



# Bay Area Country Dancer

No.102– June 2015

[www.bacds.org](http://www.bacds.org)

## Special Benefit Contra Dance!!!

On April 25, a massive earthquake occurred in Nepal. This earthquake, along with several major aftershocks, killed nearly 9,000 people and injured more than 23,000 others.

Many hospitals and doctors have answered the call to help. Among those hospitals is the DCWC Rajbash Hospital in Rural Nepal, which has become the local distribution center in the area for food, tents, medicine as well as treating over 200 quake victims daily.

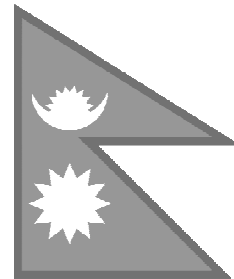
There will be a benefit contra dance on Friday, June 12, at St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in San Francisco, to raise funds to contribute to the healing efforts at the DCWC Rajbash Hospital. Eric Hoffman will call, and the musicians will be Rodney Miller, Charlie Hancock and Chris Knepper.

A raffle will be held, and the winners will receive an Apple Watch, or \$300 cash, or possibly other prizes.

Thanks to Laura Stillman for making this event happen.

Details:

- BAND: Rodney Miller, Charlie Hancock and Chris Knepper
- CALLER: Erik Hoffman
- Friday, June 12, 2015, 8-11pm (newcomers' orientation at 7:30)
- St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, 43rd Ave. at Judah, San Francisco
- 7:30 beginner lesson 8-11pm Dance
- Price: \$12. All proceeds from the dance and raffle go to the DCWC Rajbash Hospital in Rural Nepal.



## Plan a Summer Dance Vacation: *It's not too late!*

What better way to enjoy your summer than spending a week or a weekend dancing with your friends? You know the reasons it's a good idea: you spend your time surrounded by your favorite music, dancing as much as you want to, surrounded by old friends and new, learning new things, and just plain relaxing and having fun. So why haven't you signed up yet?

- *It's too late: camp is probably full and I won't get in.* Really? No. It's true that *English Week* has a waiting list, but *American Week*, *Family Week*, and *Balance the Bay* all have room for more campers. And even if the camp does have a waiting list, it may be worth getting on it. Cancellations happen, and you could get in.
- *I can't afford it.* Don't let that stop you from trying. All of our camps have scholarship and financial aid programs to help people who are not able to pay the full price. We have discounts for young people, for aspiring musicians, for the unemployed or low-income, for people who volunteer to help run the camp. It can't hurt to ask. We don't want lack of funds to keep anyone from dancing.
- *I don't have the time.* This one's harder. We can't do anything about your other time commitments. And the camp committee *would* rather have people come for the full week or weekend if possible. But if camp doesn't fill with full timers, or if you can find someone else to time-share your space at camp, it could work. Once again, it can't hurt to ask.
- *I have other plans for that week/weekend.* Enjoy. Hope to see you next year, or at a different camp.
- *My Ex will be there.* We can't fix this either, but you could try another camp that your Ex will not be at.
- *I'm not sure I'd like it.* If you like the music and the dance, you'll probably like the camp. Talk to anyone who has been there, and ask lots of questions.
- *I never thought about it or didn't know about it.* What are you waiting for? Sign up!

Here are the possibilities. Pick the one that suits you best.

***American Dance and Music Week***, June 28–July 3 at Jones Gulch camp in La Honda. Contra Dancing, Music, Crafts, Yoga, Squares, 'Trash' English and other late-night fun. This is one of the best camps ever, and there's still space. [www.Amweek.org](http://www.Amweek.org)

***BACDS Family Week***, July 5–11, Foothill Horizons camp in Sonoma. Contra dance, English dance, Irish dance, International dance, Music, Singing, Crafts, Storytelling, programs for children of *all* ages. If you have children, this camp is for you. If you don't have some, and can't borrow any, come anyway. It can be just as fun for a 'family' of one. [www.bacds.org/familyweek](http://www.bacds.org/familyweek)

***Balance the Bay Contra Dance Weekend***, August 7–9, Pomeroy Recreation and Resource Center, San Francisco. This is San Francisco's premier Contra Dance weekend. It used to sell out, but we've added more space and there's room for *you*. [www.bacds.org/btb](http://www.bacds.org/btb)

