

**November, 2024**

**Sunday, November 17, 2024**

3:00pm (Pacific)

*Special Online Presentation!*

## **The History of the Accordion in Northern California**

By SFAC member **Monica Ambalal**

**\*PLUS\* Music by Duane Quenzel**

♪ SFAC Members will receive ZOOM link via email ♪



Club member **Monica Ambalal** is a scholar, a professor, a cellist, a singer and a student of the accordion. Please join us via **Zoom** as Monica talks about her recently defended doctoral thesis: *The Development and Sustainability of the Piano-Accordion by Italian Communities in Northern California*.

Monica is the chair of the Department of Music at Merritt College and has recently completed a PhD from UC Santa Cruz. Her doctoral dissertation focuses on the piano accordion and how it was cultivated and sustained by Italian communities in northern California.

Monica has agreed to offer the Club a glimpse back in time, when the accordion was in its heyday in San Francisco, host to many Accordion manufacturers and some of the most prominent teachers and accordionists of the time.

New SFAC member **Duane Quenzel** has offered to complete the afternoon with a couple of songs. Those of us who heard Duane play on our Oktoberfest ZOOM session already know this will be a unique treat! He has virtuoso skills in both Stradella and free-bass, and plays publicly. The audio quality of Duane's ZOOM performance was among the best we have heard on the platform. Please see Duane's biography on page 5.

### **A call for volunteer writers:**

Well, we sure could use contributions to our monthly newsletter to keep it bustling with content our members want to read! Just about anything accordion-related works . . . but if you prefer a targeted task to coming up with your own ideas, please consider writing a musical event summary. You could either attend the program in person or watch it on Zoom. Here is your chance to have fun with creative writing, to let our readers know what you found most memorable about the wonderful musical program you attended. You may have some experience writing for publication, or you may not. Trust us: our very capable newsletter editors will be at your side fixing up the rough spots ... we can make you a famous *auteur*!

Contact [info@sfaclub.com](mailto:info@sfaclub.com)



# PIEDMONT ACCORDION CIRCLE SUMMARY

Ken Schwartz

October's meeting was our second outing to Piedmont and once again was highly successful with a good turnout and new faces! The venue, Piedmont High School Student Center, is an historic building, and provided ample room for the meeting. The acoustics were excellent, thanks to the redwood ceiling (see photos on next page). We got a bit of a late start to the Zoom session, as we encountered limited parking and a major high school event that same day.

This month's jam session was once again capably led by Joseph Martin and featured traditional Oktoberfest music that had been assembled from multiple sources by Robert and Elaine Cooperstein a few years ago.

During and following the intermission, new member **Duane Quenzel** (left) played the German National anthem, followed by Beethoven's *9th Symphony Ode to Joy*, and then the ending of Beethoven's *5th Symphony*. He then proceeded to play *Classical Gas* by Mason Williams, the Tommy Emanuel arrangement. This song was super pop in 1968, #1 in the Cashbox Top 100 in the month of August.



Due to unforeseen circumstances, Duane's outstanding performance was viewed only by SFAC members who were logged onto Zoom during the break between the Jam session and the set featuring solo performers. Viewing remotely, Marilyn Valentino and Tseli Wu were very impressed! Duane's Stradella accordion required 3 years to construct and is an exact replica of Frank Marocco's accordion; Duane's accordion teacher played with Frank. Duane took up the accordion at age three but had a 50-year hiatus following his serving in Vietnam at age 21. Duane only resumed accordion in 2021, and plays beautifully, clearly not having lost a step!



Following the break, Duane's friend Henry Michal followed with beautiful renditions of *Brise Napolitaine* and *La Valse Des As* on his Roland chromatic C system accordion. Thank you, Duane and Henry!

**Scott Anderson**, dressed for Oktoberfest, kicked off our soloist live session with great renditions of *Für Elise* (Beethoven) and *Girl from Ipanema*. **Joel Weber** followed with *Prince of Peace*, a terrific rendition and something quite new to the Club – a rock piece beautifully adapted and performed on the accordion! Thank you, Joel, you rock!

