



# Bay Area Country Dancer

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www.bacds.org

## Nicolas Broadbridge Visits from Scotland: ECD Teacher and Caller for Fall Ball

by James Candlin

The River Clyde is known as the waterway which was so important to Glasgow's emergence as Scotland's largest and most bustling city. Glasgow's growth peaked with the Clydeside ship-building industry that produced boats large and small for the British Empire and for the whole world. The best known of these ships were the ocean liner RMS Queen Mary and RMS Queen Elizabeth. Yet, before it reaches Glasgow, the Clyde has an equally historic role as it runs through Clydesdale in the hills of southern Scotland. Still industrial in parts — the river was an important source of hydraulic power for the mills that lined its banks — this is also a farming area. This is where Nicolas Broadbridge and his wife Nell have made their home for many years, running a small holding that maintains the region's rural traditions.

Dancing takes the Broadbridges a bit farther afield. Nicolas founded the Glasgow and Edinburgh Assemblies as a two-center venue for English Country Dancing, and both cities have regular dance series which Nicolas teaches. Both groups meet for their annual ball in New Lanark, an eighteenth century model industrial community on the River Clyde established by an enlightened mill owner and endowed with schools, social facilities, and decent lodging for the original workers. It is a perfect — even if not by original intent — setting for an ECD ball! Nell also runs dances, concentrating on Scottish Ceilidh Dancing, a more informal style of Scottish dancing enjoyed by occasional dancers. The Broadbridges are a musical family: Nicolas on accordion and his son Aidan on fiddle constitute a large part of the Assembly Players, with many fine dance music recordings and live performances to their credit.

Nicolas's involvement in and knowledge of ECD stems from an earlier time in his life when he lived and worked in England. He had the opportunity then to learn and develop the repertoire of the time, including working with such figures as Pat Shaw. Much of this knowledge has been captured in the extensive set of publications authored or edited by Nicolas. One of Nicolas' books, *Purcell's Dancing Master*, with old and new dances to tunes of Henry Purcell, will be the theme of the Fall Ball.

Nicolas has contributed much to the musical interpretation of the dances with his carefully researched arrangements and harmonizations. The musical interpretations are comprehensively explored in the prodigious recording output of the Assembly Players, with albums covering Kynaston dances, dances of Jane Austen's time, Pat Shaw, the Purcell tunes, and much more. (Visit [NicolasBroadbridge.com](http://NicolasBroadbridge.com) to learn all about his recordings and publications.)

Nicolas' visit to California in November offers us the opportunity to explore not only the Purcell theme, but to sample much of the rest of the historical and stylistic breadth of Nicolas's repertoire, including some dances of his own composition. Several BACDS regular dances and one of NBCDS's will feature Nicolas as caller and BAERS is sponsoring a Jane Austen evening. There will be a special workshop in the afternoon on November 26, which will precede the regular 4th Saturday dance at Christ Church, Berkeley, and which will be an opportunity for advanced dancers to work with some more challenging material. For full details of the tour, please see [bacds.org/NicolasBroadbridge](http://bacds.org/NicolasBroadbridge).

The Fall Ball itself will be the highlight of Nicolas's tour, showcasing the Purcell theme. We are also very lucky to have a line-up of musicians with both the dance and Baroque sensibilities to bring dancing life to Purcell's lovely melodies. Taken together, the Fall Ball and Nicolas's tour will be a true feast of dancing and musical pleasure to look forward to in late Fall. *See the article about Henry Purcell on page 4.*



## In Thanks for Fried

by Sharon Green

Born on November 13th, 1927, Fried Herman found folk dancing as a teenager in war-torn Amsterdam. In her nearly seventy years as a dancer, teacher, and choreographer, she inspired and sometimes infuriated her fellow dance lovers throughout the United States, England, and her native Holland.

