



Bay Area Country Dancer

No.83– Sept 2010

www.bacds.org

Contra College: Contra Dance Teaching Retreat Weekend

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 and gotten stuck at a plateau, having trouble making that shift into “experienced” 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 will provide us with very danceable tunes. Susan and I have worked out a curriculum that explicitly and carefully teaches the 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 we expect more question and answer time. The dances will also be really, really fun, since dancers will feel confident and at ease.

The venue is tucked in among the redwood trees at the top of a ridge, giving beautiful views from the dance hall (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>.

Big Changes for the Peninsula English Dance

Susan Bickford

After eight years in Mountain View, our hall is being demolished, so the Peninsula English dance is moving to a new home, a new night, and a new time.

- Our new home is **All Saint's Episcopal Church, 555 Waverley St. in Palo Alto**.
It's a great hall — airy, good floor, piano, kitchen, and right across the street from the Prolific Oven. The Palo Alto Caltrain station is nearby, and there is plenty of free parking.
- Our new time is 1st, 3rd and 5th **Tuesdays**, and running from **7:30 to 9:30**
We changed the schedule because of hall availability, and in response to poll results. We hope this will be a convenient time for everyone.

We will continue dancing to high quality, live dance music led by top notch callers. Bill Jensen, Stan Kramer, and friends make the music while Bruce Hamilton and friends teach the dances. The focus is on teaching good dancing, allowing beginners to build a solid foundation and experienced dancers to develop their technique and expand their mastery of the English Country Dance repertoire.

It should make for an enjoyable and accessible mid-week English dance. Check it out!

Special Notes

September: Due to availability of the new hall, the dance will be on **September 14th and 28th**, 7:30-9:30. Note that this is different from the current BACDS calendar and fliers.

October: **We will be at an alternate site** for October 5th and October 19th. Stay tuned.

24th Annual No Snow Ball Festive Contra ~ Moved to Sunday!

Charlie Fenton

Due to circumstances beyond our control, the hall where we hold our annual festive contra dance is not available on the usual first Saturday this December. After weighing all the options, we have decided to hold this year's No Snow Ball on Sunday evening, December 5, 2010 from 6:00pm until 10:00pm at the Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Oakland.

The 24th annual No Snow Ball will once again ring with the music of the Hillbillies from Mars plus perennial favorite Cathie Whitesides from Seattle. Santa Claus and Robin "the Calling Bird" Steen will call a carefully crafted selection of contras for your dancing delight.

While we expect to return to our usual first Saturday schedule in 2011, we hope that this year's Sunday date will make attendance easier for dancers who work on Saturdays. And we've moved the time a bit earlier to accommodate those who must report bright and early on Monday.

In the words of one dancer:

It is very magical to see both the familiar and unfamiliar people who make up this wonderful community dressed in such splendid attire; the flashing Christmas lights threaded in people's hair, the tuxedos, Scottish finery, Santa suits, sequins, crystals, and all the smiles.

The hall itself is very stately, with a wonderful floor and lighting and so much space! The music was just great and the dances creative, challenging, and perfectly do-able. The food during the break is also very tempting and welcome, and I really appreciated the Channukah cookies!

Delicious refreshments will be provided, but our buffet is made even more marvelous by tasty potluck contributions from dancers. Please add one of your specialties to the table. Items for the special diets table (wheat free, sugar free, dairy free, etc.) are especially welcome.

A limited number of work exchange discounts are available for your participation on the Ball Committee (decorations, food preparation, setup, cleanup, etc.). Please email nosnowball@bacds.org, or speak with our volunteer coordinator, Ed Severinghaus.

We encourage everyone to bring friends who are new to contra dancing, but be sure to get them to the hall by 5:30 pm so they can participate in the free introductory workshop.

Be sure to save the date for this contra dance ball:

24th Annual No Snow Ball
Sunday December 5, 2010 6:00PM-10:00PM
Greek Orthodox Cathedral of the Ascension
4700 Lincoln Ave., Oakland CA
\$25 General, \$22 members of CDSS and affiliates

There is ample free parking in the cathedral's large parking garage.

