



Bay Area Country Dancer

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www.bacds.org

Let English Country Dance Transport You!

by James Candlin

Your interest in and enjoyment of English Country Dance can take you many places! You can go to dance camp, drop in on another dancing community when you are out of town, or take a dancing tour in an exotic location. For example, Ken McFarland organized a cruise through the Dalmatian islands a few years ago with English Country Dancing sessions led by Annie Laskey, who is leading this year's BACDS Fall Ball on 16th November.

This year, Annie will be taking us to new destinations in spirit with a program that celebrates the joys of dance and of travel. Evoking the 18th century embrace of leisure travel, "Trip to Terpsichore" is the theme of the 2013 Fall Ball.

In what would have been a day trip for London society of the time, we will be taking the waters at Kilburn. Now a bustling part of north London, 18th century Kilburn would have been in the country, and boasted an elegant spa with springs of iron-bearing water. The supposed health benefits were much appreciated, but so were the gardens, the dining, and an assembly room for all sorts of entertainment, including, presumably, the eponymous dance.

Travelling a little further afield, how about a visit to Freeford in Staffordshire? Site of an elegant country house in the 18th century, Freeford Gardens inspired a new dance at the end of the 20th century. We will then visit the Netherlands on A Trip to Amsterdam, before spending Christmas at Zeist.



Freeford Hall

There also is a Dutch connection for our next stop, in Ireland. The Siege of Limerick, in the aftermath of the Glorious Revolution of 1688, refers to the (initially unsuccessful) attempts of the new régime, in the person of William of Orange, to subdue the Jacobite resistance in that part of Ireland. The dance of the same name, however, is a lovely serene affair that has a beautiful tune with great momentum.

It will be a treat at the Ball to hear that tune, as well as all the others, played by our musicians for the evening, Bangers & Mash. The band, comprising Stanley and Susan Kramer, Craig Johnson, and David Strong, is well known in the Bay Area dance community for their sensibilities to the period and dancing character of the tunes they play, and they and Annie will be excellent company for our travels.

The BACDS Fall Ball is on Saturday 16th November at the San Mateo Masonic Lodge. The ball will be preceded by a workshop from 2:30 to 5:00 pm to review the dances. After a dinner break (good restaurants are a few minutes' walk away), the evening dance begins at 7:30 (doors open at 7:00). When the Ball ends at 10:30, we will conclude our travels at a community potluck. For more details and for registration, please visit our website at <http://bacds.org/fallball>.

New Location for the No Snow Ball

by Sharon Gavin

The 27th Annual BACDS **No Snow Ball** will take place Saturday, December 7, 2013 at a wonderful new location—the gorgeous Alameda Ballroom, located at 1415 Broadway (between Central Ave. and Santa Clara Ave.) in Alameda, CA.

This year we are very excited to have the sensational band *Celtic Spring (!)*, for their first northern California contra dance tour. The six Wood family siblings, ranging in age from 11 to 26 (and accompanied by their mom on keyboard and dad on percussion), have spent their lives on stage, bringing their unforgettable performance to live and TV audiences in the millions. In the summer of 2007, an estimated 12 million people watched *Celtic Spring* perform on the #1 rated TV show of the season, NBC's "America's Got Talent," where they finished as one of the top five finalists.

Their youthful energy and dynamic style will combine perfectly with the expert calling of *Warren Blier* and *Alan Winston* to create an evening of exceptional music and dance. You do not want to miss this!

Through the Looking Glass: A Week at Family Camp

by Margaret Miles

I went to BACDS Family Dance Camp this year for the first time, because I was invited to attend as the Song Leader. What a gift it was to be able to teach some of my multiple-part songs to a group of willing participants, and hear my ideas expressed through their voices!

Perhaps my favorite experience (though it's hard to pick just one!) was playing in the Camper Band. I've been going to a teaching session near my house for the past two years, learning Irish tunes on pennywhistle.

Band Leader Will Wheeler taught us tunes and arrangements, and on the last night of camp we played for a real contra dance! It was amazing to "step through the mirror" and see the dance from the stage, and it gave me renewed appreciation for the music I hear at contra dances – how many times did they play that tune?

Although I didn't know many people when I first arrived, by the end of the week, I could look around the room and know that each person there had touched me and that we'd become a family through our short time dancing, singing, eating, swimming, and parading. I'm already looking forward to next year, when I can see these friends again, and meet new ones.