In tribute to Fried, and in thanks for Fried's teaching and friendship, Sharon Green is leading a special English country dance on Saturday, November 12th, at Dance Ground Keriak, 1805 Divisadero, San Francisco, site of the regular 2nd Saturday English dance. The program will consist of dances taken from Fried's 1995

Westchester Thanksgiving Fest program, and will be performed by Bill Jensen, piano; Jon Berger, violin; and Rebecca King, clarinet. Usual 2nd Saturday times and admission fees will apply.

## American Week in a Haiku Nutshell

by Eric Black

Camp starts in twelve hours.  
Dancer friends I've yet to meet  
but will, very soon.

Music in the woods  
a tiny clearing filled with  
musicians jamming.

Workshops and sessions  
of dancing and music styles.  
An excellent day.

What's Jam-o-Rama?  
Old time, Irish, old folk songs.  
Whatever you want.

Guerilla Bromley!  
Abbots in the woods. Most-heard  
comment was: "What the —??"

Late night after dance.  
Trash English was such great fun!  
Half of camp was there.

Morning waltz music  
before and during breakfast.  
Floating... just floating...

George hears a few notes,  
some sound in the woods. Next day  
\*we\* hear a new waltz.

The "Write That Tune" class  
is a prolific bunch that  
keeps churning them out.

Speaking of floating:  
moments of weightlessness in  
Contra Rocket Science.

Wednesday BBQ  
and field games in the meadow.  
Restful afternoon.

Wednesday Camper Night  
with a band full of ringers  
and great new callers.

Camper Night dance, then  
a taste of Techno Contra.  
First time for many.

Long, long, long medley  
with amazing megaband.  
Can't get this elsewhere.

It's the Live Auction  
to raise funds for scholarships.  
Sold!! for fifty smiles.

Final dance party  
before we say our goodbyes.  
Once around the room...

Ah, euphoria!  
A week with friends, old and new.  
Happy (but sore) feet.

Back to The Real World.  
But for the mess left behind,  
it all seems a dream.

*American Dance and Music Week* returns to Jones' Gulch July 1-6, 2012. Mark your calendars.

## Contra Grad School

by Joyce Fortune

As I have talked to people over the past year or so about Contra College, several expressed interest in a more advanced teaching opportunity but said that a weekend is just too long. So, we are trying a new model this year. After Contra College (November 11 – 13), Contra Grad School, taught by professors **Susan Petrick** and **Kelsey Hartman**, will finish off the weekend on Sunday afternoon, from 2:00 to 6:00 pm.

**Contra Grad School**  
November 13, 2011  
2-6 p.m.  
\$15 for all dancers  
Women's Club of Palo Alto

Contra Grad School will be a shorter and more advanced version of Contra College. The curriculum will be driven by the dancers themselves. At both Contra College and Contra Grad School, we have time set aside for question and answer sessions between dances, allowing us to de-brief, talk through, and even pick apart the dance we just finished. This allows dancers to get immediate answers to nagging questions or lingering doubts.

Contra Grad School also offers the following opportunities to participants:

- Dancers can email Susan Petrick ahead of time to request that she address or teach a specific topic. Maybe you've been wondering how to lead or follow a particular embellishment. Maybe you've never quite figured out why you get confused on a certain step. Maybe you are unsure about how to do a step or how to help a newcomer do it. Email [contracollege2011@bacds.org](mailto:contracollege2011@bacds.org) by October 30 to make your request.
- Dancers can give 2-minute presentations about specific things that they think will interest or help other dancers. This is not an opportunity to rant or criticize other dancers. This is a time to point out things you've found helpful in the past and think would add to everyone's dance experience. Email [contracollege2011@bacds.org](mailto:contracollege2011@bacds.org) to propose your mini lesson.

**Three Fifths of Scotch**, with Debra Tayleur (piano), Eloise Blanchard (fiddle), Emily Parsons (fiddle) and Del Eckels (percussion) will provide us with great live music to keep us moving. The dance will be held at the Woman's Club of Palo Alto, 475 Homer (at Cowper) in downtown Palo Alto. There is no pre-registration. We ask that you plan to arrive early or at least on time, since people trickling in would disrupt the collaborative atmosphere and learning experience.