***Hey Days English Dance and Music Week***, August 16–23, Bishop's Ranch near Healdsburg. There's a waiting list for this one, but don't let that stop you from trying. [www.bacds.org/eweek](http://www.bacds.org/eweek)

If you can't make any of these, look ahead to ***Fall Frolick*** (October 16–18) or ***Spring Fever*** (March 11–13)

## Free Morris Dance Workshops *By Beth Bergen*

Every year Berkeley Morris hosts a series of FREE workshops in Morris and related dance traditions. No experience is needed, and all are welcome! Workshops are taught by members of Berkeley Morris, or friends of ours from the local (or not so local) dance community. Come to one, or attend all four. Join us afterwards at the [Jupiter Pub](#) at 2181 Shattuck Ave. in downtown Berkeley.

Each workshop will teach a particular style or tradition of Morris, and you don't have to have attended an earlier workshop to attend a later one (but of course you'll want to!). The particular styles and dances taught vary from year to year, so if you attended last year, come back for something new!

Workshops will be held on the following dates, at Christ Church Berkeley, at [2138 Cedar St, Berkeley, CA 94709](#):

- Tuesday, 25 August, 7:30 pm
- Tuesday, 1 September, 7:30 pm
- Tuesday, 15 September, 7:30 pm
- Tuesday, 22 September, 7:30 pm

**Note that there is a 1 week hiatus with no workshop on Tuesday, 8th September.**

Interested in Morris dancing after workshops are over? Morris dancing is a lot of fun! If you think you might be interested in joining a team, talk to us. Performing with us is a big commitment, but is also quite rewarding\*. [Send us a note](#) if you'd like to come check out one of our weekly Tuesday practices. Even if you aren't interested in a team commitment, we look forward to dancing with you at a workshop.

\* We practice year-round, perform almost every weekend during Spring and early Summer, and wear an outfit that's sort of silly (but really, it's quite fetching).

## Fall Frolick Goes English with a Hint of Scotch!

*By Sharon Green*

This October the coastal redwoods of Monte Toyon will be alive with the sound of ... bagpipes? Well, perhaps not, but Fall Frolick program director Joanna Reiner Wilkinson has added an exciting new track to the weekend: Scottish country dancing, led by RSCDS teacher Linda Henderson. Originally from North Berwick, a small town near Edinburgh, Linda now lives in the Bay Area. Once a competitive Highland Dancer, she took her RSCDS Teaching Certificate at St. Andrews. Since moving to California, she has taught workshops throughout the U.S. and Canada and has been on staff for English-Scottish Session at Pinewoods and for the Teachers' Association (Canada) Summer School.

Fall Frolick 2015 brings us not only an exhilarating introduction to Scottish country dancing, but also the return of three notable ECD teachers with splendid repertoires.

From CDS Boston Centre we have Barbara Finney, one of the East Coast's top English country dance leaders. Described as "articulate, genial and serene," Barbara is known for her clear teaching and welcoming presence. Her varied dance background includes teaching and performing baroque, renaissance, Morris, longsword, and Scottish as well as English country dance.

From rural Dorset we have Rosemary Hunt, a fine teacher of both contemporary and historic English country dance. Co-editor with her husband Steve of the collection *Dances from 1792*, caller at dance weeks and weekends in the UK (Halsway Manor, Chippenham, Lichfield, Eastbourne), US, Belgium, and Holland, Rosemary is the resident caller at the Wareham Folk Dance Club and organizer of Dorset's popular Purbeck weekend. She also choreographs dances, setting many of them to tunes by Steve.

Filling out the English country dance staff is program director Joanna Reiner. Joanna, a Philadelphia-based English dance caller, is known for her dedication to encouraging people to become better dancers. Her calling has taken her from Pinewoods Camp in Plymouth, MA, to Hey Days in the Bay Area of CA, from St. Croix to Hawaii. Joanna calls regularly for the Germantown Country Dancers, is an avid dance gypsy, and, in her spare time, works to support her dance habit.

And then there are the musicians. Yes, they are local, and they are brilliant. There are The Whoots—Michelle Levy and Jim Oakden are the heart of this high energy band, sometimes working with Shira Kammen, sometimes with Charlie Hancock—providing contra drive with an occasional medieval twist. There are our Scottish specialists Lyle Ramshaw and Susan Worland, for the best in strathspeys, jigs, and reels. Last but not least, we have our wonderful pianist/composer Rebecca King, whose tunes have inspired have inspired many of the foremost ECD choreographers active today.

