

# Accordion Talk

April 2026



## Upcoming club meetings

**May 16, 2026**

**12-4pm**

*Special performance  
by Andy Mirkovich  
begins at 1:00 pm*

3200 SE Harrison St  
Milwaukie, OR

## RCAC Board

### President

Amber Matz

### Vice President

Beth McDonald

### Secretary

Marlene Meissner

### Treasurer

Delette Huffman

### Camp Director

Sue Schwab

### Past-President

Fran Maddox

### At-Large Members

Don Devlaeminck

Lynne Clark

## President's Message

Greetings, RCAC!

Our club meeting on April 18<sup>th</sup> was a bit cozier than the larger group in March, and in spite — or because — of that, we had a great time playing & sharing music and socializing. For the folks who couldn't make it, we missed you!

After club, a few of us headed down the road to the Milwaukie Senior Center for their spaghetti dinner fundraiser, where **Doug Stickler** was strolling with his accordion, treating us to a variety of Italian, French, and other classic tunes.

For this newsletter, I once again asked **Doug** and **Courtney Von Drehle** if they would like to contribute a short article. In future newsletters, we'll have contributions from **Marlene Meissner** as well as anyone else who would like to write a short article for our club members. Just let me know! Your perspective is valuable.

See Page 3 for what's happening on **May 16**. (HINT: A LOT, including a special performance by **Andy Mirkovich**!)

*~Amber Matz, President*

*P.S. More info about the latest "party invite" scam on page 8!*

# April Meeting Recap

## Music Circle

Led by:  
**Marlene Meissner**

Songs:  
*Puff the Magic Dragon, Scotland the Brave, Nursery Rhymes Medley, Love Story Theme*

Thank you,  
Marlene!

## The Playlist

**Jeff M.** — Odessa Bulgarish and Heart of Gold  
**Chad A.** — La Gradisca si Sposa e se ne vā (from Amarcord)  
**Leonard K.** — History of Love and Caravan  
**John M.** — His arrangement of It Had To Be You  
**Amber M.** — What a Wonderful World  
**Kathy G.** — Trieste Overture and Dark Eyes  
**Bev S.** — Serenata De Acordeones and Bailemos un Vals  
**Marlene M.** — Tulips from Amsterdam and Woodshed Swing  
**Fran M.** — Menilmontant and Cine Citta



**Marlene Meissner** stepped up to lead Music Circle with about a day's notice, as **Beth** was out sick. **Marlene** did a great job leading, using Beth's notes as her guide. **Amber** and **Kathy** chimed in a few times with tips as well (as they have a tendency to do, lol). We had a great time playing through the tunes Beth picked out, including *Puff the Magic Dragon, Scotland the Brave, Nursery Rhymes Medley* (in which we definitely got tripped up by *Itsy Bitsy Spider*), and *Love Story Theme*.

# News & Updates

## Camp Update from Sue Schwab, Camp Director

- All the music is finally out to campers for practicing
- Fran now has the T-shirt list and will be submitting the order
- We are now turning to the week long camp schedule. Marlene is the master of this process. She will be assigning campers their workshop times as well as rehearsal times.
- I will be working on reporting to the lodge the head count for meals and lodging assignments, as well as the details of needs for our orchestra and workshop rooms (tables, chairs, etc.)
- The next meeting of the Camp Committee will be on **May 4**, preceding the **RCAC Board Meeting**.

## May 16, 2026 Special guest Andy Mirkovich



**Andy Mirkovich** will be our featured performer at the **May 16<sup>th</sup>** club meeting.

This event will be **open to the public** and is sponsored by the Rose City Accordion Club! **Free** admission.

## May 16 Agenda

**9:30–11:30 am:** ScanFest Rehearsal  
**11:30–noon:** Set up  
**12:15–12:30 pm:** RCAC Club Meeting

**1:00–2:00 pm**  
Andy Mirkovich

**2:30–3:30 pm:** Individual play  
**3:30–4:00 pm:** Lively socializing and room reset



# Play Better Using Theory



*Doug Stickler strolling for supporters of the Milwaukie Senior Center fundraiser on April 18. Several club members enjoyed a good meal and lovely accordion music.*

by **Doug Stickler**

I've seen it happen many times with members playing solos at the club, and I remember it happening to me years ago when I was learning to play. You're reading the music and playing the song, everything's going fine, then there's a change in the music and you have to stop and figure it out. Even if you've practiced it many times, you still get thrown by that change. If you know your theory, that change will be less intimidating and you'll find it easier to play through it without having to slow down or stop.

