



# Bay Area Country Dancer

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www.bacds.org

## American Week in the Mendocino Woodlands

*Laura Light*

Mendocino Woodlands – just the name evokes memories of redwood forest and ocean, and untold great jams and dancing for me. I first attended camp there some twenty years ago, as a fiddler at Lark camp. Many years later I came back to play for American Dance and Music camp, run by BACDS. My experience as a dance fiddler has taken me to some wonderful camps and places all over the world, but Mendocino still has something special, unique, and full of magic. American week hosts campers from all over the world, creating an interesting mix of folks to live, dance, and play with for a week. In true California style, the food is superb, the program is full (but with time to hike and swim), and the conversation is always inspiring. You can even wake up to café latte and a wood fire.

This year’s camp will be especially inviting, with North Carolina storyteller and percussionist Jubal Creech, noted Kentucky musicians Al and Alice White (of the McLain Family band and Berea College), all playing with Virginians Laura Light and George Paul (The Avant Gardeners), Anna Patton, Ethan Hazzard-Watkins, and rising star Owen Morrison (the core of the youthful, high energy band, Elixir), and the one-of-a-kind, Stuart Kenney, adding his banjo and bass to the fun. All these musicians are also great teachers known for their inclusiveness and high fun factor. Also teaching will be beloved callers Scott Higgs, Cis Hinkle, and Gaye Fifer (from the East, South, and Midwest!), and Matthew Duvenek, back for another round of teaching tango, waltz, and rowdy country dancing! There was one particularly rowdy and entertaining night last year – well, never mind, come and help us surpass last’s year’s follies. Matthew’s partner, Anna Gilbert, will be sharing her creativity as an artist and craftswoman, as well.

So yes, the ingredients are all there – just add water, -er, campers to make an unforgettable week. Come join us, and you just might find the magic I’ve always found in the Mendocino Woodlands. Whether you want to study guitar, piano or fiddle, vocal improvisation, Tune writing, tango or waltz, or just hike in the woods and dance all night, it all works. We’d love to have you, young and old, and every age in between. Don’t miss it! Where else do you have a candlelight dinner with fine California wines at a dance camp, after all?

## Notorious! Plays Local Dances, June 17 – 27

The incredible band Notorious! will be delighting dancers and listeners at several events in Bay Area neighborhoods this June! The ensemble will include Eden MacAdam-Somer on the violin, Larry Unger on guitar, Sam Bartlett on mandolin, and Mark “Pokey” Hellenberg on percussion.

Berkeley Contra	June 16	Berkeley	with Erik Hoffman
House concert	June 17	Santa Rosa	at Howard Booster's
Faultline Frolic	June 18-20	Santa Rosa	with Cis Hinkle
Aftershock Dance	June 20	San Rafael	with Susan Petrick
House concert	June 24	Oakland	at Charlie Fenton's
SF Contra	June 25	San Francisco	with Charlie Fenton
Palo Alto Contra	June 26	Palo Alto	with Eric Black
Hayward Contra	June 27	Hayward	with Susan Petrick

*Out of a Job? Down on your Luck? Come dance anyway! Remember that BACDS has a pay-what-you-can-afford policy at the door. If all the rest of your world is not going your way, we want you to be able to dance*

## CDSS Lifetime Contribution Award Presented to Chuck Ward

*By Sharon Green*

What recent Bay Area event featured 30 musicians onstage playing, 5 display teams dancing, the premiere of a newly composed brass fanfare, the recitation of at least one limerick, and a parting champagne toast? The description matches only one event: the presentation of the 2009 CDSS Lifetime Contribution Award to Chuck Ward, held on March 28, 2010, in Albany, California.

