, age 11

performances by three students of MAAA members. Maya, who is 11 years old (and departed for her flute recital as soon as she finished her performance at MAAA) played "Let's Dance Polka" and "Tea for Two." Her phrasing, tone, and poise were truly impressive.

Maya is a student of [Dr. Emilian Badea](#), as was our next performer, Ian, who is 14. Ian performed Mozart's "Rondo alla Turca" by Mozart and the well-known Gus Viseur piece, "Flambe Montalbanaise." Ian's powerful performance demonstrated mastery of these challenging pieces, expressiveness, and dynamism.

Lewis Howes was the day's third student performer. Louis is a "second time around" student, having studied accordion when he was young and then, after a lengthy lapse, resuming study with

[Paul Monte](#). Lewis played "Dizzy Fingers" by Zez Confrey, a composer of novelty piano pieces. While the complicated ragtime runs and flourishes may have set listeners' heads spinning, Louis' performance was proficient and polished.



Ian, age 14

## Letter from the President

by Tony Marini ([AnthonyM@LMMCPAS.com](mailto:AnthonyM@LMMCPAS.com))

These past nine months were packed with extraordinary presentations and learning experiences for all those who attended MAAA meetings. Members and guests witnessed guest artists along with fellow members imparting their experiences and knowledge.

During the past few months, we introduced another avenue for those interested in participation in an orchestra. Lead by Carmen D'Angelo, this orchestra is intended to allow all players to develop a multi-part group that rehearses and ultimately performs. It is intended to be fun and allow people to grow. The music is diverse. Anyone can join in. The music is available by emailing Carmen D'Angelo ([dangeloc@comcast.net](mailto:dangeloc@comcast.net)) or me.

As participants we are now have many different ways to play and perform through open mike, play along, and the orchestra.

This month our Treasurer, Patty Simmons, is sending out membership forms. Your thoughts, suggestions and concerns are important to the future of this group. Please provide us with your feedback.

Linda Walden is very interested in singing with a player or group. If you are interested in this endeavor, please email me and I will send it along.

June (Jooyeon) Koo, a graduate student at Harvard, is coordinating a verbal documentary of accordion players. She is seeking volunteers to spend about an hour with her to talk about the accordion and its effects. See page 3 for more information.

Happily, there are members who are meeting outside the normal meetings and playing together. These smaller groups are welcome to perform. Please let me know and there will always be time available in our meetings.

For those who came to see Don McMahon and his wife Leslie, we saw history. Due to Don's hand, he will no longer be playing the accordion. On a positive note, two people came to this last meeting wanting to learn the accordion!

As the summer continues, I especially am grateful for the many people who work hard in this group, including, in alphabetical order, Al, Carmen, Carol, Catherine, Chris, Dan, Ed, Gary, Jan, Janet, Jim, Lewis, Lou, Maryanne, Patty, Rocco, and the many players and participants in our events.

Personally, I feel extremely fortunate to be involved with this group and hope that each of you feels the same.

## The Bellowers

The Bellowers are a small group of MAAA members and non-members. Performing "La Spagnola" at the June meeting were Penny Yunuba, Fred Brewer, Kim Galle, and Helen Selle. MAAA member Anne Jeka is also one of the Bellowers. They have been gathering monthly for about three years.

"We're a beginners/intermediate group. We choose pieces by consensus and take a relaxed approach to practicing and playing out," Penny explained.

Playing together is followed by a potluck and the accordionists have all become friends. "We seem to be able to listen to suggestions amongst ourselves about how we want pieces to sound," she adds. "We aim to have a good time. If this appeals



*The Bellowers*

*(photo: Carol Avedisian)*

to anyone else, feel free to ask one of us about giving it a try."

On Sunday, April 27, the Bellowers played a short recital at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church in Jamaica Plain as part of the church's organ recital series.