Next, **Colette Ogata** and **Joseph Martin** performed duets. They've recently been performing in the Arrivals Lounge of Oakland/San Francisco International Airport as described in our October newsletter. They started with a terrific rendition of *Que Sera, Que Sera*, followed by *Never on Sunday* (paradoxically, performed at our *Sunday* meeting!). Lovely!!! Colette and Joseph, you were sensational! **Colette** and **Jane Tripi** next performed another terrific duet, *La Paloma*. Let's try to have more duets at our Club meetings!



**Pamela Tom** performed a spirited *Tico-Tico* (Abreu), complete with a finale featuring her signature double and then triple bellows shake! Next, Pamela wowed us with her rendition of yet another rock piece, *City of New Orleans*, an arrangement of travel-related themes. She first started working on her wonderful arrangement with Mr. Lou Jacklich in 2014. The piece opened with a theme from an old campfire folk song, *500 Miles* (Peter, Paul & Mary), followed by Arlo Guthrie's *City of New Orleans*, and finally portions of Les Brown's *Sentimental Journey*, featuring her signature triple bellows shake. Pam even included a musical equivalent of a train whistle or two and concluded with an announcement: "All Aboard!"

**Ken Schwartz** followed Pamela with the beautiful *Olive Blossoms* (Pietro Frosini) followed by *Begin the Beguine* (Cole Porter, Roberto Carreno arrangement).



.... Continued from previous page



**Iñaki Reta** was up next. This was Iñaki's first visit to a Club meeting, courtesy of member Thomas Seiter. Hopefully, it will be the first of many visits! According to Thomas Seiter: "He is the non-plus-ultra accordionista from Navarro, España!" Iñaki wowed us with his virtuosity on the button accordion and his singing. He first played a spirited rendition of *España Cañi*, pasodoble music by Pascual Marquina Narro, which then flowed into a brilliant rendition of an original pasodoble composition. It was simply marvelous, rapid and full of energy, replete with Spanish emotion!

**Mike Zampiceni**, in keeping with the Oktoberfest theme, played and sang *Beer Barrel Polka* and *Pennsylvania Polka*, always favorites when he performs them. This segued into *California, Here I Come!* Then, paying tribute to Halloween, Mike played *You Stepped Out of a Dream* (Nacio Herb Brown w/Lyrics by Gus Kahn, 1940). Great fun! As always, thank you, Mike!



Finally, by popular demand, Iñaki returned to play and sing one final song, which is from his home region of Navarro, Spain. A song about a Patron Saint (in Spanish, of course), it was a terrific rendition of a traditional Spanish theme and was accompanied by his wonderful singing!!!

The meeting concluded with a shout-out to **Robert Berta**, who was celebrating his 77<sup>th</sup> birthday on the day of the meeting. Bob is a former president of the Club and a lifetime member. **Mike Zampiceni** played/sang the birthday song, with everyone joining in. Happy Birthday, Bob!

This meeting was sensational, with so much talent and a wonderful venue - an historic room with marvelous acoustics. It was great fun for all!



# What You Should Know About Free-Bass Accordions

By Duane Quenzel

Today there are seven different styles of free-bass convertor instruments manufactured -- not including the Titano piano accordion! A true convertor free-bass piano accordion switches from Stradella to all single notes giving you the capability of five and one-half octaves of playing runs for the capability to play most major composers' music as it was written. On the other hand, the Titano system bass section goes from Stradella to a V shaped quint system or five pattern which makes the octave runs both shortened and almost impossible to play the music composition as written by the composer.

The new full size digital accordions (both the Roland FR-7X, FR-8X, and KORG FISA Performa) are another change again from the conversion switch on true piano acoustic accordions with free-bass instruments. They do not have the same size octave range, which is shortened! Therefore, the accordionist has to "cheat" or improvise the music to make it sound close to the way the piece of music is written.

Now for the rest of the story! Most virtuoso European, Eastern bloc, and Russian accordionists use only chromatic button convertor free-bass accordions. The Eastern bloc and Russian accordionists only prefer the "B" System bass set-up, which they call "bayans." The Russian Brand Jupiter is the highest quality bayan.