Some Spaces Left for Fall Frolick (15-17 October)!

Join Gene Murrow, Nikki Herbst, Sue Dupre, Randall Cayford, Sharon Green, and Rosemary Hunt (here from England) plus 9 of the Bay Area's best musicians and song leaders for a splendid weekend in the Santa Cruz mountains. Info at: <http://www.bacds.org/camps/fallwk2010/>

The Two Step Waltz

By Andy Plumb, 2010

Waltzing between imperial skyscrapers
where the sun refuses to shine

Waltzing on rickety wooden bridges
strung across ancient rivers wild

Waltzing with feet embedded in quicksand
as the winds rock, rattle and roll

Waltzing with the daughter of Aphrodite
on a mile long string of crimson pearls

Waltzing with hands behind my back
on a tightrope made of lace & denial

Waltzing in a dime store novel
with a cynical gal who talks in riddles

Waltzing on the palm of a giant's hand
wrapped in Rapunzel's golden hair

There is nothing to fear
but the waltz itself

Quite a Song and Dance...

by James Candlin with the Fall Ball committee

... is the subtitle and theme of the 16th BACDS Fall Ball. This year, our programmer (and long-time committee member) Ric Goldman is presenting a program that will include dances that have tunes that are also songs, as well as some songs that we also know as dances. The connection between English country dances and the song tradition is a strong one. Especially in the early days of Playford's Dancing Master collection, which was published in many editions over several decades starting in 1651, many of the dances were set to the tunes of well known songs.

Have you ever wondered where the whimsical and evocative names of some of the old dances come from? What about *Row Well*, *Ye Mariners*, *Upon a Summer's Day*, or *The Mayd Peept out at the Window* (alternately *The Friar in the Well*)? These names do not particularly relate to the movements or the structure of the dances, but rather to the names of popular songs of the day. Some of these songs have survived, more or less, to the present day – we're all familiar with *Greensleeves* – and others have been perpetuated as nursery rhymes or collected in anthologies of ballads. Here's one I remember from when I was a child:

*If all the world were paper
And all the sea were ink,
If all the trees were bread and cheese
What would we do for drink?*

And so on for several verses of nonsensical hypothesis. Some of the songs were either overt or coded political messages; this was a time of civil war and religious polarization in England. Tunes, songs, ballads, and melodies for formal compositions were much more



interchangeable in those days, and people didn't have to worry about copyrights and royalties. It was only to be expected that these tunes would wind up being recycled for dances. Take *Greensleeves* for example. Having started off as a popular tune in Elizabeth I's time, it acquired various sets of words, one of which is the one that's most familiar today. The tune shows up in two different guises over several decades in Playford: as *Green-Sleeves and Pudding-Pies* and later as *Green Sleeves and Yellow Lace*.

As "country" dancing evolved through the 18th century, it became more gentrified and less connected to the people, so it lost some of its connection to popular tunes and songs. More dances and their accompanying tunes were composed by professional dancing masters. But in its modern revival, English country dancing has again often looked to the song tradition for its music and motivation. So we now have *Faithless Nancy Dawson* to the tune of *A-Roving*. We dance *Key to the Cellar* to the melody of a Jacobite ballad putting down the Hanoverians, and Pat Shaw's *Heidenröslein* (Heath Rose) picked up where Schubert and Goethe left off with the song. Perhaps things come full circle when an Elizabethan lute song, which may have been inspired by the dance rhythms of the day, becomes reinterpreted hundreds of years later as the dance *When Laura Smiles*. Dances and songs such as these will be an element of this year's ball.

Song has always been an important aspect of the Fall Ball over the years, and one tradition has been the informal gathering to sing just before the dancing starts. This group sing-along helps set the mood for the evening – whether you choose to sing along, to sit and listen, or to hear it in the background as you get ready to dance. We can expect the song circle this year to feature some of the same tunes that we will later be dancing to.

