

THE OKLAHOMA SQUEEZINS

"Our squeezein'...is pleasin'"



The Oklahoma Accordion Club Newsletter

You can't do the "Beer Barrel Polka" at the Grammys

Mollie Boutell-Butler

When the Grammys take place for the 52nd time on Sunday, it will be the first show in 24 years to not have a category honoring Best Polka Album. According to The Recording Academy, polka isn't "representative of the current musical landscape." (You know, like Herbie Hancock's Joni Mitchell tribute album, which beat out Kanye West, Foo Fighters, and Amy Winehouse for Album of the Year in 2008.) It is the only category among 110 to get the boot this year, so it certainly looks like the academy is picking on polka. Not that the polka world was used to being taken seriously.

Even in Milwaukee, where Frankie Yankovic was crowned the Polka King in 1948, a polka haven like Kochanski's Concertina Beer Hall is a novelty. (And even Kochanski's relegates polka night to Wednesdays -- the rest of its schedule features other genres.) You can find polka bands at fish-fries, like at Lakefront Brewery or the Bavarian Inn, but it's not the norm, and only a handful of radio stations around Wisconsin devote a couple of hours on weekend mornings to accordion-fueled tunes. If Wisconsin can't keep polka relevant, how can we expect the Grammys to honor it?

Some in the polka world aren't taking the Grammy slight well. "It's devastating," Grammy-winning polka artist Carl Finch told the New York Times last June. "Polka is so misunderstood, you know, the butt of jokes. Having a polka category was the most important step to legitimacy that we could ever hope to achieve. To have that taken

away, it's like it was all for nothing." Still, it's not like this is coming totally out of left field.

According to the Times story, only 20 albums were considered for the polka category in 2006, and only one of the five nominees had national distribution.

Polka is certainly not mainstream, but there still is an undeniably strong (though small) base of polka enthusiasts out there. In Milwaukee, there may not exactly be a resurgence of polka, but there's definitely a growing interest in it out there. In Milwaukee, there may not exactly be a resurgence of polka, but there's definitely a growing interest in the accordion. The Milwaukee Accordion Club -- formed not in the '40s, but in the '90s -- boasts 250 members. Local songstress Pezzettino seems permanently attached to her accordion, and while she doesn't play a lick of polka, she's certainly put her instrument on the local music scene's radar.

In the end, maybe it doesn't really matter if polka isn't recognized with a Grammy. What did 24 years of Best Polka Album honors (most of which went to bandleader Jimmy Sturr) do for the music anyhow? Maybe this Grammy dis is exactly the kick in the pants all those starving artists out there need to create the next polka masterpiece. In the meantime, we hope ol' Jimmy Sturr won't miss out on the annual encouragement.

• *Courtesy of the A.V. Club, Milwaukee
by Mollie Boutell-Butler*

February Meeting

Our next meeting will be held on Sunday, February 14 (Valentine's Day), at the Messiah Lutheran Church, which is located at the intersection of NW Expressway and Portland Ave., just west of I-44 and Baptist Hospital, and across the street from Deaconess Hospital on Portland Ave. Festivities begin at 2:30, when the orchestra

rehearsal starts. At 3:30 our meeting begins, followed by individual and group performances, and then a "jam session" follows until 5:00 or 5:30 pm. Everyone is encouraged to come, and everyone is encouraged to perform. If you are shy about playing alone, some of us will play with you.



The Prez Sez

Bill Henson

What a great club! Wow, I understand we had really good attendance at the January meeting. I also understand we had several people we haven't seen in awhile attending, and I'm glad to hear that.

At the time I am writing this, we are bracing for another possible bad snowstorm. This time I will not be here in Oklahoma to be involved in it, but Beth will. I don't know about the rest of you, but it will be a while before I ever wish for a white Christmas again.

I want to thank you club members for supporting me, especially when I have missed the Christmas party and the January meeting due to work requirements. I don't like missing the meetings, but this is part of the price I have to pay with my new job. The officers of your club are willing to step in and help wherever needed, and I appreciate that.

Last year was an interesting year. It started off with Troy losing his job and moving away, and then I lost my job of 29 years and one day, and then, after five months, I was fortunate enough to land a job back in a career field that I held 29 years, five months, and one day ago.

I feel young again! I feel revived! And I look forward to our February meeting. The meeting is on February 14th, so bring all the romantic music you can find. Let's really fill the air with wonderful sound.