Want to know more about the weekend? Go to [www.bacds.org](http://www.bacds.org) and follow the weekend camp links to Fall Frolick. Or talk to Mary Luckhardt, Marilyn Kinch, or Sharon Green at any local English dance. Mark your calendar for October 16–18.

## The New (non)-Balancing Act at *Balance the Bay*

*By Jens Dill*

Every year, the *Balance the Bay* committee has a spirited debate about whether or not to include gender balancing in the admissions policy for the weekend. The first year (2008), we did not gender balance. Our featured caller that year was not in favor of gender balancing, and as a new event, we were not sure we were going to be fully subscribed (if you can't fill the camp, gender balancing is a luxury you probably can't afford). From 2009 to 2014 we opted for a gender balance policy, which became ever more complicated over the years. We added "couple" balancing (so that people who sign up without "partners" don't feel lost in a sea of couples). We adapted our formula to account for same-sex couples, family and other groups that also wanted to sign up together, and people who did not want to be identified by gender. It was a lot of work, but it worked.

Until this year's committee took a look at the registration records and concluded that we'd have gotten almost the same results if we hadn't done all that elaborate balancing work. So this year, we voted not to gender-balance, and let the world know. And it works, too. Signups have been coming in consistently at about the same rate we ended up with last year: 52% women, 42% men, 6% decline-to-state. There doesn't even seem to be any evidence for the folk wisdom that says that women tend to sign up early and men tend to sign up late. Who'd have thunk it?

## The President's Corner



**From the President:** Last month, David Chandler of CDNY posted the following appeal to the English Country Dance E-mail list ([ecd@bacds.org](mailto:ecd@bacds.org)):

*This has been a difficult year for English dancing in NYC, with lots of people not dancing because of disability, weather, etc. We are looking for ways to get more dancers to come and join our community on a continuing basis, and want to survey dancers (those who came only once, those who came for a while and dropped out, and long-timers) about what might make dancing more attractive. Contacting those who no longer dance will be challenging, though we have some ideas. Rather than reinvent the wheel we wondered if any other communities have done such surveys, and/or found good ways to expand their English dancing community. Thanks for your help!*

I was moved to respond, on behalf of the Bay Area dance community. My response was *very* well received. I would like to thank EVERY ONE OF YOU for helping to create such a welcoming climate in our dance community.

Hello, David.

Out here in the San Francisco Bay Area, we've tried the survey thing, and found it only marginally useful. As you suggest, we found that:

- it's hard to reach out to the people you *really* need to hear from (the ones who are *not* coming to your dances).
- it's hard to formulate questions that elicit useful responses.
- when you see the responses, they mostly tell you what you already knew or suspected.

We have been pretty successful in attracting people to our English Dances. Here are some of the things that work for us. Mostly it's a lot of little things, but all the details add up.

