



October, 2025

Sunday, October 19, 2025

♪ ♪ **East Bay Accordion Circle!** ♪ ♪

PIEDMONT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT CENTER
800 MAGNOLIA AVENUE, BUILDING B
PIEDMONT, CALIFORNIA

2:00 pm - 5:00 pm PST

SFAC MEMBERS WILL RECEIVE ZOOM LINK VIA EMAIL

\$10 member / \$15 non-member

Donation in cash welcomed.

We incur significant costs to rent the room,
so thank you for your understanding.



Our Oktoberfest Accordion Circle meeting will take place at our "home away from home" - the historic **Piedmont High School Student Center, Building B, 800 Magnolia Avenue, Piedmont, CA 94611.**

- ◆ *Free parking on Magnolia Ave. and adjacent side streets*
- ◆ *Magnolia Ave. is a one-way street with very limited parking*
- ◆ ***Please allow at least 20 minutes to park***

We hope all members, wherever you live in the Bay Area, will participate. For those living on the Peninsula, the drive across the San Mateo bridge on a sunny Sunday afternoon provides a relaxing and scenic view of the San Francisco Bay. Just ask those of us in the East Bay who attend meetings in Millbrae.



Accordionists of all skill levels are welcome! Be you a very beginner, someone dusting off that accordion after pursuing a career, or a seasoned expert, we want you to join the Circle as we all make music together. If you don't play the accordion - come anyway and enjoy the music. There will probably be a few tunes to sing along with.

Sheet music will be provided to play and enjoy as a group, but we also invite and encourage any person or group who has prepared a piece or two that they would like to perform in front of an audience to do so - just let Ken Schwartz know at info@sfacclub.com so that there is an opportunity for everyone that would like to perform.

September Event Summary

By Ken Schwartz

In September, a small but appreciative audience enjoyed a wonderful afternoon of terrific music, sitting for complimentary photo portraits, and community spirit.



The jam session was led by Dr. **Scott Anderson**, who was complete with his vintage band stand and led us through an assortment of tunes. **Ed Burgle**, who joined the Club as a new member, entertained with a talented solo prior to the intermission.

Ashley Thompson, photographer, took portraits of members and their families. Proofs will be posted to a shared website shortly. Thank you, Ashley, for making this day so memorable, literally. Your photographs will be cherished – forever! Ashley’s son is a young student accordionist and new member of the Club. He’s off to college shortly and has enjoyed our meetings.



Our featured performers were the **Reno DiBono Trio**, featuring accordionist/singer **Reno DiBono**, guitarist **Rick Vandivier** and drummer **Olaf Schiappacasi**.



Reno opened with beautifully performed solos on his vintage Sonola accordion demonstrating his versatility: the hauntingly beautiful *Adagio Cantabile* (Beethoven, from Sonata Pathétique No. 8, op. 13), followed by a lovely version of *Va, Pensiero* (From Verdi’s Nabuco), *Musetta’s Waltz* (from Puccini’s La Bohème), and *Por Una Cabeza* (Gardel).

Next, the **Reno DiBono Trio** performed an extensive array of songs: *Samba Italiana* (accompanied with Olaf’s vocals); a spirited *Tico Tico*; *Twilight Time* (a hit from the pop trio **Three Suns**, consisting of accordionist **Morty Nevins**, **Al Nevins**, and **Artie Dunn**); *Begin the Beguine* (Cole Porter); *My Romance* (Richard Rogers); *St Louis Blues*; *Darktown Strutters Ball* (sung by Reno); *Here’s That Rainy Day* (Van Heusen and Burke) with Rick’s elegant solos; *One Note Samba*; *Wave* (again with Rick soloing on the guitar). Next followed a series of mostly Italian songs: *Marenariello* (Ottaviano and Gambardella) accompanied by Reno’s Italian vocals; *Come Back to Sorrento*; *O Sole Mio* (Di Capua); *Reginella Campagnola* (*The Woodpecker Song*); *La Piccina* (Italian vocals by Reno); *On the Road Again* (Willie Nelson) with Reno’s



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vocals; *Ciribiribin* (Alberto Pestalozza) sung in Piedmontese by Reno; *Take the A Train* (Duke Ellington) featuring Rick's solos; *Volare* sung in Italian by Reno; and *Ce La Luna* (Louis Prima).