Contra College Adds New Courses

Contra College is expanding its curriculum. Established in 2010 as a teaching weekend for new and intermediate contra dancers, Contra College is now offering a callers' workshop and couple-dance classes for the general public. Here's the full program:



1. **Callers' workshop**, Friday, November 8th 7-9:30 pm. Taught by Susan Petrick. For new and experienced callers. Advanced registration encouraged. bacds.org/cc/caller-ws
2. **Contra College**, Saturday and Sunday, November 9th and 10th, all day. Taught by Susan Michaels. The curriculum is designed to help new and intermediate dancers become comfortable on the dance floor, familiar with all the calls, and networked into the Bay Area contra dance community. Even experienced dancers can learn new things. Advanced registration encouraged. bacds.org/cc/contra-college
3. **Waltz workshop**, Saturday, November 9th, from 4-5:30 pm. Taught by Susan Petrick. Included in the price for Contra College attendees, but open to the public for \$5 at the door. bacds.org/cc/dance-ws
4. **Community dance**, Saturday, November 9th, from 7-10 pm (newcomers' orientation at 6:30). Called by Susan Michaels. Music by *The Whoops* (Michelle Levy, Jim Oakden, Shira Kammen). Contra College plays host to the regular Palo Alto Contra dance. Included in the price for Contra College attendees, open to the public (\$10 non-members, \$8 members, \$5 youth). bacds.org/cc/community-dance
5. **Hambo Workshop**. Sunday, November 10th, from 5-6:30 pm. Taught by Susan Petrick. Included in the price for Contra College attendees, but open to the public for \$5 at the door. bacds.org/cc/dance-ws
6. **Free dance**, Sunday, November 10th, from 7-9 pm. Music by *Uncle Farmer* (Ben Schreiber, Michael Sokolovsky). This is where the graduates of Friday's callers' workshop get to show us what they've learned. Free for everyone. bacds.org/cc/caller-dance

All classes are held at The Woman's Club of Palo Alto, 475 Homer Avenue, just 3 blocks from the regular Palo Alto Contra location.

Spring Fever will be Bigger and Better in 2014

Mark your calendars now for the *Spring Fever* dance weekend, March 14-16, 2014. Last year's *Spring Fever* was a roaring success, and we're coming back with the same formula, more callers, more musicians, more dancing, and more fun. *Spring Fever* is a true crossover weekend: you can spend your whole time Contra dancing, spend your whole time English dancing, or mix it up however you like, with another full track of music, calling, and singing workshops. We encourage you to cross over to the other side. It's amazing what kind of energy and new ideas hot Contra dancers can bring to English dance and vice versa. Find out more at bacds.org/springfever.

Unlike many dance weekends, *Spring Fever* is a residential camp. You spend 48 straight hours among the coastal redwoods at Monte Toyon Retreat Center. Your camp fee pays for two nights' lodging, five meals, and the chance to get up close and intimate with the music and calling of *Contra Sutra*, *FootLoose*, *Kathy Anderson*, *Michael Barraclough*, and *Laura Mé Smith*. **Sign up by December 1st and get in for last year's price.**

The President's Corner



From the President: Sometimes you just get lucky. I was putting together the President's Letter for this newsletter, and having a hard time of it. For lack of any more timely ideas, I was planning to write about how we are the custodians of a living tradition. I was putting together a mix of historical observations and comments about how times change and how we both preserve what has been passed down to us, and adapt it to fit the mood of our times. It's a meaty topic, and I was struggling to make it concise and focused enough to fit in a one-page article. While I was working on it, I received the following communication from Joyce Fortune, the "chief cat herder" of the Palo Alto Contra committee. It's concise, focused, and very relevant to us right now. I hereby yield the floor and offer Joyce a guest slot in my column.

The Most Important Person in the Room

Who is the most important person in the room at a dance? Is it the caller? She or he chooses and teaches the dances, directs people, sets the mood and keeps us all moving. *No, it isn't.*

Is it the band? They set the tone, build the energy, bring spirit to the dance and give it heart and soul. *No, it isn't.*

Is it the organizers? They pay the rent, get the insurance, set up food, schedule and pay the caller, musicians and sound tech, come early and stay late and keep the dance running. *No, it isn't.*

Is it the regular dancer who drives an hour or more to come to our dance? He or she brings his/her experience, twirls and turns, helps us out, looks great, smiles and makes eye contact, knows the dances and has the muscle memory to quickly pick up new ones. *No, it isn't.*

It is the newcomer.