Our musicians for the evening include Shira Kammen, who is renowned for her combined instrumental and vocal prowess; Charlie Hancock, whose talent and sure touch on the piano will be much enjoyed by all; and Jim Oakden, an amazingly versatile multi-instrumentalist with both a strong musical sensibility and a sense of fun.

The Fall Ball is a relatively informal and relaxed event, which makes it a great first ball to attend if you have recently taken up English country dancing. We recommend going to a few of the local dance series in early fall to get some familiarity with the dances, and then attending the workshop on the afternoon of the ball, featuring a superb Peninsula team: caller Lise Dyckman with musicians Stanley and Susan Kramer plus Bill Jensen. This way, you will have the dances primed in your mind and your body ready for the evening. At a combined price of \$25 for the whole day (\$27 at the door), it's also a remarkable dancing bargain.

The Fall Ball is being held on Saturday, 20th November, 2010, at the San Mateo Masonic Temple, 100 North Ellsworth Avenue. The afternoon workshop runs from 2:30 pm to 5:00 pm, followed by a break for dinner – good restaurants are minutes' walk away. We reassemble at 7:30 pm for singing, and dancing opens with a Grand March at 8:00 pm. The dancing concludes at 11:00 pm, with potluck refreshments following. Full details and registration forms will be on our website at <http://bacds.org/fallball> in early September.

We are looking forward to sharing a lovely evening of *Song and Dance* with you!



Projected Admission \$595*
with sliding scale \$100-\$225 for under 30 or unemployed

come to SF early & stay after to join us for
Special Dances,
Workshops, & Concerts
the weekends before & after camp

Save The Date!

* projected amount not final, subject to change; see web site for details

bacds.org/amweek



In Camper's Words: American Dance & Music Camp Week 2010

Awesome and Amazing by Cory Rundle

I really wish I had written down more about dance camp at the time; it was such a wonderful time, I think I was too busy enjoying it. But I would like to share with you the parts I do remember. I was very excited thinking about dance camp, but I was also a little nervous, as there weren't that many people there I knew well. I have to say, that's definitely the silliest thing to be worried about for a dance camp!

While the dancing was amazing, the absolute best part of the camp was the people I met there.

The first night we settled into our little two person woodsy cabins, with fireplaces! Then, of course, we hit the dance floor! There were folks I knew from the bay area or close by, a contingent from Arizona, a boat load of young folks from New Mexico, and basically folks from all over the western states. But let's not forget Captain Don! As far as I know, he definitely traveled the farthest, all the way from New Hampshire! (The first time I wrote that sentence, I accidentally wrote "Camptain Don" I think I might like that new nickname...)

Anyway, Cap Don regaled us with stories throughout the week; I'm sure none at all exaggerated! It was great talking with him about all the people he knew who my parents knew and hearing his version of stories from back east I'd heard from my parents. I could go on forever about all the cool people I met at camp, but since you might not know them and you will undoubtedly meet different, totally awesome folks at camp, I'll get back to activities.

One of the best parts of camp was the ability to try out new dance styles without committing to them, and without feeling like a fool, because 90% of the people with you were new to the style, plus the instructors were awesome and super friendly. The best *best* part though, at least for me, was the nightly contra dances. The daytime stuff was fun (I liked the arts and crafts break!), but it was at night where people really brought it out. In particular there was sparkle night (ok I forget what we actually called it, Bling Night maybe? But everyone sparkled!) I think having all the sparkles around us gave us even more energy than usual. And I really don't even know how to describe the bands, they were just amazing! There is nothing like dancing to an amazing band with an amazing crowd of dancers who are also amazing people! Then, of course, there was the staying up ridiculously late, making s'mores, chatting, discussing everything under the moon, raiding the kitchen for gluten-free items (what? Who did that? Definitely wasn't me, just heard some rumor of that!) I could go on and on... And on, but the bottom line is: you should come to camp next year because it is awesome! (*continued...*)

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Signed Up for Next Year by Kathleen Weiler

Despite initial misgivings and not knowing exactly what to expect from an American dance week, I had the most wonderful camp experience of my life at BACDS American Week 2010. The sense of community was awesome and the staff were superb. Who would have thought that I could get semi-private piano lessons from George Paul of the Avant Gardeners? With high-energy dancing, round-the-clock jamming and so many new friends, you sure had to work hard to be in a bad mood! I'm already signed up for next year.