Thank you for such a wonderful performance, **Reno, Rick and Olaf!** You were sensational with such an extensive and varied repertoire. And Reno, as a teacher of American History earlier in your career, you inspired generations of students. You continue to inspire this generation of accordionists!

And, thank you **Paul Cain**, as always, for providing your audio/video expertise; **Scott Anderson** for leading the jam session; new member **Ed Burtle** for your solo during the intermission, and **VERY SPECIAL THANKS** to **Ashley Thompson** for your photographic portraits; they will be cherished!



Membership Update

By Robert Cooperstein

As of October 8, 55% our members had paid their annual Club membership fee (a little better than last year at this time). For those of you who have not yet done so, understand that technically your membership has lapsed. Please take care of this so you can continue receiving our Newsletter, invitations to our accordion programs, and other SFAC announcements that go out from time to time. You may use the renewal form and return envelope you received from us, or renew at the SFAC webpage. If you would like to opt-in to our forthcoming SFAC Contact Directory, return the form you received for that (or send an email to me (drcoop@sbcglobal.net) specifying what contact information you would like included.

We are proud of what our Club accomplishes each year – engaging famous accordionists to play for us, holding jam sessions at almost every event, being the last accordion club standing at the Cotati Accordion Festival (donating to its scholarship fund and to other worthy students), and producing by all accounts a highly regarded monthly newsletter. Above all, we just do our best - with limited resources - to faithfully support accordionists, teachers, students, and listeners.

Finally, let us welcome three new members to the Club, Mark Pitts of Pacifica, Vadzim Chernyshevich of San Francisco and Ed Burtle. At a time when many accordion clubs are under stress to maintain their membership rolls, the SFAC remained at exactly the same level year over year.



The Making of “Pietro Frosini - The Wizard of the Accordion”

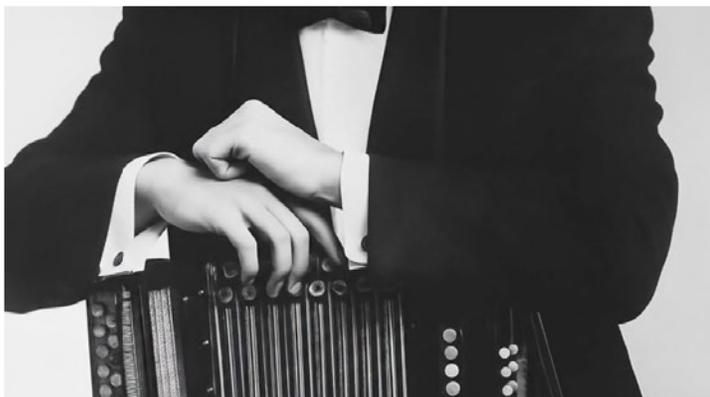
By Roy Zheng

During the Cotati Festival, I premiered my accordion-focused documentary on the life of Pietro Frosini, which was warmly received by the accordion community. If you haven't seen it yet, you should check it out here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q3hY_vE_k34

Some of my viewers are surprised that I was able to put this documentary together by myself. To satisfy their curiosity, I want to share how it was put together. The short answer: artificial intelligence (AI) tools. In fact, the research, the narrator, and even the script was created mostly by AI. Some of the music and video clips were also created by AI.

Since Frosini did not leave us with any footage of himself, my vision was to bring him to life through AI-generated videos. First I needed high quality source material, i.e. high resolution photos of Frosini. To this end, I reached out to Lars Ek, the CEO of the [Frosini Society](#), and he generously allowed me to use the photos from his Frosini biography. Next, I fed these photos into Gemini Veo which takes an image and a prompt to create a short video.

Getting the clips right took much experimentation, and there were some interesting bloopers along the way. Some examples:



In the middle of a scene, an antique accordion spontaneously morphs into a chromatic button box accordion



And here is a strange accordion-bandoneon hybrid

Creating these Gemini-generated clips was an enjoyable process. Combined with stock photos and videos, they provided enough material to build the visuals of the documentary.