## The President's Corner



**From the President:** We sure know how to throw a party. I'm not just talking about the thank-you party we threw for Charlie Fenton to celebrate his 30+ years of contributions to the music and dance community. Although that *was* a good party. If you missed it, check out *Dale Komai's* video at [youtube.com/watch?v=zr8eM8Z7v5Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zr8eM8Z7v5Q).

*American Dance and Music Week* moved to a new location this year. It's always risky to change a venue. You risk losing people who were strongly attached to the old venue, and you have to work hard to persuade people who are unsure about the new one that it's worth a try. We did persuade enough people to try it, and we had a great party all week long. The committee did an excellent job of marketing the camp, with their *Hey, Four for Three* promotion that lets someone in for free if they can recruit three full-paying campers, and its generous discounts for young people and the underemployed. It turned out to be pretty easy to adapt the camp program to fit into the new location, although there was some confusion at first because we had to move some things around to take proper advantage of the space. The dancing was fabulous, the music was beyond fabulous, the camp staff were friendly and helpful, and the after-parties in Perkins Lounge were wild.

You can see for yourself at [vimeo.com/26120478](http://vimeo.com/26120478). The only downside was the food. We had to rely on the resident camp cooks, and they did a great job for camp cooking. The food was ample, and tasty. But we got used to gourmet catering at Mendocino, and it's hard to let that go. Until you remind people that they paid \$235 less to get into camp compared to last year. With that perspective, the food was just fine. And the camp was fantastic. The dance hall is bigger than Mendocino's so we can bring more people next year. Put it on your calendar.

*Family Dance Camp* was at the same time as American Week, and I couldn't go to both, so I have to rely on *Lynn Ungar*, who says: Family week had another fun and fabulous session under the leadership of programmer extraordinaire *Kalia Kliban*. In addition to bringing in stellar musicians (including, this year, the amazing *Lisa Ornstein*) and callers (great to have *Steve Hickman* and *DeLaura Padovan* back at camp), Kalia can make announcements while standing on one foot, and kept us all guessing WHATS IN THE BAG? An unscientific poll of camp highlights revealed favorites to include time hanging out with friends, Denise's cooking, Angela's stories, late-night Doodling in the pool, and the slow jam under the ever-so-patient leadership of *Bobbi Nickles*. Of course, if I polled people who weren't already in my house I might have also heard about the Beatles sing-along, the techno contra, making a real longbow with Julian in the shady grove, games with Annie, border morris with Julie or a whole host of other marvels. A list just isn't going to cover it. You'll need to come next year and see for yourself.

*Balance the Bay* has a reputation as a great party. It also filled up quickly. Registration opened in March; there was a waiting list by May. Things happen, though. Family events, illnesses, injuries, all take people away, and we were able to admit quite a number from the waiting list. And the party was as wonderful as ever. Fantastic dancing, wonderful food (thank you again, *Sarah Watts*). The music, from *Contra Sutra* and *The Groovemongers*, was to die for. *B-t-B* also has a reputation as a well-organized event, and it was even better-organized this year. This committee is nothing short of awesome. Oh, and there are lots of photos and videos on Facebook at [Facebook.com/groups/96632551442/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/96632551442/). Remember to sign up early next year.

American Week, Family Week, B-t-B, and English Week also provided extra occasions for partying, by sharing their staff with the rest of the dance community. Including the NBCDS dances, there were three extra dances with American Week staff, three with Balance the Bay staff, and two with English Week Staff. These dances drew about double the normal attendance to their respective venues, and extended the party atmosphere over several more days. And Family Week brought out *Michael Barraclough*, who called a week's worth of dances back in June, before camp started.

And then there was *Bill Ward's* birthday party dance in Palo Alto. This kind of thing is catching on. Rumor has it that there will be more birthday-party dances on the schedule for next year.