**Contact Penny at [pyunuba@comcast.net](mailto:pyunuba@comcast.net) for more info.**

## Guest performance by Don and Leslie McMahon

Don (accordion) and Leslie (vocals) McMahon were June's featured performers. Both are well-known professionals. Don played Cordovox accordions—among the earliest electronic accordions—with many bands in the Springfield, MA area during the 1960s, then gained



*Don and Leslie McMahon at the June 22 meeting (photo: Carol Avedisian)*

national exposure in the '70s with jazz saxophonist Charlie Ventura (they opened for legendary violinist Stephane Grappelli thirteen times). Don was also the leader of a house trio backing up jazz artists Zoot Sims, Buddy Tate, Kenny Davern, Vic Dickenson, and Jimmy McPartland. In 1988 and 1992, Don joined with the Hartford Symphony Orchestra to accompany opera star Luciano Pavarotti.

From 2008-2011, Don was a Product Specialist for Roland V-Accordions, presenting workshops, demos, and concerts at accordion events around the country. Performing for MAAA, he highlighted the Roland's versatility by accompanying his wife, Leslie Alexandra (McMahon), who started her music career as a Hammond B3 organist, then continued her music training at the Hartford Conservatory and University of Connecticut. The Leslie Alexandra Sextet performed at "All That Jazz" in Springfield for 5 years. She released her first CD, "Jazz du Jour," in 2003.

Don and Leslie have been performing at the Loft at the Clarion Hotel in Northampton for the past 2 years. Highlights of their MAAA set included Volare, One Note Samba, Besame Mucho, Herbie Mann's Coming Home, and Hermeto Pasqual's Bebe.

## Massachusetts Accordionists Oral History Project

*by June (Jooyeon) Koo*

I've been a member of the MAAA for almost a year now. I am a huge fan of all things accordion and I have been playing with the Ladies Accordion Orchestra since last October and attending MAAA meetings whenever I can.

Every time I speak with an accordionist from the MAAA, I've been blown away by your stories about how you have come to learn and love the accordion. This August, I would like the opportunity to write down some of these stories. The product of this project would simply be for the archives of MAAA (and for posterity!), as well as for possible use in publicizing our group and raising awareness about and interest in the accordion in our community.

The interviews will take place during the first two weeks of August. I will try my best to accommodate each interested member and drive out to your home in Massachusetts. If this is not possible, then I will try to speak with you over the phone.

**If you are interested or simply want to find out more about the project, please email me at [koojo11@gmail.com](mailto:koojo11@gmail.com) or give me a call at 617-542-5111.**

**I hope to hear from you!**

## Celebrating World Accordion Day

On May 6, the accordion world annually celebrates the invention of its instrument. Dan Mackowiak had the opportunity to commemorate the occasion with 13 young friends--the pre-school class attended by his grandson, Jonathan Fairbanks, at Miss Tanya's Woodland School in Westborough, MA.

Dan was invited to play the accordion for the class. With the interests of five and six-year olds in mind, he used a two-pronged approach. The first was to describe the basic workings of the instrument; the second was to demonstrate its worldwide popularity by playing songs from several ethnic traditions.

The class learned about reeds (with the aid of a translucent harmonica), bellows, and right and left-hand keyboards. Dan also had pictures of different accordion types, and explained that the instrument can be found

in many shapes and sizes but that all accordions have the same basic components.

With Jonathan's aid, Dan gave each student a flag representing regions that feature accordion



music: Italy, France, Germany, Sweden, Poland, Israel, Ireland, Newfoundland, Argentina, Louisiana, Texas, and the USA. He played a song representative of the music in each location. Spontaneous clapping to several tunes, parading to the German march, and dancing to the Cajun

two-step were good indicators of the enthusiasm level. Since no pre-school event is complete without a hands-on segment, everyone had a chance to play a few notes as Dan pumped the bellows.

After the session, Dan said, "Several kids had not seen an accordion before. Part of my goal was to introduce them to the instrument." When asked about the idea of flags and international music, he explained, "The accordion is pivotal in the music of many countries. In connection with World Accordion Day, I thought the learning experience would be particularly meaningful if we combined a few words about different countries with related music."

He concluded, "My passions these days are my grandchildren and music--especially playing the accordion. This opportunity to merge the two for a fabulous forty-five minutes was absolutely second-to-none."