The newcomer is the most important person in the room. He or she makes our dance thrive. Without newcomers, dances die. The dance's energy flags and it becomes a place that isn't fun to go to. A dance is basically a party. It needs to be fun. People don't go to dances because they are supposed to. They go because they think the dance will be fun. Newcomers make the fun continue. We must nurture our newcomers or our dances die.

When the Palo Alto Contra dance was dying four years ago, we didn't have a solid base of local dancers. We as a committee debated how to bring the dance back. We fretted about San Rafael's dance on the second Saturday and how it pulled dancers from our dance. We fretted about the Hayward dance on fourth and fifth Sundays and how it pulled dancers from our dance. We made a conscious decision to not worry about the regular dancers. We reasoned that if the dance was fun, they would come.

So, we focused on building up our base—on bringing in and keeping local dancers. (One third of dancers on our PA contra mailing list are from Palo Alto or its nearest neighbor cities, and more than half come to our dance from within 20 miles.) Over time, this base of newcomers became intermediate dancers; when the regular dancers came to Palo Alto for a special dance, they found a sea of smiling faces that they didn't recognize but who could dance and had great energy.

These newcomers are now the core of *our* regular dancers, bringing their energy and enthusiasm to the community. They bring their friends, volunteer, help out and join the committee. They become experienced dancers and help to nurture the ongoing flow of newcomers. As organizers, we must give priority to these dancers. We must treat them as what they are: the most important people in the room.

~ Joyce Fortune, Chief Cat-herder, Palo Alto Contra Committee

This is me again. I've *seen* Joyce's focus on the newcomer in action. It certainly seems to have worked for the Palo Alto Contra. It also seems to be working for the San Francisco Contra. San Francisco is not as far along in its recovery, but it *is* attracting and retaining newcomers, and seems to get more people coming in off the street than any of our other dances. Joyce is right. Instead of worrying about how to attract the same few hundred "regular" dancers away from competing dance series, we need to work on expanding the pie, and attract some of the *nine million* people in the Bay Area who haven't yet heard about Contra dancing.

~ Jens Dill, BACDS President, bacds-president@bacds.org

Volunteer Thanks

- ♪ Thanks to *Michael Siemon, Mary Luckhardt, Denis Thalson, and Erik Ievins* for helping run the *Jacqueline Schwab* workshops and dances this July. Thanks to *Erik* and to *Diane Frank* for hosting her house concert
- ♪ Thanks to all the camp and weekend committees who put together a fantastic year of dance camp events. *Fall Frolick, Spring Fever, Contra College, American Week, Family Week, English Week, and Balance the Bay* were all great successes, and all of them made money.
- ♪ Thanks to all the campers who donated items, time, and money to the camp auctions.
- ♪ Thanks to *Les Addison* for doing such a great job of making *Contra College* even bigger and better, and to *Sharon Gavin* for bringing a new look to the *No Snow Ball*. Both Les and Sharon are relatively new (to BACDS) as organizers, and are working without big, established committees helping them out, and are doing a *fabulous* job of bringing new life and new ideas to some of our old, familiar events.
- ♪ Thanks to *John Lindley*, who is moving to Houston, for all he has done for BACDS and the Palo Alto Contra.
- ♪ Thanks to the folks who are putting so much energy into getting the *San Jose* dance up to speed: *Shirley Worth, Joyce Cooper, Bob Fraley, William Allen* and *Catherine Allen*.
- ♪ 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