We've entered the *Facebook* age. Not only are there interest groups, invitations, and announcements for our dances and special events, but lots of people are posting pictures and videos. It used to be hard to find good dance video footage on the web, and we used to have serious debates about whether to allow people to take pictures at dances, or how to properly notify people who might object. Now it's just happening, and there's a profusion of dance images on the web.

And it's not just us. The Chattahoochie Country Dancers have produced a great video called "Why We Contra Dance," at [youtube.com/watch?v=7m9EGS4iiOg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7m9EGS4iiOg). Well worth sharing with your friends. And *Doug Plummer's* *Contra Dance Photo Project* on Facebook ([Facebook.com/contraphotos](https://www.facebook.com/contraphotos)) speaks for itself. Doug is a professional photographer and an avid contra dancer, and has made a project that brings both together. He was at American Week this year, and will be at many, many other camps as more people hear about what he's doing. He's produced a Contra Dance calendar for 2012, which can be ordered through the CDSS web site ([cdss.org](http://cdss.org)).

*English Week* is also starting out in a new location, Bishops' Ranch. The new camp is more well-appointed than Mendocino, and connected to the Internet. As soon as camp started, people were on Facebook telling us what a wonderful time they were having. I showed up at the end of the week to help drive people back to the airport, and almost everyone made a point of telling me how much fun they'd had at camp. Yes, indeed, we do know how to put on a good party.

That we can have so much fun is no accident. It's the result of a lot of work by a lot of people. Our camp and event committees meet year-round, have lots of fun, and put a lot of effort into planning the events. And lots of people pitch in to help, even if it's just to take someone to the airport.

And we can look forward to more fun. This fall, we have the *Fall Frolick* dance weekend, the *Halloween Contra* mini-tour featuring the *Retrospectacles*, *Contra College*, *Contra Grad School*, the *Fall Ball*, and a special *New Year's Eve contra dance* in Palo Alto. And just wait until January...

by Jens Dill — [president@bacds.org](mailto:president@bacds.org)

## Volunteer Thanks

- ♪ Thanks to all the camp committees who did such a fabulous job of putting on our summer camps and week-ends. *American Week*, *Family Week*, *Balance the Bay*, and *English Week* were highly successful this year, and the credit goes to the people who spent the whole prior year planning and organizing.
- ♪ Thanks also to all the people who just "helped out," by transporting people and gear to and from camp, opening their houses to out-of-town campers and traveling bands, helping with shopping for food and cutting up vegetables, taking out the garbage, setting up, and closing down the camps. *English Week* in particular needed a lot of help transporting people to and from camp. Thanks to all who volunteered, especially the ones who didn't even go to camp, and special thanks to *Alan Winston* for coordinating the effort.
- ♪ Thanks to *Joyce Fortune*, *Les Addison*, *Susan Petrick*, *Kelsey Hartman*, and all the others who put together this year's *Contra College* and the brand-new *Contra Grad School*.
- ♪ I can't possibly remember all the people who need to be thanked for their efforts. If I fail to mention someone, let me know, and I'll add them next time.

## Upcoming Events

Sep 16-18	Echo Summit Contra Dance Weekend	Lisa Leslie, Will Mentor with Tidal Wave and Rumblestrip (SCDS)
Oct. 14-16	Fall Frolick (English Weekend)	Monte Toyon. See <a href="http://www.bacds.org/fallfrolick">www.bacds.org/fallfrolick</a> for more information.
Oct. 28 Oct. 29 Oct. 30	The Retrospectacles Hallowe'en mini-tour	San Francisco Contra with Joyce Miller Palo Alto Ball with Susan Petrick, Robin Steen Hayward Contra with Joyce Miller (TDOGS)
Nov. 11-13	Contra College	Susan Petrick, Kelsey Hartman
Nov. 12	Palo Alto Contra at Contra College	Kelsey Hartman with StringFire
Nov. 13	Contra College Grad School	Susan Petrick, Kelsey Hartman with Three Fifths of Scotch
Nov. 19	Fall Ball	Nicholas Broadbridge
Nov. 26	ECD Workshop	Nicholas Broadbridge
Dec. 3	No Snow Ball	Charlie Fenton, Erik Hoffman, Susan Petrick with Ratnip
Dec. 30	Eve of the Eve (Palo Alto English)	Cavalcade of callers
Dec. 30	Pre-New Year's Eve Dance Party	Hayward Contra (TDOGS)
Dec. 31	Palo Alto New Year's Eve Contra	Tina Fields with Star Thistle
Dec. 31	San Rafael New Year's Eve Contra	Susan Petrick with the Fiddlerats (NBCDS)