## Squeezebox Slam 2014

The Somerville Squeezebox Slam on Saturday, June 14 drew appreciative crowds and accordionists of all kinds who gathered in Davis Square to listen to each other or play with others.

The event culminated in a grand finale concert. Our own Paul Monte's performance with bassist Tal Shalom-Kobi was a highlight of the concert, which featured leading accordionists from across New England.



Top left: Paul Monte and Tal Shalom-Kobi.

Bottom left: MAAA members playing in the Ladies Accordion Orchestra

Bottom right: Richard Messina from the New Hampshire Accordion Association



**CALENDAR**

**Lou and Jan Borelli**  
**July 8, 7-8:30 pm**  
**Clinton Common, Clinton MA**  
[www.borellimusic.com](http://www.borellimusic.com)

Lou and Jan Borelli play for a Children’s Concert on the Clinton Common, 7-8:30 pm. Free and open to the public. Bring the kids and grandkids. Bring a lawn chair or a blanket, maybe a picnic supper. Facepainting will be available.



**American Accordionists’ Association 2014 Festival**  
**July 9-14**  
**Tarrytown, NY**

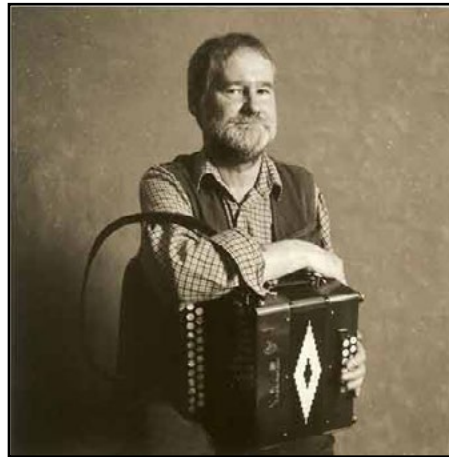
[www.ameraccord.com](http://www.ameraccord.com)

Some of this year’s guest artists include Vladimir Mollov, Guy Klucevsek and violinist Todd Reynolds, Dr. Robert Young McMahan, Steve Albin, Don Gerundo, Frank Carozza, The Plainville Plaids, Dallas Vietty, Julie Cardona, Beverly Roberts Curnow, Mary Tokarski, Mario Tacca, and Mary Mancini.



**Hazmat Modine**  
**July 9, 7:30 pm**  
**Museum of Fine Arts, Boston**  
[www.hazmatmodine.com](http://www.hazmatmodine.com)

Hazmat Modine’s American roots music features harmonicas, accordion, tuba, drums, guitars, and many, many horns.



**Matt Cranitch, Jackie Daly, and Paul DeGrae**  
**July 23, 7:30 pm**

**The Burren Backroom, Somerville**  
 Jackie Daly, one of the Celtic accordion greats, joins with Paul DeGrae (guitar) and Matt Cranitch (fiddle).

**July 30, 7:30 pm**  
**Teadá with Seamus Begley**

**The Burren Backroom, Somerville**  
 Teada’s top notch players perform with Seamus Begley--accordionist, dancer, storyteller, and “one of the sweetest, ancient, purist, old-style singing voices you will come across,” performing a repertoire of Gaelic and English songs from his native Kerry.

**MAAA Board of Directors**

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Al Bacchicchi  
 Jan Borelli  
 Carmen D’Angelo  
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**SAVE THE DATE**  
**NHAA’s Accordions Now! Festival**  
**August 8-9-10, 2014**  
**Courtyard Marriott, Nashua NH**  
<http://accordionconnection.com/events-2/>

Check out the weekend-long program of events--gala concert, open mike cabaret, New England Accordion Museum exhibit, jam sessions, educational hands-on workshops, night owl jams, and vendor displays. The event is co-sponsored by New Hampshire Accordion Association and Accordion Connection LLC.

Featured performers include:

- Tony Lovello, the “living legend of the accordion world” dubbed “King of the Bellow Shake”
- Catfish Howl Blues Band’s Cajun, country, blues, and original tune
- New England favorite Brent Buswell

**For more information:**  
[AccordionsNow@yahoo.com](mailto:AccordionsNow@yahoo.com) or  
 call 603-216-9582

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