1. **Make certain that your dance is a "welcoming place" for newcomers.** At our Palo Alto English and Contra dances, we make an effort to greet newcomers and engage them in conversation from the moment they walk in. We have managed to train a large proportion of our regular dancers to actively seek out newcomers as partners. At our Contra dance, which is large, we have someone from the organizing committee tasked with "shmoozing" with the newcomers at the break, and asking if we can put them on our E-mail announcement list. At our English dance, which is smaller, the door sitter has time to converse with each person at sign-in time. If they look new, we ask if they've danced before, and if so, where. We also try to remember their names and say goodbye to them by name when they leave. We also make sure we tell our newcomers at "announcement time" that we are glad they are here, and that they are the most important people on the floor.
2. **If you are not using name tags, get some.** We have lots of colors of Sharpie markers so people can be creative. I try to "download" a new "font" for my nametag at every dance.
3. **Get your regulars on board.** Some years back, when BACDS as a whole was having similar worries about declining attendance, I started an online discussion among our regular members. The main thing it did for us was to raise the consciousness of the community. After enough people have reminded each other that the future of the dance depends on bringing in new people, the attitudes on the dance floor do tend to shift.
4. **Pile on the extras:** Pot-luck snacks at the break; going out for food as a group before or after the dance; ride-sharing, etc. One of our competing area contra dances (Hayward) did this and was an immediate *big* success. And what they did was emulated by our dances and others. They actually have a budget to pre-stock the snack table with good stuff: watermelon, dolmas, cookies, and even popsicles. At our Palo Alto English dance, we had one dancer who is a confirmed vegan, and who regularly cooked and brought a full vegan entree (soup or casserole or the like) to share with us. She also branched out into providing drinks ("mocktails" or hot spiced cider) to hand to people when they arrived at the dance (she even brought the fancy glassware). She's no longer doing it, but her example encouraged others, and our snack table is still a special treat.
5. **Have space for conversation and for kids to play.** Dancers with injuries will come for the social life if there's a place where they can sit and yak. Dancers with kids will bring them if there's a place where they can play off to the side.
6. **Proselytize at other dances.** When you are at a Contra dance, say, talk to people there and ask them whether they'd be interested in trying English. If they've heard it isn't as much fun, let them know it's fun in a different way. More interesting figures, more of the lingering glances and such, and not so much spinning. Then make sure when they come, they have a good time. Look around for other dance groups that might cross over. Scottish? Irish? Visit them and see.
7. **Set up hooks to bring in young people.** A youth discount works somewhat (we set the bar at 30 or younger), but only if you get the word out, so you need people in the local youth scene to pass the word along. What really works for bringing in young people is just hooking that one magic personality who is a magnet for bringing all of his or her friends. It's hard to find that person, but once you do, the momentum will build. And once you find those key people, make them part of your management team. Also look to bring in young people as callers and musicians. If they get a gig with you, they'll invite their friends. One of our local music teachers makes up a band with all of her students to play a contra dance once in a while. That brings in lots of parents and siblings for the evening.
8. **Advertise online.** We find [meetup.com](http://meetup.com) tends to produce a fairly steady stream of newcomers. But try all the possibilities you can think of. If you can get a few new people every week, you have something to build on. Remember, though, that getting them in the door is only the first step. The second is making sure they have a good time. The third and hardest (which is beyond your control) is for them to decide that they had a good enough time to make a change to their weekly schedule to come back regularly.

Sorry, I can't suggest anything to do about the weather. But when I was a New Yorker, weather was not an impediment to anything I *really* wanted to do. If you can find a way to pack up your weather and ship it out to California, we'd really appreciate it here.

Jens Dill, BACDS President, [bacds-president@bacds.org](mailto:bacds-president@bacds.org)

## Volunteer Thanks

- ♪ Thanks *Denis Thalson* for well over a decade's service to BACDS, as a Board member, volunteer, and manager for the Fourth Saturday experienced English dance. Thanks to *Lisa Gartland* for taking over as manager.
- ♪ Thanks to *Mary McMurtry* designing the *Fall Frolick* flyer, and to *Joey Charters* and *Kennith Grotjohn* for taking on the job of work-trade coordinator. Thanks to *Bowen Lee* for stepping forward to do decorations for *Balance the Bay*.
- ♪ **Farewell** to *Denis Thalson*, who has moved to Forestville, to *Andy Eggleston*, who will be attending medical school in Ann Arbor, and (soon) to *Bob and Ruth Anne Fraley* who will be moving to Eugene, Oregon.
- ♪ ... and a call for **HELP!** We need someone to take over managing the *No Snow Ball*, or it might not happen this year. Talk to *Jens Dill* or *Chris Knepper* if you want to help, or have ideas about a better hall.
- ♪ Thanks to all the invisible volunteers who keep things going behind the scenes. 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