More than 200 people attended the ceremony, sponsored jointly by CDSS and by BACDS. The afternoon's Mistress of Ceremonies was Kalia Kliban, current programmer of the Sebastopol English Country dance co-founded by Lydee Scudder and Chuck; mass band leader and organizer of the day's music was Chuck's fellow North Bay pianist, Rebecca King. Guests included Derek Booth, Liz Dreisbach, Peter Persoff, and Stan Kramer, members of the Claremont Country Dance Band with whom Chuck recorded *Popular English Country Dances of the 17th and 18th Centuries* in the mid-1970's; Ellen Judson, daughter of caller Mary Judson who worked with Chuck during his early years in California; and Helene Cornelius, longtime Pinewoods staff member and senior teacher of CDS Boston Centre. Also represented in the program by their works were Chuck's friends Marshall Barron, who wrote several of the arrangements performed by the band, and Eric Leber, who choreographed the two-couple set "Chuck Ward's Whirl," performed by four nimble BACDS dancers.

After the spoken tributes, musical offerings, country dance demos and a spectacular rapper performance by Swords of Gridlock, CDSS Director Brad Foster and CDSS Board President Bruce Hamilton formally presented Chuck with his award, together with a commemorative tile designed by Nawal Motawi. CDSS Associate Director of Development, Robin Hayden, described the work of the Chuck Ward Musicians Training Fund, the CDSS Leadership Fund created in celebration of Chuck's many contributions to the dance community. There next followed a refreshments break, a time for friends to converse, admire the photographs and posters on the walls, write anecdotes or draw sketches at the scrapbook table, look over old flyers and ball booklets on display, or simply eat. Then it was time to dance.

Callers Alan Winston (CA), Alisa Dodson (MA), Brad Foster (MA), Brooke Friendly (OR), Bruce Hamilton (CA), Mary Devlin (OR), Robin Hayden (MA), Sharon Green (CA), and Tom Roby (CT) presented sets of favorite dances, which were interspersed with morris and sword demos by Apple Tree Morris, Berkeley Morris, Goat Hill Morris, and Leap of Faith. The program concluded with an exuberant mass dancing of the jig Princess Royal and Winster Processional out to the terrace, where the assemblage toasted Chuck, and Susan and Sarah Kramer led the group in singing Wild Mountain Thyme.

The Chuck Ward Celebration Committee:

*Alan Winston, David Brown, David & Sharon Green, Denis Thalsen, Jon Berger, Joyce Uggla, Kalia Kliban, Mary Luckhardt, Michael Siemon, Nick Cuccia, Rebecca King, Stan & Susan Kramer, and Susi Ostlund.*

### Balance the Bay, August 13-15

*Balance the Bay* returns this summer for another fabulous weekend of contra dance. Thrill to the music of the Latter Day Lizards (Dave Langford, Bill Tomczyk, Peter Barnes, and Stuart Kenney) and our own OpporTunists, and the unforgettable calling of Lisa Greenleaf and Susan Petrick.



We're in the same great hall, the Janet Pomeroy Center in San Francisco, between the ocean, the zoo, and Lake Merced. Now that we know our way around, we hope to make the dance experience even more wonderful than it was last year.

At the rate registrations are coming in, *Balance the Bay* may be full by the time you read this, but it's still worth getting on the waiting list – you'll get a preference for next year if you don't get in this time around.

# Contra College: Contra Dance Teaching Retreat Weekend November 12-14, 2010

*Joyce Fortune*

Many of us have had the experience of bringing a friend to a dance and having them not come back. They have been frustrated by the large number of dance steps and lack of teaching. Some of us analytical types struggled in the beginning with the lack of explicit instruction and the stressfulness of “picking it up as you go.” Newer dancers sometimes express frustration at dance weekend workshops not really being workshops at all, but just a collection of dances with a common theme. Some of us have gone past beginner status to that of intermediate dancers only to get stuck at a plateau, having trouble making that shift into “advanced” dancer status. I personally have experienced all of these conditions, and for that reason, I have joined with Susan Petrick in organizing a new, different model of contra dance weekend.