See [bacds.org](http://bacds.org) for more information. For events sponsored by neighboring organizations, see [nbcds.org](http://nbcds.org) (NBCDS), [haywardcontradance.org](http://haywardcontradance.org) (TDOGS), [sffmc.org](http://sffmc.org) (SFFMC), [santacruzdance.org](http://santacruzdance.org) (TDSC), [sactocds.org](http://sactocds.org) (SCDS).

## 25th Annual No Snow Ball

*by Dina Rosenblatt*

### 25th Annual No Snow Ball

December 3, 2011

7:30 - 11:30 pm

Beginner's Lesson at 7:00 pm

Greek Orthodox Cathedral  
of the Ascension

4700 Lincoln Ave., Oakland

\$25.00 General

\$22.00 members of CDSS  
and affiliates

A gala event, the No Snow Ball, is held annually on the first Saturday in December at the Greek Orthodox Cathedral of the Ascension, just next door to the majestic lights of the Mormon Temple. Dancers will be greeted with music played by Ratnip (Caroline McCaskey, Cole Ingraham, Howard Booster, Alan Snyder) and enjoy the calling talents of Susan Petrick, Erik Hoffman, and Charlie Fenton.

Dancing up and down 4-6 contra lines, you will see dancers from all areas of the local dancing communities as well as from Southern California and occasionally visitors from other states arrayed in

their formal or festive attire for this evening of contra magic. While formal attire is optional, this is every dancer's opportunity to cut a swath through the dancers in that one outfit (gown, tuxedo, retired Halloween costume) they rarely get to wear. There is nothing like coming to each new partner in the line and seeing them dressed to the nines! From blinking lights and Santa hats to Dicken's Fair gowns and Scottish kilts, no accessory or outfit is too little or too much for this night. But if you find yourself lacking a special outfit at the last minute, don't stay home; your regular dance attire is fine. Just don't forget your dancing shoes!

Delicious refreshments will be provided, but our buffet is made even more marvelous by the 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, gluten free, nut free, etc.) are especially welcome.

A limited number of work exchange discounts are available for participation on the Ball Committee (decorations, food preparation, setup, cleanup, etc.). Please email [nosnowball@bacds.org](mailto: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 7:00 pm so they can participate in the free introductory workshop.

Once a year the dancing community comes together to celebrate with a gala night of contra dancing, friends, and good food! Plan ahead and save \$2 on each ticket by ordering tickets by November 3. For more information, see the No Snow Ball flyer or go to our Facebook page. For questions or inquiries, email: [nosnowball@bacds.org](mailto:nosnowball@bacds.org).

Be sure to save the date!

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

## Henry Purcell - Singing in Praise of

By Stewart Hall and Ric Goldman

We are often given the source of a dance. That is to say that when a caller announces a dance they use words like, “*The Hole in the Wall*, a dance out of Playford” or “*Chocolate Round-O*, a dance by Fried Herman.” It’s not often that we learn about the source for the music of a dance, or its composer. But if you have attended a BACDS Playford or Fall Ball, or one of our regular dance series, then you have probably danced to a Purcell tune. And if you have danced either of the two dances just mentioned, you have definitely danced to a Purcell tune.

The majority of Purcell’s music used for English Country Dances can be found in the 9<sup>th</sup> and subsequent editions of *The Dancing Master*. By this time, however, John Playford’s son, Henry, had assumed the family publishing business on his father’s death. This is not to say that Purcell did not know John Playford. On the contrary, Purcell’s first printed composition, *12 Sonatas of III Parts*, as well as other works were published by John. But although we dancers hold *The Dancing Master* in high regard, it is not for these tunes that Purcell is famous.