Looking back through the *Palmer-Hughes books*, *Book 4* includes the song, *A-Hunting We Will Go*. (You can find the song in this link: [Palmer-Hughes Accordion Course, Book 4 - Google Play Books](#)) The arrangement of that song has plenty of examples where knowing a little bit of theory will make playing the song easier:

- **Arpeggios** – The first few notes of the song are actually a G Major arpeggio. A "G Major" chord consists of the notes, G-B-D. Inverting the chord gives you B-D-G and inverting it a second time gives you D-G-B. Playing those notes separately creates an arpeggio and that's what is written in the music. Looking ahead in the music, you'll again find arpeggios using an A Major chord and a D Major chord. Having familiarity with chords in the right hand, their inversions, and playing them as arpeggios makes this song much easier to play. changes again and the one and five chords are in the key of D (D major and A seventh).

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# Play Better Using Theory

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- **Key Centers** – Jeff briefly mentioned key centers a few months ago and you'll find them in this song. The song itself is written in the key of G with one sharp, F#. A quick glance at every line would leave you thinking everything's in the key of G. It's not. On the fifth line the key center changes to the key of A. We know that because the arpeggio is now based on the notes from an A Major chord, A-C#-E. On the seventh line the key center changes again to the key of D. The D Major chord notes making up the arpeggio are D-F#-A. By recognizing where the key centers are, we know what accidentals to anticipate and what chords in our left hand to anticipate.
- **Chord Changes** – Chords are often referred to by numbers rather than names. Going back to the beginning of the song, we know it's in the key of G Major. If we play a G major scale and number the notes in the scale, the first note (G) is one and the fifth note (D) is five. So, we refer to a G chord as the one and a D chord as the five. This song uses just the one and five chords (with the five chord played as a dominant seventh). When the key center changes, we're still seeing the one and five chords, it's just that now it's the one and five in the key of A (so the chords are A major and E seventh). The key center changes again and the one and five chords are in the key of D (D major and A seventh).

Having knowledge about arpeggios, key centers, and common chords used in keys should make it easier to play this song. We just shift our thinking when we encounter the key center change. As Jeff stated in one of our meetings, it helps to carefully look through a new song when first learning it to familiarize ourselves with certain things. Knowing what's coming up as we play through the song rather than being surprised by it will make our playing and performing much smoother.

~ Doug Stickler

# Bringing Songs onto the Accordion



*Courtney Von Drehle plays with Trio Quartetto at a house concert on April 25, 2026.*

by **Courtney Von Drehle**

You know that feeling you get when you hear a great song and think, "I'd like to play that."

A while back, I'd find those songs on the radio. These days, that moment usually finds me while wandering through YouTube or a streaming platform. A few days ago, it was the song *Can't Find My Way Home*, written and sung by Steve Winwood, and recorded by Blind Faith in 1969.

The version I heard was spare and beautiful — just guitars (Winwood and Eric Clapton), a touch of cymbal, and Winwood's smooth voice. It brought me back to the era of rock songs with great acoustic guitar, when players like Cat Stevens built their songs around weaving guitar arpeggios. All the cats (pun intended) in those days were listening to each other and absorbing each other's ideas. Such a great time for music!

As accordionists, we often borrow songs from other worlds — maybe a piece by The Beatles — and there's always that inner comparison to the original. Sometimes it works beautifully. Other times, it raises the question: how do we make the accordion fit in music that wasn't written for it?

Lately, I've been answering this question differently.

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# Bringing Songs onto the Accordion

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Instead of searching for an arrangement, I start by listening — deep repetitive listening. I try to hear the bass line, the harmony, the shape of the melody. A recent class with Dallas Vietty on jazz chords that some of us in the club took, reinforced this by having us sing the bass lines — a step that opened up hearing the harmonic structure in a new way.