Russia is also the only country that produces the Timbre wooden acoustic accordions. This accordion group is in a league of its own!!! They look and sound different because of their weird looking acoustical box style chamber. There are several quintet groups in Russia that play these instruments and utilize Russian music composers. Here is a [link](https://youtu.be/XO2NI6DQBgg?feature=shared) to *Prelude Asturias* (I. Albeniz) by the Timbre Russian Accordion Group (Русский тембр) <https://youtu.be/XO2NI6DQBgg?feature=shared>

Why are chromatic button accordions used over the piano style? Because the right-hand buttons are closer together and give faster playing capability because you don't have to stretch your fingers as far on some very large and complex chords!!! The piano keyboard is longer on a piano style than button style accordion.

I use the "C" system button arrangement because, like the treble pattern side, the low notes are toward the chin and the high notes are towards the feet. On a "B" system free-bass accordion, its arrangement is the opposite, thus making it confusing for a regular Stradella musician to feel comfortable to play. See examples of Petosa accordions below that show different button arrangements between the C and B systems.



Petosa AM-1100C (C System) AND Petosa AM-4100 (B System)

Other free-bass convertor systems include the Belgian, Finnish, Swedish, and Baroque which have their place in ethnic music compositions. Are you confused yet?

The switch that changes the button pattern from Stradella to free-bass is a long bar above the top row of buttons (or third inversion of the circle of fifths). For the reed division switches before the bellows, there are also two, two-

## Free-Bass Accordions

position button switches (next to the air release button) for the base octave switches to add higher or lower octave sound reeds. AH HA! Now we're getting into the more complicated segment of how free-bass works.

When playing a classical piece of music, your left-hand thumb slides towards the air button to move these octave switches while playing. AH HA! Yes, when playing the convertor free-bass accordion you use all ten fingers during the performance; as well as a left leg lift and right body lean on full bellows extension to facilitate bringing the bellows to the closed position. This is why playing a convertor free-bass instrument is so much more strenuous physically for a sit-down, heavy playing instrument compared with a lighter stand-up Stradella instrument.

When a classical accordionist plays a major symphonic work of music you can believe they get exhausted. Some performers like [Alexander Hrustivich](#) can burn over 2,000 calories during his performance! Yes, he physically earns his money!!!

### New Member Profile: Duane Quenzel

Submitted by Pamela Tom

Duane Quenzel is a gifted and highly trained accordionist living 20 miles north of Philadelphia, PA. He started lessons at age three during the 1950s and studied the accordion for 16 years. At age six he competed with *Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2* at the Rockville Civic Center in Rockville, MD and took first place in his age group. One thousand were in attendance that day.

He received training from renowned accordionists and teachers: Jean Smallwood (top pedagogue accordionist during the 1920s-40s), Frank Moliterre (duet accordionist with Frank Marocco), and Myron Floren. He learned all 30's and 40's big band swing and jazz music. At age 16 he studied classical music on a convertor free-bass (C) system with Myron Floren for over three years.



Duane at 6 years.



Duane with his Stradella and convertor free-bass wooden Victoria accordions.

After graduating high school, he joined the U.S.A.F. and served a tour in the Viet Nam War, 1970-1971. When he returned home, he learned that his parents had sold his full-sized accordions to support his older brother's college tuition. The State Dept. sent them a letter noting that his helicopter had been shot down and he was MIA in enemy territory; they thought he had died.

Duane took a 50-year sabbatical from playing the accordion. He received two new wooden Victoria (Stradella, and converter free-bass) acoustic accordions from Italy during the Covid-19 pandemic. He was restricted to performing via Zoom (predominantly for European audiences). Since the pandemic, he has refreshed his virtuoso accordion skills and entertains publicly.

Duane owns an exact duplicate of Frank Marocco's Poeta V. 5/5 with double chambers and double cassottos. Swedish blue steel handmade Binci reeds and internal Sennheiser mics are installed in both instruments. His converter free-bass Victoria is a (C) system free-bass and is the Ad Libitum model.

"I used to practice thirty hours a week when I was in High School. Now, I practice twenty hours per week."