More Comments by Anonymous AmWeek 2010 Campers

- ♥ Favorite moments? So many. The evening dances where the music changed into rock and roll or Pirates of the Caribbean!!! Things that people shared at Back Porch, the singing class. I LOVED the opportunity to learn stuff that I'd never done before like swing and tango and Dutch Crossing. And really what makes it all click is the community. So really just any moment that we were all together and talking and being in the same space was excellent.
- ♥ *Too many memorable moments to single one out!*
- ♥ The attention to detail by the organizers and staff is unbelievable! All the little "extras" make it an unparalleled experience. Thank you.
- ♥ *How to improve it? More hours in the day!*



From the President: This summer has been an exciting time for many of our dance organizers. A lot has happened; some of it scary, some exhilarating, and some of it just intense.

American Week was the first scary thing. Coming into June, it was clear that the camp was not going to fill up with paying campers. Great staff, great program, great reputation from previous years: but not enough campers. Could be the recession: people with enough time have been out of work long enough to be worried about money; people with money to spend often don't dare take time away from their jobs. Or something like that. We were looking at a potential loss of \$15-\$20,000. Scott Johnson asked the key question at the Board Meeting: if we're going to lose the money anyway, why shouldn't we expand our youth scholarship program and bring in a bunch of young people to liven up the camp and brainstorm about the future?

It worked. We filled the camp with young people, and they brought energy, enthusiasm, and ideas. Nearly everyone I've talked to said it was the best camp ever. And the young people are now part of next year's camp committee, helping us plan for the future. We did lose a lot of money (about \$18,000) but we consider it an investment in the future.

English Week and *Family Week* both made money this summer. *Family Week* is going strong. We're seeing many of the teen campers from prior years coming back as young adults and volunteering their time and energy in our dance community. And there's a new group of teens from this year's camp . . . They came to the Hayward Contra on the 22nd, and they were awesome.

This was our last summer at Mendocino Woodlands. *English Week* has been planning its move for over a year. They're going to Bishop's Ranch in Healdsburg. *American Week* made its decision this summer to move to Jones Gulch in La Honda. Both camps are closer to the Bay Area (and its airports), and offer more modern amenities. The cabins have electricity, and some have indoor plumbing. The camp staff cleans the bathrooms, so our work-trade volunteers can do more fulfilling things. And the terrain is flatter. We'll miss Mendocino, but the new camps have more potential for future growth.

And we had a scare over the *No Snow Ball*. Due to staff turnover at the Greek Orthodox Cathedral, we lost our reservation for the first Saturday in December. A small group of us put together a very intensive search for another hall. All the other halls that were big enough were already booked. So we finally settled on moving the Ball to another day. It will be on Sunday, December 5, and it will start and end an hour earlier than usual. Mark your calendars.

Once again, we nearly lost Spring Weekend. After putting together a very successful *Spring Fling* last March, the committee began to fade away, as the chair and programmer both decided to step down. The rest of the core committee came together over the summer, recruited a new chair (Peggy Chipkin), a new programmer (Sam Weiler), renamed the camp (*Spring Fever*), picked up some energy from the American Week youth contingent and the Balance the Bay committee, and is on track to bring us a weekend that is even better than last year's.

Balance the Bay was once again an outstanding success. The committee did an outstanding job: everything was well organized, and things that were problems last year were mostly fixed this year. We have a new list of things to fix for next year, and people are working on them. It was a fabulous party, and the quality of dancing was phenomenal.

It's been a wild ride, but a good one. I'm looking forward to seeing what happens next.