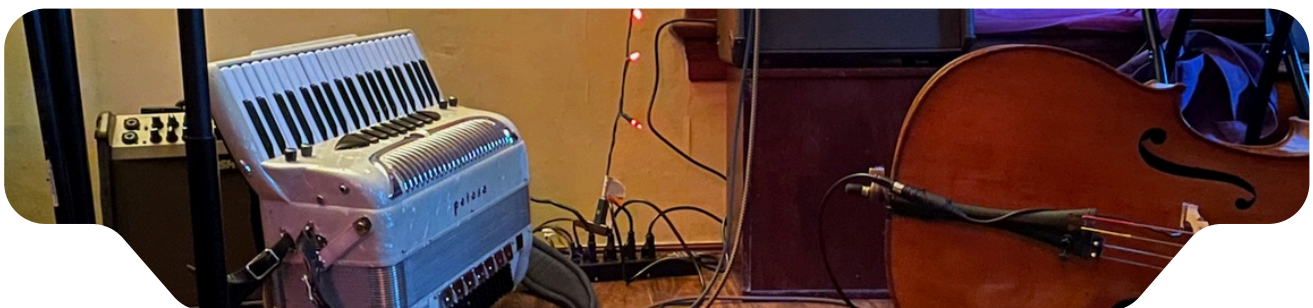
With *Can't Find My Way Home*, I could hear the chord movement fairly quickly. Then the melody came into focus. What stood out were the subtle details: the interplay between F# and F natural against a D major harmony, and moments that hinted at chords outside the key. Those nuances give the song much of its character.

From there, it becomes a process of translation — taking what you hear and letting it find a new voice on the accordion. There's trial and error, and gradually... intuition takes over. At some point, the song begins to live in its new form.

It's no longer the original. The goal isn't to replicate, but to carry the spirit of the music into our unique sound world of bellows and reeds.

Give it a try. It can be challenging, but it's a deeply rewarding way to grow your ears and your playing.

**~ Courtney Von Drehle**



# Fake Party Invite Scam

Several of our members were impacted by the recent malicious “fake party invite” scam going around email inboxes.

**Rachel Tobac**, a security expert I appreciate and trust recently wrote up important online safety tips regarding this scam on LinkedIn. She’s given me permission to share her thoughts in our newsletter.

Have you received a party invite that turned out to be a scam?! The New York Times just asked me to break down this scam so let’s dive into the 2 distinct paths this attack follows, how to catch it, and how to reduce its impact if you do fall for it. [Read: There’s a New Phishing Scam: Fake Invitations](#)

Why do scammers use fake party invites in the first place? There’s a real desire for hang outs once the weather gets nicer. And people are longing for community since 2020, something many feel they’re still missing. This lure preys on that desire.

But I thought phishing attacks usually leverage urgency & fear though? You’re right, that’s common. Because fear and urgency are so common in phishing attacks, most training omits the potential for a “positive lure”, a phish that offers you something good, so many folks may not realize a phish can look so positive and don't catch it.

The fake invite phish takes 1 of 2 common paths These 2 paths are:

1. MALWARE: Link clicked > quiet download of malware > malware (infostealer) quietly runs in the background and steals passwords and secrets as you type them on your machine > malware reports those passwords, secrets and codes back to the scammer who then steals your money, data, and scams people in your contacts (propagating the scam through inboxes).

# Fake Party Invite Scam

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2. **CREDENTIAL HARVESTING:** Link clicked > email password is typed to “view invite” > password stolen to log in as you and scam your contacts, steal your other accounts by resetting passwords to your email inbox, wreak havoc on digital and IRL life.

Why is my email inbox such a juicy target? Your email inbox is the center of your digital and IRL life. When you reset the password for your bank, instagram, Twitch, healthcare, etc it goes straight to your email inbox and allows you to reset your password. Because of that, your email inbox access functions as the keys to your whole life. Most accounts can be stolen from you if the password can be reset by an attacker in your stolen inbox.

How do I catch this fake invite scam or lessen its impact?

1. **Be politely paranoid:** use another method of communication to confirm the invite is legit before clicking (for example text your friend who invited you before clicking). This will protect most folks.
2. **Avoid password reuse.** Most folks still reuse passwords. That matters because if I steal your password from you in an invite phish then I can use that password against your bank account and drain it fast. You don't want that at all. A password manager with MFA on works great.
3. **Turn on multi-factor authentication,** the 2nd step when you log in. This can be a code in an app (like Google Authenticator, Duo, etc), a code sent to your phone, a security key, etc. Some MFA is better than none. Use the MFA that is right for your threat model/digital literacy.

Help your family/ friends understand how to catch this invite scam too before their inbox is hacked!

**~ Rachel Tobac, via LinkedIn. Reprinted with permission.**