The process of creating the documentary starts with research to generate a script and storyboard. ChatGPT's research mode does this perfectly. With a script and plan in hand, the next step is to generate the narration. ElevenLabs has a great text-to-speech interface that lets you describe the voice of the narrator using plain English. Once I created a voice, it was just a matter of copy pasting the script from ChatGPT into ElevenLabs. For music, I have recordings of my own playing, some content from the public domain, and some AI-generated compositions using Riffusion.

AI technology in digital media has advanced dramatically and it appears to still be accelerating. Companies are developing fully-autonomous AI agent-based tools that can go from a storyboard to a complete video. As these tools increase in quality and affordability, I foresee a world where even the most obscure topics can have high quality documentaries.

This article was written with a nontechnical audience in mind. If you're interested in more details, feel free to reach out and I will be happy to discuss this topic with you.



ACCORDION AMBASSADOR ADVENTURES

By Pamela Tom

Several SFAC members attended an accordion concert starring visiting Hungarian virtuoso accordionist, Tamás Kéméndi, at the San Francisco Bay Area Hungarian Cultural Center in Newark, CA on August 31, 2025. Tamás entertained the audience with numerous accordion favorites including music by Liszt, Monti and Piazzolla. Tibor Sárkány and Tamás performed a duet of *Biscaya* by James Last. Tamás also performed duets with Bay Area musicians Judith Fischer (singer) and Endre Balogh who performed on the tárogató (a woodwind commonly used in Hungarian folk music).



SFAC members (seated) Colette Ogata, Mike Zampiceni, Sergiy Turchyn, Rosemary Busher, Pamela Tom, plus (standing) Casey Ogata and Joseph Martin. Not pictured: Tibor Sárkány.



Tamás and Tibor rehearsing *Biscaya* a day prior to the concert in Newark.

Mike Zampiceni gave a benefit concert last month at Starr King Unitarian Universalist Church in Hayward. Colin Kennedy, Natasha Lyukevich, Joseph Martin, Colette and Casey Ogata, Jim Shoemaker, and Pamela Tom were among the SFAC members who viewed Mike's outstanding performance, which was also livestreamed via Zoom. The audience greatly appreciated Mike's singing voice and his virtuoso performance of French, German, Irish, Italian, and Latin tunes, as well as standards. Mike's action-packed concert with numerous popular tunes highlighted the accordion's versatility, much to the delight of the audience. His fingers were flying on the key and bass boards. He explained that the accordion was a reed instrument and described the features of the accordion. The attendees enjoyed the accordion concert so much that at the conclusion they spoke of looking forward to another concert in the future.

Mike sported different hats to be in character with some of the ethnic tunes that he played. While entertaining the audience with Italian tunes, he wore his green, white and red cap. He concluded his performance with an encore and request for *Arrivederci Roma*. [Photos below by Colette Ogata]



Award winning accordionist Cory Pesaturo is a part of Multi-Emy award-winning Jon Batiste's band, which is engaged with a global project called "Goal Keepers 2030." The project was created to fight global hunger and is sponsored by billionaire philanthropist Bill Gates and the Gates Foundation. Cory can be seen [performing](https://accordionusa.news/cory-performs-with-jon-batiste/) with the band at <https://accordionusa.news/cory-performs-with-jon-batiste/>. Teaming up with Jon Batiste and the Gates Foundation is an extraordinary opportunity for Cory's musical career and promoting the versatility and visibility of the accordion.

New Internet Video of World's Largest Accordion Museum

Submitted by Pamela Tom

If you have not visited the world's largest accordion museum yet, a newly posted short video (5 minutes, 20 seconds) recently aired on PBS Wisconsin and gives an excellent overview of [A World of Accordions Museum](https://www.worldofaccordions.org/) (<https://www.worldofaccordions.org/>) in Superior, WI. The story of the museum founder Dr. Helmi Strahl Harrington, and history of the museum, which has more than 2500 accordions, are nicely highlighted in the video and writeup. The video was professionally created and gives an excellent and high-quality bird's-eye view of the Museum's interior and exterior. Check out the [video](https://wisconsinlife.org/story/worlds-largest-accordion-museum/) and write-up at: <https://wisconsinlife.org/story/worlds-largest-accordion-museum/>



Oompa Kings Polka Band for Oktoberfest at Six Flags Discovery Kingdom

By Joseph Martin

Oktoberfest is a great time for the accordion! People love the bouncy sound of a good polka and the fun of drinking cold beer. I was invited to play with the **Olga & The Oompa Kings Polka Band** at Six Flags Discovery Kingdom in Vallejo. This was my first experience playing with a full band; it was a lot of fun.