Contra College will be held the weekend of November 12-14, 2010 at the gorgeous Sequoia Retreat Center, just north of Ben Lomond in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Susan Petrick will be the caller/teacher for the weekend, and a variety of local musicians led by Eric Anderson will provide us with very danceable tunes. Susan and I have worked out a curriculum that explicitly and carefully teaches contra dance steps in a way that allows dancers to build their skills slowly over the course of the weekend and internalize learned steps before adding in new ones. She will be doing more explaining than at regular dances and will provide more question-and-answer time. The dances will also be really, really fun, since the dancers will feel confident and at ease.

The venue is set on top of a ridge, giving beautiful views from the dance hall, while being tucked in among the redwood trees (see their website at <http://www.sequoiaretreatcenter.com>). Dancers will stay in cabins with three beds, in-room bathrooms (with showers), and central heating. The weekend will go from Friday after work (including dinner) to Sunday at 2:00 p.m.

If you are a new or intermediate dancer, consider attending and getting your diploma from Contra College! If you are an experienced dancer, please think about your friends who might benefit from this kind of an experience. There is space for a few experienced dancers interested in working with newcomers. Experienced participants can also work on developing additional skills (like learning the other gender role), discuss issues of outreach and retention of newcomers and help out while having fun. See the flyer in this mailing or visit <http://www.bacds.org/ContraCollege>.

## Volunteer Thanks

- ♪ Thanks to *Susan Gere, James Hutson, Mary Luckhardt, Ric Goldman, Lori Honzik, Joyce Fortune, Kathy and Cori Canderle*, and all the rest of the Spring Fling committee for putting together a fabulous weekend and even coming close to the break-even mark.
- ♪ Thanks to the *Playford Ball Committee* for hosting a truly elegant affair.
- ♪ Thanks to everyone involved in planning and celebrating the CDSS Lifetime Achievement award ceremony for *Chuck Ward*.
- ♪ Thanks to *Charlie Fenton* for throwing a birthday party that brought together almost the entire dance and folk music community.
- ♪ Thanks to all of our Southern California friends who joined us for Spring Fling.
- ♪ Thanks to our outgoing Board members, *Susan Gere* and *Loren Gillin*.
- ♪ Thanks to our newly elected first-time Board members, *Will Kruse* and *Yona Ran*.
- ♪ Thanks to all of our continuing Board members: *Alan Winston, Diane Zingale, Ellen Wall, Eric Black, Jens Dill, Joan Maramonte, Jody Distler-Dill, Joyce Cooper, Mary Hill, Mary Tabor, Scott Johnson, Sharon Green*.
- ♪ Thanks to *Joyce Fortune* for her initiative in creating the upcoming Contra College weekend, and to *Susan Petrick* for her enthusiastic support in planning it.
- ♪ Thanks to *Mark Galipeau* for bringing back the idea of a Bay Area 12-hour dance and working to make it a jointly sponsored event that showcases local talent.
- ♪ Thanks to all of our summer camp committees who are working *extra hard* right now to ensure that our summer camp experiences will be the best ever.
- ♪ Thanks, thanks, and more thanks to *Judy Rose Dornbush* for all her years of hosting the BACDS camp gear. And thanks to all those who are taking the job on from here.
- ♪ Thanks to *Debra Tayleur, Denis Thalson, Mary Luckhardt, and Erik Hoffman* for smoothly arranging for an alternate hall during the construction at Grace North Church.
- ♪ And thanks to all the rest of you who have helped out one way or another. We really couldn't do what we do if everybody didn't pitch in and help.

## From the President



**From the President:** There's a lot going on right now in the dance community. Please take some time to get involved in what's going on, even if it's only by spreading the word.

**Youth:** The BACDS Board of Directors is getting younger. This month we elected two new Board members: Will Kruse, coming with ideas and experience from the time he served on the CDNY Board, and (Dalia) Yona Ran, the high school student who has taken charge as "Food Diva" for the Palo Alto Contra. They join Cory Rundle and Mary Hill as representatives of the youth interest. The Berkeley Contra still seems to attract the most twenty-somethings, and the Palo Alto Contra seems to appeal to the *very* young. We recently had a just-short-of-seven-year-old young man there who impressed everybody with his poise, enthusiasm, and willingness to ask any woman to dance.