Accordions are Red
Accordions are Blue
Accordions sound great
You should play yours, too.

Bill



Q. How do you make two accordionists play in time?

A. Shoot one of them.

Q. What's the difference between an accordion and a macaw?

A. One is loud, obnoxious, and noisy. The other is a bird.

New Website

Frank Gesinski

For those of you who have web access, if you haven't already done so, you really need to check out our new website that is now maintained by Diana Richard. Jackie Mashore, who did a marvelous job with our previous website, has turned the reins over to Diana.

The website has useful and interesting features, several of which are still in development. I am working with Diana to catalogue most of the Squeezins issued since the founding of the club. You can view a slew of pictures from many of our past meetings and other occasions. One thing that I originally missed about the photos is that you can double-click any one of them, and the site will display many other photos from the same occasion.

Haven fun viewing!



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The Treasurer Sez

Dick Albreski

One thing for sure, bad weather doesn't stop accordion players. At the first meeting held on January 10th, we had people in attendance, and that was good. Why was it good? Well, we have some big plans for our club, and we were able to start talking about them at the meeting.

In the last treasurer's report, I mentioned that our club will be ten years old this year. At the last meeting, a committee was formed to investigate what could be done to celebrate our ten-year achievement. If you have some ideas for our tenth anniversary celebration, please contact Oliver Delaney, Jackie Mashore, or Jim Woolly.

I'm also going to give a "blast from the past" in this and the next newsletters. I'm going into the archives and will pull out a page from the

beginning newsletters for you to review, perhaps recall, or just enjoy. If you check the following pages of this month's newsletter, you will find a copy of the very first newsletter issued on June 2000. Enjoy!

Are we half-full or half-empty? What I mean is that we are at 31 renewals, and traditionally have 65 members. Somehow I haven't received the other 34 renewals required to make this a perfect year. If you haven't renewed to date, please do so. I don't want you to miss our ten-year celebration.

The bills for this period came to \$105.63. Our income was \$367.00. Our current checkbook balance is \$1,640.34.

See you all in February, if not before.



Q. Why did the chicken cross the road?
A. To get away from the accordion recital.

Q. What is the best thing to play on an accordion?
A. A flamethrower.

Q. What's the difference between an accordion and a trampoline?

A. You should take your shoes off before jumping on a trampoline.

Q. What's the difference between an accordion and an onion?

A. People cry when you chop up an onion.

Q. What do you get when you toss an accordion off

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January Minutes

Beth Henson

Minutes Oklahoma Accordion Club January 10, 2010

- The meeting was called to order by Vice President Jimmie Woolly. There were 12 members in attendance.
- It was noted that the OAC website is up and running (<http://www.okaccordions.com>).
- A report was given on the Christmas party, and everyone agreed it was fun. Dick Albreski said that it would be good if we could pick advance dates for the summer picnic and Christmas party so that everyone can participate.
- Dick pointed out that the OAC will be ten years old in June -- the club was founded June 2000. We had a birthday cake for the fifth anniversary, and it would be nice to do something special this year to celebrate. A motion was made and passed to have a tenth-year birthday party. We should consider a date when our out-of-town members will be able to attend. The date of June 13 was suggested. A committee was established, with members Oliver Delaney, Jackie Mashore, and Jimmie Woolly, to come up with a recommendation for a celebration. They will submit a report at the next meeting.
- Jackie Mashore reminded us that club members had played at the NAMI (National Alliance of Mental Illness) walk a few years ago. A photograph of the group was taken at that time, and it is still used as part of the NAMI's advertising. Their next walk is May 16, and they

would like to have players again, as a group or as solos. The event will be held in Stars and Stripes Park.

- Dick said that the Bohemian Knights, the band he and Milo Shedeck play in, will be performing at the Royal Bavarian Restaurant and Beer Garden on Friday, January 15; Friday, January 22; Saturday, January 23; and Friday, January 29. Performances begin at 6:00 pm.
- Anne Lopez suggested that we have a social night at the Czech Hall, and listen and dance to the music of the Bohemian Knights.
- We had lovely performances from the following individuals:
 - Anne Lopez: "Lina Mazurka," "Fanciulla che Sogna," and "Santa Lucia"
 - Dan Orza: "The Sharpshooter's March"
 - Dick Albreski: "Edelweiss," "The Secret," and "Continental Caper"
- Dan reported on the performance by Lois Roth, Max Gunter, and himself at the Scandinavian Festival. They had a good time and enjoyed the event.
- Richard Butricks would like to have the club travel to Enid to the Pegasus studio to make a recording as a promotional tool for the OAC. Recordings could be as a group or of individual members. He could make arrangements for a Saturday or a late-evening recording time.