-- Jens Dill

Volunteer Thanks

♪ Thanks to *Judy Rose Dornbush* and *Joyce Cooper*, who stayed on to assist the new leadership of the American Week committee. It's sometimes hard to let go, and both Judy Rose and Joyce used up all their reserves of volunteer energy helping the camp. The new leadership is now properly launched and on their own. Let's hope JR and Joyce get a well-deserved rest.

♪ Thanks to the youth contingent at American Week, and their not-so young mentors and co-conspirators, "*Captain Don*" *Gorman*, and *Sam and Kathleen Weiler*.

♪ Thanks to *Charlie Fenton* and his scratch team of hall-searchers: *Scott Gamble, Jim Saxe, Jens Dill, and Jody Distler-Dill*, for doing the legwork necessary to reschedule the *No Snow Ball* after we lost our hall reservation. Thanks also to *Ed Severinghaus* for taking the job of Volunteer Coordinator off Charlie's shoulders.

♪ Thanks to all who helped produce *Balance the Bay*: *Kris Inman, Sarah Watts, Jens Dill, David Garnick, Jody Distler-Dill, Joan Maramonte, Lynn Ackerson, Merrie Sennitt, Rae Fixler, Lauren Manierre, Melanie Courchaine, Adam Fixler, Cory Rundle, Damiana Volpe, Marty Brenneis, Kai Barnwell, Susan Pleck, Les James, Clark Cole, Moira Hill, Ann Brown, Diane Frank, Erik Ievins* and more. This year's committee was even more well-organized than last year's, and every bit as much of a joy to work with.

♪ Special thanks to the *Balance the Bay* dinner crew, headed by *Sarah Watts*. Chief cooks: *Dan Moore, Damiana Volpe, and Kai Barnwell*.

♪ Special thanks to *Clinton Gilbert* for donating his expertise to soften the lighting in the gym for *Balance the Bay*, and to *Marty Brenneis* and *Eric Ievins* for improving the sound. Thanks also to *Marty* for letting us use his Genie Lift for the lights.

♪ Thanks to *Peggy Chipkin* for taking charge of the Spring Weekend committee, and for putting so much early energy into publicity. Thanks to the core committee, *Lori Honzik, Ric Goldman, Sharyn Peterson, Sam and Kathleen Weiler, and Jens Dill*, for putting the camp back on track for 2011.

♪ Thanks again to *Lynn Ackerson* for all the buying, washing, ironing she does for her dress boutique. Lynn has now handed off most of the work to the American Week committee. She'll still do the buying; the committee will do the rest of the work.

♪ Thanks to the Peninsula English dance committee, headed by *Loretta Guarino Reid* and *Susan Bickford*, for finding a new location now that the Flex-it gym is no longer.

♪ Thanks to the Palo Alto Contra dance committee for building the Palo Alto contra back up to where it can bring in 90+ people for special dances. Now we need a committee for the San Francisco contra.

♪ Thanks to *Jim Saxe* for having the time and energy to put together special events and tours for out-of-town contra dance bands and callers.

♪ Thanks to all who continue to make Family Week such a success, and for the teenagers who are keeping the spirit alive even after camp is over.

♪ Thanks to *Deer Creek Morris* for hosting the 2011 California Ale.

Upcoming Fall Events

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| Sep 17 – 19 | Echo Summit (SCDS) | Lisa Greenleaf, Nils Fredland, <i>Crowfoot, Elixir</i> |
| Oct 15 – 17 | Fall Frolick | Gene Murrow, Rosemary Hunt, Nikki Herbst, Sue Dupré , Randall Cayford, Sharon Green |
| Nov 12-14 | Contra College | Susan Petrick |
| Nov 20 | Fall Ball | Ric Goldman with Charlie Hancock, Shira Kammen, Jim Oakden |
| Dec 5 | No Snow Ball | Santa Claus and Robin "the Calling Bird" Steen with <i>Hillbillies from Mars, Cathie Whitesides</i> |

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

This issue was edited by Julie Thomas and Loretta Guarino Reid. Send corrections to caljuliet@comcast.net. Deadline for *Winter Dancer*: Nov 15. Send submissions to caljuliet@comcast.net. Please join the conversation.