

June 2020 Newsletter of The Silicon Valley Accordion Society



Hi Everyone:

I sincerely hope you are staying safe and well! Our year just seems to get more interesting (and challenging!) every time we turn around! Definitely one to remember! And it is far from over!

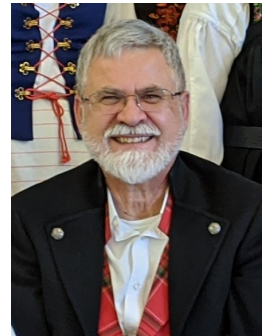
If you play the accordion, and are "Sheltering in Place," you probably have had plenty of time to practice. And speaking of practicing, be sure to read **Joe Domitrowich's** article in this issue of our Newsletter. Joe is a "Pro", and his advice is most welcome! And with all your practicing, we will be looking forward to you entertaining us at our future meetings once we get going again!!

We are sad to learn that our illustrious Editor **Scott Williamson** is "retiring" from the Editor's desk due to health reasons. **SCOTT, THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING, INCLUDING THE NOTE ABOUT THE EDITOR'S ROLE (further on.) WE WISH YOU WELL!!** Given Scott's departure, we are earnestly seeking volunteers to help with the Newsletter. Please contact me if you are willing to help!

I will make this message brief, as we need space for two significant articles we want to include in this edition. Please, stay safe and well!

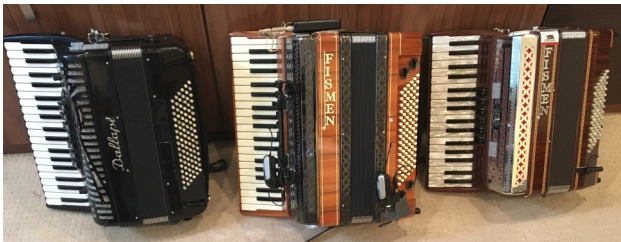
Bill

Bill Likens is a professional accordion player who has played for the Society on several occasions. He contributed this really interesting article on how his playing life adapted to the lockdown, and a delightful overview of the several accordions that he owns and plays. These emphasize the Swiss and German styles. Here he is with his "captured" Scottish waistcoat just showing. Ask him about this! It's a great, 408 year old warning to casual invaders! →



The shelter-in-place has reduced many activities for me, but I'm still keeping active with my music! Two different groups I play with are using Jamulus software for rehearsals. Jamulus is a little more complicated than Zoom, but works great once it is set up.

I've also participated in other music forums that meet via Zoom. Zoom only handles the audio from one person at a time, so groups using this for music do a round robin, with each musician playing a couple tunes. Or one person leads on Zoom, and the others play along with microphones muted. [Tip: Zoom automatically suppresses what it considers to be "background noise". Turning on "Enabling Original Sound" will minimize the garbling this creates.]



All my piano accordions are 96 bass or less. Over the years I decided 120 bass accordions just weigh too much. Also, I never play beyond C# at the top and Db at the bottom on the bass side. I used to play a Guerinni piano accordion. A very heavy 120-bass model. Today I play 72 and 96 bass models from Fismen (alpine musette with helikon bass) and Dallape (dry tuned).

Continued on page 2

Silicon Valley Accordion Society USUALLY (and it will again!) meets on the 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 and under free. Annual Memberships: Regular \$35, Gold \$125, Platinum \$200

Bill Likens article, continued from page 1.

My two row diatonic button accordions are from Harmona and Castagnari. ↓

I am learning a new instrument, the Schwyzerörgeli, a 3 row Swiss button accordion. I've had this for five years now and never figured out how to play it. But now that I have so much time at home on my hands, I'm finally making progress. Playing in Gb-Db-Ab-Eb-Bb, the melody side is diatonic, and the bass side is chromatic. The right hand buttons are arranged similar to but differently than either the club or Steirische systems. Normally you expect the low notes to be at the top, and the high notes at the bottom. Not so with this instrument. Pitch vs. position on the keyboard is somewhat random. The melody buttons are unbelievably close together, which is a challenge! The left hand side is like a Stradella bass, as on a piano accordion, but upside down! This crazy instrument has inverted a lot of the normal accordion layout.



out.

Bill Likens

Editor's Note. Bill also described enthusiastically the backstraps he uses. We described this topic previously, and mentioned Bill's source in the March issue of the Newsletter. https://www.stringsandboxes.de/epages/es117831.sf/de_DE/?ObjectPath=/Shops/es117831_stringsandboxes/Products/KX-SYTI

Editor resigning.