Six Flags has a fantastic Oktoberfest area with German food and drinks. The outdoor stage was right next to the water, and the trees offered shade to the players. Tom Wiggins, Joey Ventitelli, Adam Gabriel, Rasa Vitalia, John Wilder, David Somers, Rich Newcomb and **Joseph Martin** played for the Oktoberfest crowds that danced and sang.

The Six Flags staff were fantastic and really made the performance enjoyable to all. Some of the highlights were the children dancing and laughing to the *Chicken Dance*. Some of the songs played were *Anneliese Polka*, *Auf*

Wiedershe'n, *Edelweiss*, *Ein Prosit*, *Herz Schmerz Polka* and *Pennsylvania Polka*.

Lederhosen was the costume of the day. A special shout out to Rasa Vitalia for the great job she did getting the crowd involved and making fun lighthearted jokes for everyone to enjoy.

I will continue with the **Oompa Band** for the Oktoberfest season and am currently preparing for the Feather Falls Casino Oktoberfest celebration. *Ein Prosit!*



Happy Halloween!



President's Report

The Club's Executive Board of Directors is pleased to welcome two new members to the Board, Anand Joseph and Roy Zheng.

They will bring their expertise and octane to the Board to work with the existing members to expand and improve our social networking, community outreach efforts, innovative meeting programs, and Accordion Circles. We are always seeking ways to grow the Club to ensure its successful future. Please welcome Anand and Roy!

Just a reminder – your memberships are extremely important to the Club. If you've not already done so, please take a moment to renew now. And, please let us know how we're doing! The request to renew you received in the mail also contained a form where you can indicate whether you want to opt-in to the forthcoming paper directory, and if so, which information you agree to have published.

Ken

SFAC members' directory

To help build community, we plan to compile a member directory, available to SFAC members only, inclusion in which is purely optional. Imagine how much easier it would be to find a nearby accordion enthusiast to arrange a carpool to a club meeting, or to an accordion related event, or set up an at-home jam session to play a tune or two together in your own space. You get the idea! For security reasons this directory will be distributed in a print edition only.

The only information we will need from you is your approval to be included, as well as which of the following contact information you are willing to share: first name, last name, email address, phone number, full residential address or city/state only. A request for you to opt-in or opt-out of the directory was mailed in September with the annual dues notice. Once created, the directory will be shared among all those who opted in.

The plan is to distribute the printed Club directory early in 2026.

Southwest Florida Accordion Scene

By Robert Cooperstein

When Elaine and I moved to Florida 2½ years ago, after settling in for several months, we finally began to look around to see if there was any kind of accordion scene here. Accordion clubs, Facebook events, Meetups . . . nuttin'. We saw a busker somewhere, that's it. Eventually Elaine discovered a German restaurant that featured an accordionist once a month, and of course we decided to dine there. He said there was a group of accordionists who "in season" (that means "not the summer" here) get together at an Elks Lodge in Sarasota, which is half an hour from us in Englewood.

Sure enough, we have managed to get to 3 of their events. These players do not comprise an accordion club, and the people who come to the lodge are there to eat and drink and be entertained by these accordionists. Some of the diners are even dressed up, and there is a slightly nightclub vibe to the evening.

The accordionists, about 6 of them, are extremely talented. They are there because they like playing out, that's it. Almost all joyous, even raucous polka music. A couple of them sometimes sing in German. A female singer with a lovely operatic voice does a set with them. The whole setup is not especially similar to a SFAC Circle jam session, because there is no leader, there are no jam books, and not really any space for a beginner to just break in. Just a bunch of people stepping up to solo or play as duos or trios. Elaine and I are invited to sit at the "accordionists' table" with the players, since they know us as kindred spirits if not skilled enough to play with them.