*Editor's note: We look forward to Duane's virtuoso performances of standards, jazz and classical music via Zoom at future SFAC meetings. He will perform some selections on our November ZOOM meeting.*

## Membership Report

Robert Cooperstein

We have now concluded our membership renewal drive for 2024-25.

We are very grateful to those Club Members who renewed promptly, sparing us the tedium of sending out reminders. In most years, the number of new members is relatively similar to the attrition rate. Some people decide to leave the club, and sadly, some people pass away. This year, that equation is to the downside.

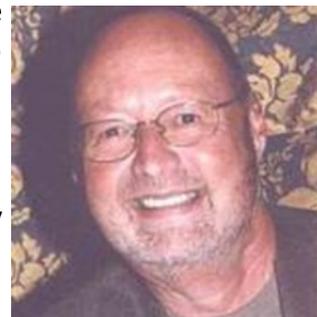
We are puzzled to see about a dozen people who had been active members of the SFAC, whom we know well, have allowed their memberships to lapse in spite of multiple invitations to take care of business. If you are one of those individuals, please understand you are receiving this newsletter and an invitation to the November meeting as a final courtesy, although we certainly appreciate your past support.

If your intent was to remain in good standing, now is the time to take a few minutes to renew. Trust me, your time is not more valuable than mine in tracking members' status and maintaining our database. I am one of the most active retirees you will ever meet.



## Welcome New SFAC Member Ron Mulgrew

Ron was born in Youngstown, Ohio in 1946. He was a career air traffic controller for the Federal Aviation Administration, retiring in 2007 as the Air Traffic Administrative Services Manager in Atlanta, Georgia, after 37-years of Federal service. He actively volunteers as a Disaster Responder, Duty Officer, and Recovery Coordinator for the Red Cross. He and his husband, Chai, celebrated 34 years together this year. They lived in Chicago, New York City, and Atlanta before moving to San Francisco in 2012. Ron has been fascinated with accordion music since childhood. He is about to launch a YouTube channel named "The OCTO Geezer", meant to promote late-in-life accomplishments and to encourage other baby-boomers to pursue their dreams.



## Polkageist West

Featuring SFAC member *Thomas Seiter*

Sunday, December 8, 2024

Polkageist West starts at 2:00pm

### Oakland Nature Friends

3115 Butters Drive, Oakland, CA

- ◆ Doors open at noon
- ◆ \$10 at the door
- ◆ Food and drink for purchase
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[POLKAGEIST.West@gmail.com](mailto:POLKAGEIST.West@gmail.com)

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# AN INTERVIEW WITH LOU JACKLICH (5/18/2019) - PART 2

Pamela Tom, Interviewer

**Pam:** What moments in your career did you wish did not happen?

**Lou:** Around the late 60's or early 70's, I was booked at 9 PM on Treasure Island (located between the San Francisco and Oakland Bay Bridges) and discovered as I was setting up my equipment that I had left my foot pedal (an essential part of my act) at the previous night's gig at a country club down the San Francisco Peninsula. Panicked, I jumped in the car with my dad. Fortunately, the pedal was on the stage where I had left it. It was a harrowing experience. I made it back to the auditorium in Treasure Island while dad parked the car. I had possibly 15 minutes to spare before show time.

**Pam:** What were important lessons you learned in your career?

**Lou:** As a professional performer, the most important lesson that I learned is that "you do not hog or play over your time." If you are playing a television show, your performance has to be timed to the minute. Never overdo your performance. The strategy that works for me is to stop while having your audience on their feet wanting more after your encore. There is only so much time allotted for the show. There was an accordionist who hogged the show and was not invited back. As a professional you are never supposed to hog your time.

I learned that if I was the first or third person on the show, you couldn't even give your record album (CDs did not exist at that time) away by the end of the show because the audience has a short memory. When, however, you are the last act and tear the house down, you can dig into your second box of albums to sell immediately following the show.

In earning a living, as a performer I branched out beyond playing in trio-combos (which I performed with), to diversify and play solo or strolling jobs. For two years I had a steady job strolling with violinists at the Marriott Hotel, and then heading to the country club with the electronic unit to perform with a sax/violinist (band leader and an agent) and drummer. There was a period in New York during the 30's when a sax player needed to also play the violin. I have been teaching since I was 16; 75 years and still counting.