In his brief 36 years, Henry Purcell was appointed to many positions related to the royal court, including keeper of the king’s instruments, copyist at Westminster Abbey, organist for the Chapel Royal, and “composer in ordinary to the king.” These positions gave him an opportunity to compose for a broad spectrum of occasions: religious and secular, public and private, ceremonial and informal. As a supplement to his official income, Purcell also wrote music for theatrical productions. Chief among them is his opera (or semi-opera) *Dido and Aeneas*. This opera was written at the request of Josiah Priest, a dancing master who also kept a boarding-school for young gentlewomen, and it is strongly believed that Priest choreographed the dances

for it. Other dramatic works of Purcell include *Dioclesian*, *The Indian Queen*, *The Fairy Queen*, and *King Arthur*. In addition to these major works, he also wrote incidental music for over 40 other plays and operas.

Purcell did not limit himself to works of state and theater. He is also known for his catches, songs sung in parts like a round, which were popular amongst the tavern crowd. The majority of these catches fall into two categories: in praise of drink such as *He That Drinks is Immortal* and the unhappiness that women cause which drives a man to drink, such as *Once, twice, thrice, I Julia tried*. There are many others. If you have attended a Renaissance faire you may have heard ditties like *Sir Walter Enjoying His Damsel*:

Sir Walter enjoying his damsel one night,  
he tickl'd and pleas'd her to so great a delight  
that she cou'd not contain t'wards the end of the matter,  
but in rap-ture cry'd out:  
"O sweet Sir Walter, O sweet Sir Walter,  
O sweet Sir Walter, O sweet Sir, sweet Sir Walter,  
O switter swatter switter swatter switter swatter switter swatter!"

All told, Henry Purcell composed over 500 works, and over 40 have been used for country dances. This year’s BACDS Fall Ball will focus on a program featuring these dances with artistic director Nicolas Broadbridge, author of *Purcell’s Dancing Master*, sharing his knowledge, teaching, and calling for us. Registration for the Ball opens on September 5, and program details can be found at [bacds.org/fallball](http://bacds.org/fallball).

## Coming Soon: Extreme English Country Dance?

By Jens Dill

Twice this year, first at *Spring Fever* and later at *American Week*, I encountered "Trash English," which is what you get at a dance camp when you mix together experienced English Dancers with a similar proportion of young and enthusiastic experienced Contra Dancers. The comments I heard afterward, from young and old, Contra dancer and English dancer alike, convinced me that "Trash English" is, in fact, its own distinct sub-genre of ECD, and that it only needs recognition, re-branding, and promotion to make it the next hot thing with young (and not-so-young) dancers.

Re-branding, to my mind, is essential. "Trash English" is too much of a disparaging term, with no ambition to become its own sub-genre. My proposal is that we re-label it "Extreme English," which picks up on the other "extreme" sports in today's youth culture, and far more accurately reflects the essence of the genre. It even has its own nifty acronym: xECD.

So what is "Extreme English"? As I see it, it's an extension of what many of us already do to some degree in our regular modern ECD: adding extra flourishes, spins, swings and other improvisations that *fit* within the framework of the dance. I'm visualizing xECD as a sub-genre that encourages and institutionalizes this kind of improvisation. The two essential components of xECD, in my mind are the license to improvise, and the requirement that your improvisation somehow fit the framework of the dance and get you back in time for the next figure. This applies just as much to the music as to the dance. I envision xECD developing its own “repertoire,” in which dancers and choreographers annotate and share the improvisations that work best.

So why should Extreme English be a new genre? Can't we just consider it a kind of Ceilidh dancing, or just leave it as one aspect of the present modern ECD? No to both.