We ultimately learned of another group of players that meet once a month in Port Charlotte, only 20 minutes from Englewood, but we have met with them just once. They just started up again because it is now in-season. I will describe their events in a future newsletter after we attend our first meeting this fall.



Accordion Happenings

Online/Virtual Events:

Free-Bass Masterclass

Sundays, September 28 - November 2, 3pm EST

Accordionist Joe Natoli, who presented a Zoom concert for the SFAC in July 2021, is offering a free-bass masterclass series this fall via the Internet, \$40 (GR8 IDEAS members) or \$55 (GR8 IDEAS nonmembers) per session (6 sessions available). Each Sunday from September 28 through November 2, 2025 at 3pm EST, Joe will conduct a 2-hour masterclass on Zoom for both digital and acoustic accordionists who have a free-bass system on their instrument. All Roland, Bugari, and Korg digital instruments possess the free-bass configurations taught in this course. The course is designed for beginners and there are no prerequisites. Participants will understand and be playing free-bass before the series ends. For registration details visit: www.gr8ideas.org. To request a course syllabus or more information contact Joe via email: thegr8.ideas@gmail.com.

Monthly: 1st & 3rd Monday - Joseph Natoli

JANPress University - Topics vary monthly (\$) janpressmusic@yahoo.com

Monthly: 2nd Tuesday 4:30-6:30 PM (free)

Hosted by Laura Niland LauraJNiland@outlook.com

Members -

If you know of an accordion-centric festival or event in 2025-26 that your fellow SFAC members may be interested in, please contact us at info@sfaaccordionsclub.org

The San Francisco Accordion Club is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt charitable organization [EIN 94-3148553] whose purpose is to enhance, promote and stimulate an appreciation for the accordion within the membership and throughout the general public. Donations are tax-deductible and gratefully accepted by using the **Donate** button at www.sfaaccordionsclub.com



Kimric Smythe

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Noon-6pm Wed, Fri, Sat
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We continue to seek volunteers to assist with writing our monthly event summaries. Please feel free to contact us at info@sfaaccordionsclub.com

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ATG 2026 FESTIVAL HEADS WEST

Join us in Salt Lake City, Utah for the 84th ATG Festival with featured artists including Radu Ratoi, Joey Miskulin, Stas Venglevski, and more.

- PARTICIPATE IN THE ATG FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA DIRECTED BY JOAN C. SOMMERS
- WORKSHOPS
- COMPETITIONS
- ATTEND A TABERNACLE CHOIR PERFORMANCE
- LUNCHEONS AND BANQUET

JULY 8-12, 2026 atgaccordions.com

SFAC Board & Key Club Functions

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Dominic Palmisano (Honorary) accord47@gmail.com
Anand Joseph (614) 329-9384
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Mike Zampiceni (408) 569-2579, eclecticguy@comcast.net

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Newsletter: Elaine & Robert Cooperstein, Pamela Tom, Rosemary Busher, Ken Schwartz (and credited contributors each issue)

Accordion Rentals: Rosemary Busher

Live Meeting Sound & Amplification: Paul Cain

Live Meeting Zoom Camera & Sound: Ken Schwartz

Membership: Robert Cooperstein

Event Photography: Steve Mobia

🎵 Appreciation for SFAC Donors! 🎵

Sincere Thanks to those who generously donate to support the SFAC. These members have made donations during our current (October 2025 – September 2026) membership year:

Lorna Anderson, Scott Anderson, Ron Borelli, Gail Campanella, George Chavez, Elaine & Robert Cooperstein, Edward Crnich, Tony David, Xavier & Candace de la Prade, Heidi Hansen, Lorraine Inaudi, Arleen Johnson, John Lister, Linda Lonay, Franco & Susan & Lorenzo Lucchesi, Nora Mazzara, Steve Mobia, Laura Jean Niland, Colette Ogata, David Perry, Robert D. & Dil Pisani, Diana Purucker, Duane Quenzel, Richard Rauschmeier, Tibor Sarkany, Kenneth Schwartz, Georgia Sutherland, Bill & Gloria Tapogna, Pamela Tom, Jane & Frank Tripi, Frank Venturelli, Carol Whitehead.