Tuesday, Sept 10	<i>Berkeley Morris</i> free Workshop	7:30 pm, Christ Church Berkeley
Fri-Sun, Sept 13-15	Echo Summit dance camp (SCDS)	<i>Wendy Graham, Shawn Brenneman</i>
Tuesday, Sept 17	<i>Berkeley Morris</i> free Workshop	7:30 pm, Christ Church Berkeley
Friday, Sept 20	Special Santa Rosa Contra (NBCDS)	<i>Frannie Marr with the Avant Gardeners</i>
Saturday, Sept 21	Special SF Contra (thank you Marty)	<i>Frannie Marr with the Avant Gardeners</i>
Sunday, Sept 22	Special Hayward Contra (TDOGS)	<i>Frannie Marr with the Avant Gardeners</i>
Monday, Sept 23	Special Palo Alto Contra	<i>Eric Black with the Avant Gardeners</i>
Friday, Sept 27	Gender-Free San Francisco Contra	<i>Dean Allemang with Uncle Farmer</i>
Saturday, Sept 28	Waltz Workshop, Sebastopol (NBCDS)	<i>Andy Westbom</i>
Sunday, Oct 6	Special San Rafael Contra (NBCDS)	<i>Warren Blier with Contra Sutra</i>
Wednesday, Oct 16	<i>Maivish</i> tour: Berkeley Contra	<i>Mary Wesley</i>
Thursday, Oct 17	<i>Maivish</i> tour: San Rafael (NBCDS)	<i>Mary Wesley</i>
Friday, Oct 18	<i>Maivish</i> tour: Felton (TDSC)	<i>Mary Wesley</i>
Friday-Sun, Oct 18-20	Fall Frolick ECD weekend	<i>Bruce Hamilton, Jenny Beer, Graham Christian</i>
Saturday, Oct 19	<i>Maivish</i> tour: Monterey (MCDC)	<i>Mary Wesley</i>
Monday, Oct 21	<i>Maivish</i> tour: Palo Alto	<i>Mary Wesley</i>
Friday, Oct 25	Halloween Contra , San Francisco	<i>Jeff Spero with Ratnip</i>
Saturday, Oct 26	Halloween Contra , Palo Alto	<i>Jeff Spero with Common Ground</i>
Saturday, Oct 26	Hambo Workshop, Sebastopol (NBCDS)	<i>Andy Westbom</i>
Wednesday, Oct 30	Halloween Contra , Berkeley	<i>Erik Hoffman with Rodney Miller & Owen Marshall</i>
Saturday, Nov 2	Fall Has Sprung (Grass Valley)	foothilldancers.org/fhs.html
Wednesday, Nov 6	Hambo Workshop, Berkeley	<i>Erik Hoffman</i>
Friday, Nov 8	Contra College Callers' Workshop	<i>Susan Petrick</i>
Sat-Sun Nov 9-10	Contra College Dance Weekend	<i>Susan Michaels</i>
Saturday Nov 9	Contra College Waltz Workshop	<i>Susan Petrick</i>
Sunday Nov 10	Contra College Hambo Workshop	<i>Susan Petrick</i>
Sunday Nov 10	Contra College Free Dance	<i>Callers' workshop graduates</i>
Saturday, Nov 16	Fall Ball	<i>Annie Laskey with Bangers & Mash</i>
Wednesday, Nov 20	Hambo Workshop, Berkeley	<i>Erik Hoffman</i>
Wednesday, Nov 20	Special Berkeley Contra	<i>George Marshall with Perpetual e-Motion</i>
Thursday, Nov 21	Special Mill Valley Contra (NBCDS)	<i>George Marshall with Perpetual e-Motion</i>
Friday, Dec 6	Special San Francisco Contra	<i>Warren Blier with Celtic Spring</i>
Saturday, Dec 7	No Snow Ball , Alameda Ballroom	<i>Warren Blier, Alan Winston with Celtic Spring</i>
Saturday, Dec 7	Faux Snow Ball (QCD: lafd.org/sf)	<i>Kalia Kliban with Flower and McLaren</i>
Friday, Dec 20	Palo Alto ECD Holiday Party	<i>Cavalcade of callers</i>
Wednesday, Dec 25	Berkeley Holiday Party	<i>Community Dance shared with The Orphans' Dinner</i>
Saturday, Dec 28	Berkeley Sat ECD Holiday Party	<i>Cavalcade of callers</i>
Tuesday, Dec 31	New Years Eve Contra, Palo Alto	<i>Kalia Kliban with the Contra Bandits</i>
Tuesday, Dec 31	New Years Eve English, Palo Alto	<i>Alan Winston, Bob Fraley, Sandra Vlahos</i>
Tuesday, Dec 31	New Years Eve Contra, Mill Valley	<i>TBD with the Crabapples (NBCDS)</i>
Friday-Sun. Mar 14-16	Spring Fever dance weekend	<i>Kathy Anderson, Michael Barraclough, Laura Mé Smith</i>
Saturday, March 29	Playford Ball	<i>Alan Winston</i>

See bacds.org for more information. For events sponsored by our neighbors, see nbcds.org (NBCDS), sactocds.org (SCDS), sffmc.org (SFFMC), santacruzdance.org (TDSC), haywardcontradance.org (TDOGS), montereycdc.webs.com (MCDC), cccds.org (CCCD)

This issue was edited by Julie Thomas, Chris Folger, and Jens Dill. Send corrections to <caljuliet@comcast.net>. Deadline for *Winter Dancer*: Nov. 15, 2013. Send submissions to caljuliet@comcast.net. Please join the conversation.