

## January is National Polka Month!

If you're like me, you were probably up late on December 31 waiting anxiously for the clock to strike midnight. No, not because it was New Years Eve, but rather because it marked the start of celebrating *National Polka Month!!* Polka adds years to your life and life to your years.

### History of "Beer Barrel Polka" (Roll Out the Barrel)

This is one of the most famous polkas of all time, and yet many people believe it to have been composed sometime during the ragtime era. Actually, it started out as a true Czechoslovakian polka, composed by Jaromir Vejvoda in 1927 for his band. Lacking lyrics and the characteristic bass line, he gave it the title "Modrany Polka" (Modranska Polka). In 1929 he wrote the bass line for it and it was published in 1934 with lyrics under the title "Skoda Lasky" (Unrequited Love). In 1938, German accordion player Will Glahé's recording of this song, called "Rosamunde," sold over one million copies. The song made it to the U.S. in 1939 where Lew Brown and Wladimir Timm rearranged it, provided it with English lyrics and published it as the "Beer Barrel Polka." The Andrews Sisters were among the first to record it. It became popular among the Allies and was played all over the world, so much so that people in many countries regarded it as their own. The irony is that it had been played on both sides of the front during World War II. In German it is titled "Rosamunde".

(Note: the word "beer" does not appear in the lyrics of the "Beer Barrel Polka")

### Beer Barrel Polka lyrics

#### Verse

There's a garden, what a garden,  
Only happy faces bloom there  
And there's never any room there,  
For a worry or a gloom there

Oh there's music and there's dancing,  
And a lot of sweet romancing  
When they play the polka  
They all get in the swing

Every time they hear that oom-pa-pa,  
Everybody feels so tra-la-la  
They want to throw their cares away,  
They all go lah-de-ah-de-ay

Then they hear a rumble on the floor, the floor,  
It's the big surprise they're waiting for  
And all the couples form a ring,  
For miles around you'll hear them sing...

#### Chorus

Roll out the barrel, we'll have a barrel of fun  
Roll out the barrel, we've got the blues on the run  
Zing boom tararel, ring out a song of good cheer  
Now's the time to roll the barrel, for the gang's all here

(Note: If you haven't already guessed it, the "rumble on the floor" announces the arrival of a fresh wooden keg of beer.)



## History of the song "Lili Marlene"

Is it "Lili" or "Lilli"? Is it "Marlene" or "Marleen"? Is it "The Girl Under the Lantern"? Depends who you talk to and where you look. Does it really matter? There is only one song by this title. Broadcasted on German Forces Radio during World War II but quickly banned in Germany (the German Minister of Propaganda, Josef Goebbels, felt the song was not martial enough); broadcasted daily on Radio Belgrade from Yugoslavia to the Afrika Korps in 1941 when Rommel indicated he liked it; adopted by the British Eighth Army as one of their favorite songs of World War II; sung on radio by Marlene Dietrich; recorded in English by Anne Sheldon in 1944. Enjoyed by both friends and foe alike during World War II. That is "*Lili Marlene*."

"*Lili Marlene*" is based on a poem written in 1915 by German soldier Hans Leip during World War I and published in 1937. Norbert Schultze set the poem to music in 1938 as "*The Girl Under the Lantern*" and it was first recorded by the German singer Lale Anderson just before the war. It became a favorite of German troops, and the immense popularity of the German version led to a hurried English version done by Tommie Connor and broadcast by the BBC for the Allied troops. Eventually, both sides began broadcasting the song interspersed with propaganda (occasionally even blasting the song out of huge speakers mounted on trucks to distract enemy troops). The most celebrated singer was an anti-Nazi German - Marlene Dietrich, who began to sing it in 1943. After the war, the song's fame was perpetuated by Vera Lynn who sang it at every concert she gave for British Army of the Rhine soldiers stationed in pre-NATO Germany.

The song originally did not catch on with the German public in the early part of the war. Its rise to popularity was purely by chance. In late spring 1941, Radio Belgrade was transmitting to the German Army in the Western Desert of North Africa. They made a request for additional records for transmission. Among the records they received was the Lale Anderson recording of '*Lili Marlene*'. This recording was broadcasted every night at 9:55 PM and both German and Allied soldiers around the Mediterranean regularly tuned in to hear it. This caused some apprehension in both the German and British Governments. Fearing that '*Lili Marlene*' may demoralise the troops, the British authorities commissioned an English language version of the song (written in 1942 by Tommy Connor, the Ambrose Orchestra recorded one of the first 'official' British versions of '*Lili Marlene*'). Meanwhile, in a short period of time, the song became increasingly popular world-wide. In France, Suzy Solidor recorded the definitive French translation of the original. In the United States, the Berlin-born Marlene Dietrich recorded an English translation. Within a relatively short period, '*Lili Marlene*' had gone from obscurity to become one of the best-known songs of the war. The world may have been divided by war, but it was a world united by this one song. It remains probably the definitive song of World War II for many nations.