**Volunteers:** You all know that everything we do gets done because someone volunteers to do it. Please take the time to thank the people you see helping out, and try to remember that there are many more volunteers you can't see. You can be one, too. There's always room, even at the top. Both the Playford Ball Committee and the Spring Fling Committee are looking for someone to step into the committee chair role. Both committees are full of experienced people, including ex-chairs, who can help you run things, so it's not as daunting a task as you might think.

**Camps:** This is a mixed bag. English Week sold out in the first few weeks of registration, and Fall Frolick looks like it will also sell out quickly. Spring Fling is coming back. It actually made money this year, after crediting it with the funds from the Youth Scholarship program. This year, we forged some connections with the Southern California dance community that may help Spring Fling grow even more in the future. American Week and Family Week are still looking for more campers for this summer. The Board just approved additional youth and music scholarships for American Week.

**New initiatives:** Next fall, we will offer a new Contra dance *teaching* weekend, called Contra College. Joyce Fortune is managing this and Susan Petrick will be the programmer. We, along with TDOGS and NBCDS, are working on a proposal from the Queer Contra group to jointly sponsor a 12-hour contra dance in the Bay Area this spring. Talk to Mark Galipeau if you are interested in working on this. We'd like very much to sponsor a West Coast Youth Dance Weekend. If enough young people come to American Week, we'll start the planning there.

**Halls:** We're still on the lookout for new places to dance. So far, no one has found a place for us to re-establish the second Friday contra series. Grace North Church is undergoing renovations, so we've had to move the Berkeley dances temporarily. The new owner, Christ Church of Berkeley, is still happy to have us as tenants, but the damage to the roof and walls is serious enough to need immediate attention. The Mountain View English dance will be looking for a new hall in the fall, since Flex-It is closing. There are lots of opportunities for people to help us find new halls.

**Finances:** The recession continues. People have less to spend, and if they have jobs, are more reluctant to take time off for dance camps. We're coping with that, and still managing to dance around the financial break-even point. We could lose 10 or 20 thousand dollars this year if things don't get better, so continue to encourage your friends to come and dance with us, and especially encourage them to come to camps and weekends.

— *Jens Dill*, president@bacds.org

## Upcoming Summer Events

June 12	Mad Robin Ball	<i>Robert Moir with Jon Berger, Shira Kamen, Rebecca King, Beth Zekley</i>
June 12-13	San Francisco Free Folk Festival	
June 18-20	Faultline Frolic	<i>Cis Hinkle with Notorious</i>
July 3-10	Mendocino American Week	
July 4-10	BACDS Family Dance Week	
July 10-17	Mendocino English Week	
Aug 13-15	Balance the Bay	<i>Lisa Greenleaf, Susan Petrick, with The Latter Day Lizards and The OpporTunists</i>
Sep 17-19	Echo Summit	<i>Lisa Greenleaf, Nils Fredland, with Crowfoot and Elixir</i>

See [www.bacds.org](http://www.bacds.org) for more information. For events sponsored by neighboring organizations, see [www.nbcds.org](http://www.nbcds.org) (NBCDS), [www.scds.ca](http://www.scds.ca) (SCDS), [www.sffmc.org](http://www.sffmc.org) (SFFMC), [www.ccds.org](http://www.ccds.org) (CCDS), [santacruzdance.org](http://santacruzdance.org) (TDSC).

This issue was edited by Julie Thomas and Loretta Guarino Reid. Send corrections to [caljuliet@comcast.net](mailto:caljuliet@comcast.net). Deadline for Fall *Dancer*: Aug 15. Send submissions to [caljuliet@comcast.net](mailto:caljuliet@comcast.net). Please join the conversation.