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Henson



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Christmas Party

Beth Henson



OKLAHOMA ACCORDION NEWS for JUNE 2000

Greetings: To some, this may be a pleasant shock. To others this will be a wish come true. Yes, you are reading OKLAHOMA ACCORDION NEWS.

Several weeks ago, our city had the opportunity to sponsor a very talented accordion champion by the name of Jason Stephen. During the preliminary meetings by a small group of local accordion players, the topic of an accordion club emerged. Dave Mannan, Oliver Delaney and Dick Albreski agreed that an organized group would certainly be an asset to this endeavor. The Jason Stephen concert planted the seed for our club. Jason came to Oklahoma and gave an outstanding performance plus the very first exploratory accordion club meeting was held on June 4, 2000.

In attendance for the first meeting, were eight local accordion players who unanimously agreed to continue this accordion club project and the next meeting will be AUGUST 6, 2000.

The meeting will be from 4:00 to 6:00 P.M. at 7109 NW 102 Street All accordion enthusiasts are urged to attend. Our club needs members in order to grow and become a recognized organization in our great state. For specific driving directions, please call 721-0564.

Objectives were also established for the August meeting. They are as follows:

- 1) The accordion is our prime concern and every meeting will feature live accordion music.
- 2) A name for the club will be determined and selected by a group vote.
- 3) A meeting place for monthly meetings will be discussed.
- 4) Members will be encouraged to join future group ensembles to practice and perform routinely.

During the initial meeting, the attendees were entertained by Bob Mansfield, a local accordion artist, who performed his own compositions. Bob, not only gave a flawless performance but shows true talent in composing melodic accordion solos. Also, during the meeting, an interim group of officers was elected to continue the business of establishing an accordion club. They are as follows:

President	Dick Albreski
Vice-president	Bob Mansfield
Secretary-Treasurer	Dave Mannan
Communications	Quintelia (Quin) Henderson

The officers would also like to thank Erv Biernat, Johnny Sakaly, Kay Stout, Rhonda Radloff, and other respected guests at the initial June 4th meeting for their insight and enthusiasm in continuing Oklahoma Accordion.

REMEMBER: JUNE IS NATIONAL ACCORDION AWARENESS MONTH.

Why not, make a special effort to play your accordion for someone this month and the rest of the year. As related above, eight accordion enthusiasts have (hopefully) started something big. You can make it bigger by continuing to perform and encourage the accordion.

Thought for the day: By attending the next meeting on August 6, you will experience the excitement of starting an accordion club plus you can check the next issue of OKLAHOMA ACCORDION NEWS and make sure this writer tells the whole story and nothing but the whole story.

We would like to know about you. Please share any news or comments that you would like others in our accordion world to know about your accordion experiences. Pass them onto Dick Albreski or just call at 721-0564. Dick can take fast notes but can't spell worth a darn.

REMEMBER OUR MOTTO: "OUR SQUEEZIN' IS PLEASIN'!"

Now go and mark your calender so we can meet and greet you at the next meeting!



Oklahoma Accordion Club Membership Form

Name _____ Date _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail _____

Phone (____) _____ Birthday (mm/dd) ____/____/____ (optional)

Newsletter

I prefer to receive the monthly newsletter, the Oklahoma Squeezins, by:

- ☐ E-mail at address (above) or at _____
- ☐ Conventional post (snail mail)

Membership Dues

The OAC membership year runs from January through December. Membership cost is prorated quarterly for new members.

- ☐ Primary Membership is \$16.00 per year per individual.
- ☐ Family Membership is \$8.00 per year for each additional family member when accompanied by a Primary Membership.
- ☐ Lifetime Membership is a one-time fee of \$180.
- ☐ Youth Membership is complimentary for accordion-playing youth through age 18.

Your Status (please check all that apply):

- ☐ Professional ☐ Semi-Professional ☐ Amateur ☐ Student
- ☐ Associate ☐ Hobby ☐ Teacher ☐ Repairman/Repairwoman
- ☐ Other (specify) _____

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