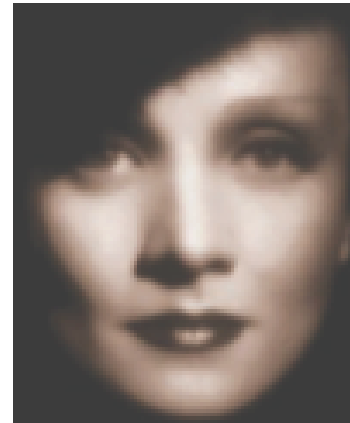
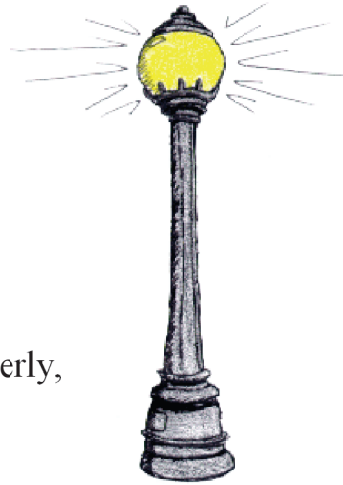
**Personal story:** last year I volunteered to play my accordion at an Oktoberfest charity dinner at the American Legion Post where I am a member. During my performance a gentleman (80+ years of age) approached me and asked if I could play his favorite song. The song he requested was "*Lili Marlene*". He closed his eyes while I played and I could tell it brought back memories for him. He thanked me and said he first heard that song while he was fighting in France during World War II. Note: he is a decorated WWII Army Veteran who was wounded in France during the liberation of Europe. A true American hero. I felt honored to play his favorite song. (Steve Knapke)

### Lili Marlene lyrics

Underneath the lantern,  
By the barrack gate,  
Darling I remember  
The way you used to wait,  
'Twas there that you whispered tenderly,  
That you loved me,  
You'd always be,  
My Lili of the lamplight,  
My own Lili Marlene.

Time would come for roll call,  
Time for us to part,  
Darling I'd caress you and  
Press you to my heart,  
And there 'neath that far off lantern light,  
I'd hold you tight,  
We'd kiss "good-night,"  
My Lili of the lamplight,  
My own Lili Marlene.

Orders came for sailing  
Somewhere over there,  
All confined to barracks  
Was more than I could bear;  
I knew you were waiting in the street,  
I heard your feet,  
But could not meet,  
My Lili of the lamplight,  
My own Lili Marlene.



**Marlene Dietrich**

Resting in a billet  
Just behind the line,  
Even tho'we're parted  
Your lips are close to mine;  
You wait where that lantern softly gleams,  
Your sweet face seems  
To haunt my dreams,  
My Lili of the lamplight,  
My own Lili Marlene.

*Marlene Dietrich sang the following variation on the lyrics.*

When we are marching  
In the mud and cold,  
And when my pack seems  
More than I can hold,  
My love for you renews my might,  
I'm warm again,  
My pack is light,  
It's you Lili Marlene,  
It's you Lili Marlene.

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## **RCAC Contacts / Business Information**

[WWW.Rosecityaccordionclub.com](http://WWW.Rosecityaccordionclub.com) [www.rcac.us](http://www.rcac.us)

### 2007 Officers

President - Steve Knapke  
Vice President - Glenda McLean  
Secretary - LaVerne Morris  
Treasurer - Marlene Meissner

### Activity Coordinators

Meeting MC - various  
Membership - Marlene Meissner  
Program - Glenda McLean  
WEB Site - Marjorie Curkendahl  
Newsletter - Steve Knapke

### Board Members

Leonard Kosatka  
Wayne Nelson  
Michael Stotts  
George Veenstra  
Glad Willie

RCAC Band Co-Directors - LaVerne Morris / Wayne Nelson

Steve Knapke/Phone -503-521-9140  
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**Rose City Accordion Club** is open to all accordion players, from beginners to professionals, their friends and families, and to anyone who enjoys music. Meetings are held monthly on the third Saturday of each month at the Milwaukie Public Safety Building, SE 32 and SW Harrison, Milwaukie OR, from 1 to 5 PM.

**Ad Policy:** Any member wishing to place a business card or four-line ad in the newsletter may do so free of charge for three months. After that, the fee is \$5. for two additional months. 2 x 3 ½ ad (Business card size) \$5. ¼ page ad \$10. ½ page ad \$20. full page ad (8 ½ x 11) \$35.

**Annual Dues** are \$20 and checks should be sent to the Treasurer RCAC