I would get contracts while unaware of whom I would be working with. Agents do not want others to know job specifics (e.g., venue, date, time) to avoid under-bidding by another agent. Often the agent offers an entire show package with numerous performers. One year I ended up going on tour among 17 California county fairs with 5-10 other acts on the program. I informed my agent what I wanted in salary for an in-town job and an out-of-town job. One important piece of advice that I have to share is that you should never reduce your rate. Otherwise, word gets around and all the agents will book you at the lowest rate. I am 90 year's old and all of my agents are now deceased. Some of my agents were very nice to me on the road and treated me like their son. I had my first agent by the time I was 17 years old and did a vaudeville tour.

Through my agents I had bookings with visiting celebrities to the San Francisco Peninsula. For example, I was an opening act to warm-up the audience before Frank Sinatra came on stage at the San Jose Auditorium. I entertained at an event celebrating **Bonanza** star Lorne Greene at the Oakland Auditorium. I was booked on the same bill with Jimmy Durante at Goodman Hall in Jack London Square, Oakland.

*Part One of this interview may be found in the October 2024 Newsletter of the SFAC*



Lou Jacklich with loyal students Scott Anderson, Tibor Sarkany, and Elaine Cooperstein at SFAC meeting - December, 2022



## Ron Borelli, Accordionist

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- WEBSITE: [RONBORELLI.COM](http://RONBORELLI.COM)
- TEXT/PHONE: 415-203-6700

### SFAC Members Performing Around the Bay

**RON BORELLI** *San Mateo* - [RonBorelli@aol.com](mailto:RonBorelli@aol.com)  
[www.ronborelli.com](http://www.ronborelli.com)

**JOE DOMITROWICH** *South Bay* -  
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or [www.capricious-accordion.com](http://www.capricious-accordion.com)

**ED GORZYNSKI, JR.** *East Bay* -  
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**PAMELA TOM** *Yolo & Solano Counties*  
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**MIKE ZAMPICENI** *East Bay & South Bay*  
[eclecticguy@comcast.net](mailto:eclecticguy@comcast.net), [www.mikezamp.com](http://www.mikezamp.com)

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Members may place 1/8-page (business-card size) free of charge for one month each year.

Additional ads are \$10/issue or \$100/year.

Monthly ad prices **for members**:

1/8 page: \$10; 1/4-page: \$25; 1/2-page: \$50; Full-page: \$100.

Non-member rates are double.

Contact [info@sfacaccordionclub.com](mailto:info@sfacaccordionclub.com)

### Searching for Lou Soper's Easy Musical Chord Retention Method, Volumes One & Two

If your collection of sheet music includes these volumes, please let us know. It would be greatly appreciated.

[info@sfacaccordionclub.com](mailto:info@sfacaccordionclub.com)

### SFAC Scholarships

Your Club has scholarship funds available to support accordion students studying with teachers who are SFAC members in good standing. Preference is given to students who demonstrate dedication to pursuing the study of the accordion.

Contact Mike Zampiceni for a scholarship application.

[eclecticguy@comcast.net](mailto:eclecticguy@comcast.net) 408-569-2579

## ACCORDION INSTRUCTION

### East Bay

- ◆ Joel Weber [www.ioelseastbayaccordionlessons.weebly.com/](http://www.ioelseastbayaccordionlessons.weebly.com/)
- ◆ Mike Zampiceni\* [www.mikezamp.com](http://www.mikezamp.com)

### Peninsula/South Bay

- ◆ Joe Simoni\* [jsimoni2000@gmail.com](mailto:jsimoni2000@gmail.com), 650-867-1122
- ◆ Mike Zampiceni\* [www.mikezamp.com](http://www.mikezamp.com)

### Outside the Bay Area

- ◆ Gail Campanella\* [GailCampanella@gmail.com](mailto:GailCampanella@gmail.com) 805-895-0457 (Santa Barbara)
- ◆ Bonnie Birch\* [www.bonniebirch.com](http://www.bonniebirch.com) (Seattle)
- ◆ Pamela Tom\* [accordionpam@gmail.com](mailto:accordionpam@gmail.com) (Davis)
- ◆ Lorna Anderson\* 910-215-5757 (Pinehurst, NC)