If you have donated and your name doesn't appear here, please contact elainedc@sbcglobal.net. We so appreciate the support and want to be sure you are recognized.

SFAC Members Performing Around the Bay

RON BORELLI San Mateo - RonBorelli@aol.com
www.ronborelli.com

JOE DOMITROWICH Entire SF Bay Area –
Joe@JoeDLive.com or www.JoeDLive.com

ED GORZYNSKI, JR. East Bay -
edspolkas@yahoo.com

PAMELA TOM Yolo & Solano Counties
accordionpam@gmail.com

MIKE ZAMPICENI East Bay & South Bay
eclecticguy@comcast.net, www.mikezamp.com

ACCORDION INSTRUCTION

East Bay

- ◆ **Joel Weber**
www.joelstbayacordionlessons.weebly.com/
- ◆ **Mike Zampiceni*** www.mikezamp.com

Peninsula/South Bay

- ◆ **Joe Simoni*** jsimoni2000@gmail.com, 650-867-1122
- ◆ **Mike Zampiceni*** www.mikezamp.com

Outside the Bay Area

- ◆ **Gail Campanella*** GailCampanella@gmail.com 805-895-0457 (Santa Barbara)
- ◆ **Bonnie Birch*** www.bonniebirch.com (Seattle)
- ◆ **Pamela Tom*** accordionpam@gmail.com (Davis)

* = remote lessons (Zoom, Facetime) available

San Francisco Accordion Club

Newsletter

c/o Cooperstein

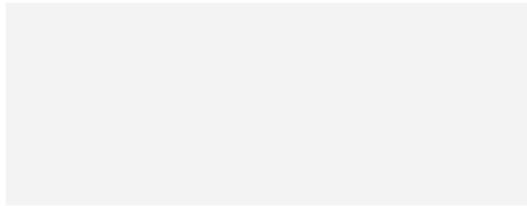
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Upcoming Events:

- ◆ **October 19** Oktoberfest Circle (see below)
- ◆ **November** NO MEETING – HAPPY THANKSGIVING!
- ◆ **December 14** Accordion Circle – Holiday Edition

SFAC Sunday Program

East Bay Accordion Circle!

Open Mic/Solos + Group Play/Jam Band

Participate In-Person + Online Access

Sunday, October 19 - 2pm-5pm

\$10 members / \$15 non-members

Youth free with parent

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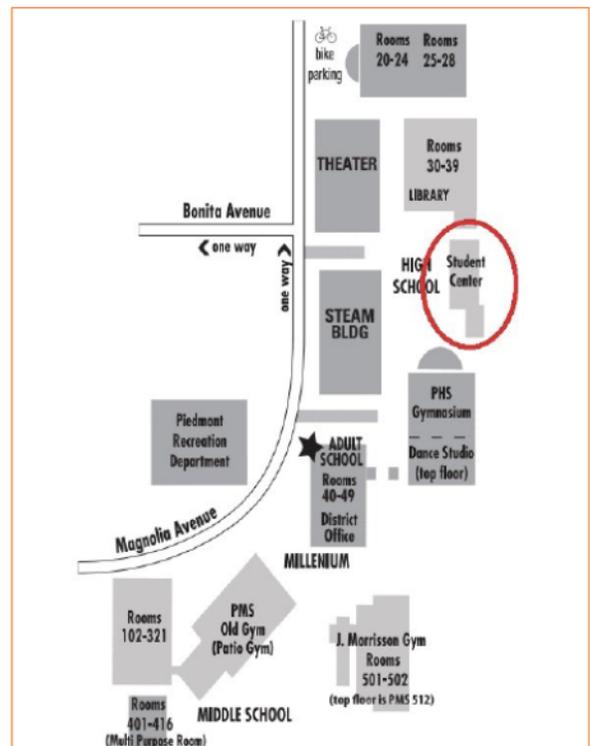
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SFAC members will receive ZOOM link via email

See email for details, or

contact info@sfaccordionclub.com



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