Ceilidh dancing takes a different approach to attracting the young and energetic: something I've heard described as "dumb it down and speed it up." The dance figures are kept on the simple side to allow for a crowd that has a relatively large proportion of inexperienced dancers and a relatively large mixture of alcohol, and the music is shifted toward rhythm-dominant forms instead of melody-dominant. xECD goes the other way. It is aimed at experienced dancers, who want to keep the full repertoire of complex figures from ECD, and mix in the full repertoire of improvisations they've developed. I would expect an Extreme English crowd to be willing to play with some of the more difficult dances from the ECD repertoire, the ones that take real concentration to get right.

Extreme English will also not replace regular modern ECD, at least without agreement from most of the regular attendees at the dance series in question. It will need its own dance nights and venues, to grow or not as it will, and if it does displace regular ECD, it will be by attracting more people over time.

I left American Week promising myself that I would explore the possibility of creating a local xECD dance series. I invite anyone interested to join the xECD Facebook group at [facebook.com/groups/257577280939355](https://www.facebook.com/groups/257577280939355).

## A Letter to the Editor

*We recently received the following letter from a dear local dancer. You may have missed her on the dance floor. As always, letters from our readers are very welcome, although we are saddened by this message. We wish sincerely that our Miz El is finding dancing joy on another dance floor. ~The Editorial Staff*

### Why I Stopped Contra Dancing

by Ellen Wall

In 2010, I was having less and less fun at dances. For years, I rarely sat out a dance, but I was beginning to avoid dances – in SF, taking far too much time setting up refreshments and actually ducking out of the building to stroll the block. In San Raphael, I grew to love Double Rainbow, even though I am lactose intolerant. I went to my doctor for blood tests to see if I had developed some wasting disease, but my doctor declared me healthy.

Then it happened. At a San Raphael dance, we were doing one of my favorite dances, easy but flashy and fun. I realized the music had no connection to the dance, and the dance was not fun. The music was excellent for a concert, but did not support the dance. And the music was painfully loud, affecting not only my ears but my whole body – as if I were being beaten on the shoulders and chest. No wonder I was escaping from the dance floor – I was being assaulted.

I had always loved to listen to the music while I was dancing and loved getting to know the musicians. Now that joy is gone. I was especially sad at Halloween. I went to the dance in Palo Alto, looking forward to the Wizard's Walk dance and music. The traditional music was not played until the end of the dance. What a disappointment that was. A friend commented afterward that once the traditional music started, she could have danced all night. She wished for more dances like that.

Another loss has been with new dancers. I had always felt the obligation to work them, connecting them with the music, emphasizing the rhythms. But now, I was having trouble counting beats for new dancers. I realized new people could not get clues for the dance from the band. While in the past new dancers seemed to be developing some facility by the end of their first dance, now they were just confused. They seemed not to be learning to dance and many quickly stopped attending.

I think I was so slow to figure out my problem because I have a slight hearing loss. I did not expect that loudness was disturbing me. One night I was wearing a skirt with metal beads on the hem. I didn't hear them at all, while some of my friends could hear them tinkling throughout the hall. If I'm having trouble with loudness, just think of how other folks must be bothered – people who can hear just fine.

I called musician and dancer friends in the south and mid-west to share my insight. They knew exactly what I was talking about – and were not happy about it. But, they said, they make their livings as musicians, so they play what they are asked to play. Contra dance, they admit with sadness, is not what it once was.

People in the Bay Area seem to think loud concert-format music, unconnected to the dance, is what is wanted. So be it. That's why I stopped contra dancing.

## Save the Dates



**Spring Fever**  
**March 16-18**

**Hot Callers:** *Eric Weberg and David Newitt*  
**Sizzling Music by**  
Dave Langford, Ann Percival, Bill Tomczak,  
Anita Anderson, Michelle Levy, Jim Oakden,



**Balance the Bay**

**August 10-12, 2012**

**Registration opens March 1**

Featuring *Joyride* and the *Great Bear Trio*  
with calling by  
*Bev Bernbaum* and *George Marshall*

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*: November 15. Send submissions to [caljuliet@comcast.net](mailto:caljuliet@comcast.net). Please join the conversation.