Hi everyone. The last few months have seen a lot of ups and downs all over the world. One of these has been my health. Some kind of progressive weakness started me thinking seriously about bucket lists. I'm resigning the editor role for SVAS. It has been an amazing three years for me. I finally got to know the Board Members very well, and many members by name and face. It is actually a lot of fun putting together the Newsletters for the Society. Cooperating with the Reporters who write up the monthly meetings has been a joy. And the work doesn't take more than two or three days in any month. The articles sent in from members local and afar became a great source of interest to me. Having to delve into the history of the accordion and its music was a voyage of wonder. And that has become part of my bucket list too!



Scott trying to explain that all that noise from the accordion comes from itty bitty little reeds.

I hope someone will be willing to give-it-a-go as editor. It is extremely rewarding. You also become quite adept at taking photos—*this one could be useful, ya never know*. And with cellphone cameras so good nowadays, the biggest challenge in taking photos is to keep remembering to take them! I'm also hoping to get the chance to work with whoever takes over. Microsoft's desktop publishing system is *Publisher*, basically MS Word with more layout capabilities. It is very similar to Apple's *Pages*. Either way, I would get a chance to work with the new Editor (s), and pass on an immense backlog of Newsletters and material that ex-president Ken Caple maintained for his 10-year (!) stint when he was also the editor. Occasionally browsing through that stuff brought back many memories, and photos and references for current newsletters. Please let Bill know if you would like to find out more. A small group of editors could be a great way to go: only busy for a couple of days every second or third month. I'd also add that our printer, Nelson Industries, has been a wonderful backstop catching errors that everyone else missed. We have a great setup—let's try somehow to keep it going.

Scott Williamson

**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/UCpam)**

Editor's note: Last month, we published a very short summary of a note on Practice Tips that Joe Domitrowich contributed. Joe felt that the summary missed some of his important points. So this month, here is the full file that Joe sent.

PRACTICE TIP #1: PRACTICE SEQUENCE

by

Joe Domitrowich

www.capricious-accordion.com



In any given practice session, it is helpful to include a variety of material, some long, some short in duration, some difficult, some less difficult. Vary the genre or complexity of the selections you plan to practice as well as their rhythms and style. Then move methodically from one selection to the next in a sequence alternating in complexity and other attributes of the pieces. This will be your Practice Setlist. It should contain the right amount of material for you to cover in a typical practice day. A well-chosen setlist will help keep your mind fresh and focused for a longer practice time and delay the onset of fatigue, thereby resulting in a more productive practice session.

After a particularly difficult passage or selection, take a break to avoid fatigue. But, break only after you have played it correctly several times in succession. When you return to your practice some minutes or hours later to resume with your Practice Setlist for the day, play first the last selection you played just before ending the prior session. This will be the most recent material in your recall. Your memory will not be diluted by other material you might otherwise have practiced in the meantime. In this manner you will always favor reinforcing the synapses that were formed in the most recent session, thereby helping to 'gel' that material. In my experience, the effectiveness of this technique is most pronounced if you resume practice of a selection just as your recall is about to fade away.

When you have completed all the material in your Practice Setlist, begin the next practice session with the last played selection in the prior practice session. Then play the remainder of the selections in your practice setlist in the reverse sequence from that in which you practiced each piece in the prior session. In this way, you will always favor reinforcement of your synapse formation starting from the most recent work of your last practice session. Then, by reversing the sequence again in your next practice, you will once again favor the first half of your material. This approach also ensures that if a song was played late in one session when your concentration was less focused, that song will receive your full and fresh attention in the next session.

Assuming you are not fatigued, it is beneficial to end one session with a priority piece, one you have identified to favor over the others. It will then alternate between occurring first and last in successive practice sessions. Or you can play priority selection both first and last in multiple practice sessions. This will be the most effective approach in making progress on a priority selection. And, it will also help you to memorize the selection if that is your intent.

Overall, favor practicing the more difficult material when you are fresh and alert, and easier material when you are less energetic. And, break from practicing before you reach the point of fatigue. If you are losing concentration, slow down the tempo and play the material you are currently working on just once correctly, then take a break. Always end on a "good note", just as this tip ends on a good pun.

THE HUMOR CORNER

- Safe "social" separation from musical instrument players: (i) good violin player—6', (ii) tone deaf guitar player who knows 3 chords—50', overly-ambitious trumpet learner—50', enthusiastic, so-so accordion player—100'.
- What is the best thing to play on an accordion? *Solitaire*.
- What do you call two so-so accordion players playing in unison? *Counterpoint*.

That may be enough for one month!

NEWSLETTER OF THE

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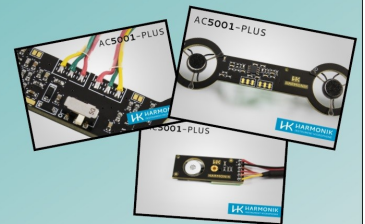
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