\* = remote lessons (ZOOM, Facetime, Skype) available

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🎻 **Thank You, Donors!** 🎻

Sincere Thanks to those who generously donate to support the SFAC. These members have made extra donations during our 2024-2025 membership year:

Scott Anderson, Ron Borelli, Raymond Celentano, Edward Crnich, Xavier and Candace de la Prade, Arleen Johnson, Pamela Lister, Linda Lonay, Franco & Susan & Lorenzo Lucchesi, Nora Mazzara, Gerald McMahon, Laura Jean Niland, Colette Ogata, David Perry, Robert D. and Dil Pisani, Tibor Sarkany, Kenneth Schwartz, Bill & Gloria Tapogna; Pamela Tom, Jane & Frank Tripi, Frank Venturelli, Barbara Winter

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Petaluma, California 95952

Noon-6pm Wed, Fri, Sat  
Noon-8pm Thurs

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smytheaccordion@gmail.com

**Oktoberfest in Florida!**

Robert and Elaine took advantage of being Floridians to



see the SFAC's good friend Alex Meixner steal the show at the Vero Beach Oktoberfest celebration. His non-stop 5-hour set was a sight to behold! It included a polka version of AC/DC's *Thunderstruck*, which has become quite popular in the accordion world!



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San Francisco Accordion Club

Newsletter

c/o Cooperstein

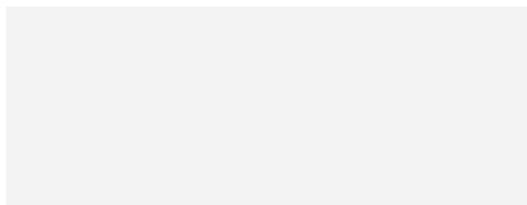
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**Upcoming Events:** *November 17* Monica Ambalal (via ZOOM) Special Presentation  
*December 15* Accordion Circle—Holiday Edition! Live at Chetcuti  
*January 19, 2025* Adrian Jost, Bandoneón - Live at Chetcuti

**SFAC Online-only Sunday Meeting**

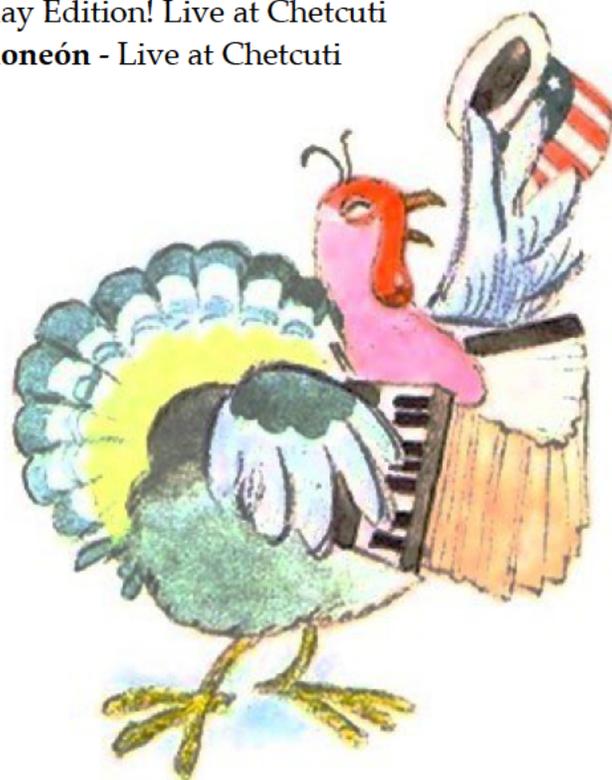
**Special Presentation! (via ZOOM)**

**Monica Ambalal**

**Sunday, November 17 - 3:00 pm**

*The History of the Accordion in  
Northern California*

**+ Music by Duane Quenzel**



SFAC members will receive ZOOM link via email

See email for details, or

contact [info@sfaccordionclub.com](mailto:info@sfaccordionclub.com)

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