Saturday, June 13	Special FREE Palo Alto Contra	Eric Black's birthday: <i>Cis Hinkle with KGB</i>
Saturday, June 13	<b>Mad Robin Ball</b> (NBCDS)	<i>Robin Hayden</i>
Saturday, June 13	Special San Rafael Contra (NBCDS)	<i>Erik Hoffman with Rodney Miller, Charlie Hancock</i>
Sunday, June 14	Special Sebastopol English (NBCDS)	<i>Robin Hayden</i>
Wednesday, June 17	Special Berkeley Contra	<i>Yoyo Zhou with Rodney Miller and Daniel Steinberg</i>
Fri-Sun, June 19-21	<b>Faultline Frolic</b> Contra Wkend (NBCDS)	<i>Lisa Greenleaf, Joyce Miller with Hotpoint</i>
Saturday, June 20	<b>Seabright Morris Day of Dance</b>	Santa Cruz area
Sunday, June 21	<b>Aftershock!</b> Contra in Mill Valley (NBCDS)	<i>Lisa Greenleaf with Hotpoint</i>
Friday, June 26	Special Pre-AmWeek Contra, San Fran.	<i>Linda Leslie with The AmWeek Gardeners</i>
Saturday, June 27	Special Pre-AmWeek Contra, Palo Alto	<i>Linda Leslie with Clew Bay</i>
Saturday, June 27	Special Sebastopol Contra (NBCDS)	<i>Kelsey Hartman with Laura Light and George Paul</i>
Sun-Fri, June 28 to July 3	<b>American Dance and Music Week</b>	<i>Nils Fredland, Linda Leslie / Syncopaths, Clew Bay</i>
Friday, July 3	Post-AmWeek Contra in Palo Alto	<i>AmWeek staff</i>
Saturday, July 4	Special Post-Amweek Contra, San Fran.	<i>Nils Fredland with The Syncopaths</i>
Sun-Sat, July 5-11	<b>Family Week dance camp</b>	<i>Tom Roby, Caroline Oakley, Hugh Glanville, ...</i>
Friday, July 10	Special Circle Left Contra (QCD)	<i>Lynn Ackerson with Rodney Miller, Daniel Steinberg</i>
Saturday, July 11	Special Mill Valley Contra (NBCDS)	<i>Eric Black w/ Rodney Miller, Paul Kotapish, Daniel Steinberg</i>
Thursday, August 6	Special San Rafael Contra (NBCDS)	<i>Kelsey Hartman with the Morrison Brothers</i>
Fri-Sun, August 7-9	<b>Balance the Bay Contra Weekend</b>	<i>Beth Molaro, Will Mentor / Syncopaths, Morrison Bros</i>
Sunday, August 9	<i>CounterBalance</i> contra dance	<i>Beth Molaro, Will Mentor with the Morrison Brothers</i>
Monday, August 10	Special Palo Alto Contra	<i>Susan Petrick with the Morrison Brothers</i>
Wednesday, August 12	Berkeley English	<i>Jenny Beer</i>
Friday, August 14	Special <i>Circle Left Contra</i> (QCD)	<i>Frannie Marr with The Gaslight Tinkers</i>
Saturday, August 15	Special San Francisco Contra	<i>Frannie Marr with The Gaslight Tinkers</i>
Saturday, August 15	Berkeley(Oakland) Experienced English	<i>Jenny Beer</i>
Sun-Sun, August 16-23	<b>English Dance and Music Week</b>	<i>Bruce Hamilton, Jenny Beer, David Macemon</i>
Monday, August 17	Special Palo Alto Contra	<i>Yoyo Zhou with Larry Unger and Audrey Knuth</i>
Wednesday, August 19	Special Berkeley Contra	<i>Erik Hoffman with Larry Unger and Audrey Knuth</i>
Friday, August 21	Special Santa Rosa Contra (NBCDS)	<i>Frannie Marr with Steam</i>
Saturday, August 22	Special Palo Alto Contra	<i>Frannie Marr with Steam</i>
Sunday, August 23	Special Hayward Contra (TDOGS)	<i>Jon Southard with Steam</i>
Wednesday, August 26	Special Berkeley English + Waltz	<i>David Newitt with Larry Unger and Audrey Knuth</i>
Thursday, August 27	Special Mill Valley Contra (NBCDS)	<i>Jean Gibson-Gorindo with The Stringrays</i>
Friday, August 28	Special San Francisco Contra	<i>Ethan Hummel with Larry Unger and Audrey Knuth</i>
Saturday, August 29	Special Palo Alto Contra	<i>Andy Shore with The Stringrays (Rodney Miller et al)</i>
Saturday, August 29	Special Santa Rosa Zesty Contra (NBCDS)	<i>Lynn Ackerson with Larry Unger and Audrey Knuth</i>
Sunday, August 30	Special Hayward Zesty Contra (TDOGS)	<i>Lynn Ackerson with Larry Unger and Audrey Knuth</i>
Fri-Sun, October 16-18	<b>Fall Frolick</b>	<i>Rosemary Hunt, Barbara Finney</i>
Saturday, Nov 21	<b>TDOGS 12-hour TWIRL</b>	<i>Susan Petrick, Frannie Marr, Michael Karcher</i>

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

This issue was edited by Chris Folger and Jens Dill. Send corrections to [TheDancer@bacds.org](mailto:TheDancer@bacds.org). Deadline for the *Fall Dancer*: August 15, 2015. Send submissions to [TheDancer@bacds.org](mailto:TheDancer@bacds.org). Please join the conversation.