



# Bay Area Country Dancer

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www.bacds.org

## On Our Grants and Your Membership Fees

By Kevin Goess, BACDS president

*On waking, he found himself on the green knoll whence he had first seen the old man of the glen. He rubbed his eyes—it was a bright sunny morning. The birds were hopping and twittering among the bushes, and the eagle was wheeling aloft, and breasting the pure mountain breeze. “Surely,” thought Rip, “I have not slept here all night.” He recalled the occurrences before he fell asleep. The strange man with a keg of liquor—the mountain ravine—the wild retreat among the rocks—the woebegone party at ninepins—the flagon—“Oh! that flagon! that wicked flagon!” thought Rip,—“what excuse shall I make to Dame Van Winkle?”*

### Our grants program is alive!

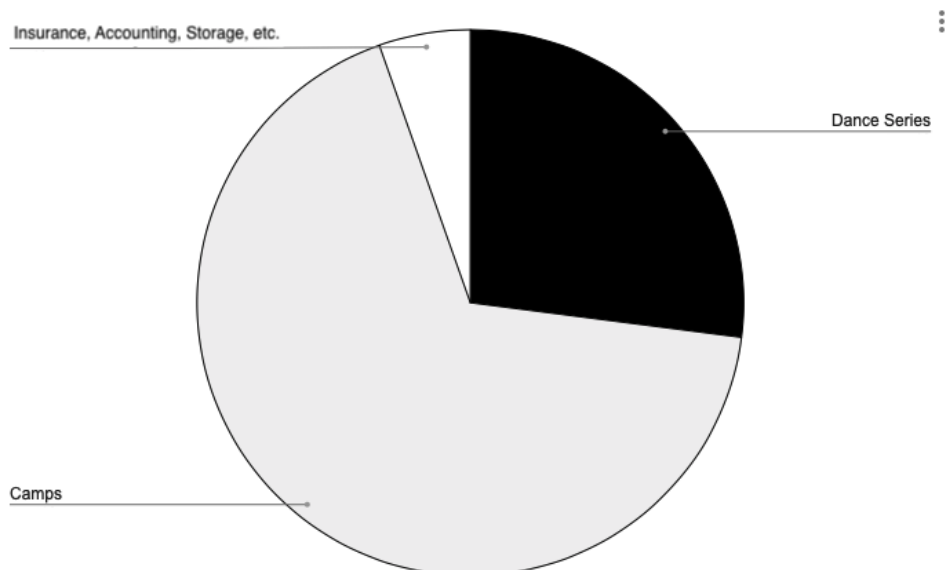
Someday we're going to wake from this fever dream of quarantine and isolation and want to go dancing again, and for that **we're going to need musicians**. If all our amazing local talent is driven away from playing for Bay Area dances because they can't afford to stay here or they've forsworn music in the face of starvation and poverty, then we'll be waking up alone in that glen, with our dog run off and our trusty fowling piece decayed into a rusty worm-eaten flintlock.

To support our local musicians and callers who depend on gig money to survive in the Bay Area, BACDS has **started up a grants program!** And we've already given away our first money: we're helping Audrey Knuth by underwriting her contra band class. And we're *this* close to fulfilling two more grants. And we don't want to stop there!

Our goal is to give a whole bunch of money away over the next six to eighteen months. We've started out as invitation-only while the grant program gets its sea legs, but if you're a **musician or caller** with ties to the Bay Area and **need some help** getting through this tough time, and think you might be able to do something along the lines of our mission of "Promoting, preserving, performing, and teaching traditional English and American music and dance", please find a board member and we'll see what we can do!

### Your Membership Helps; Donations Too!

Not only are we trying to **give grant money away** as fast as we can, but the BACDS has a number of fixed expenses that aren't going away. We're still paying for insurance, storage, bookkeeping, the website, the mailing lists. We have, very roughly speaking, about **\$20,000 of fixed expenses**. In a normal year, they're a pretty small slice of the pie;



but these days they're the *\*entire\** pie! **Your membership fees**, from all of our 300 or so members, add up to, very roughly speaking, about half of those fixed expenses. And **our plan is to give away** up to about *twice* the amount of those fixed expenses in grants during the pandemic, out of our bank account.

So **your memberships and donations are essential** in helping us keep the lights on! Please do the necessary to keep your membership up to date. And as for any donations you give us, we're doing our best to give those away where they'll do the most good.

## Lots of Zoom Activity

There is an amazing amount of **BACDS activity happening** over the internet. Don't be left out! If you haven't been **on a Zoom thing** yet, now's your chance--we'd like to see you! Old men forget; yet all shall be forgot, but *we'll* remember, and everybody else still abed will think themselves accurs'd they were not here that Zoomed with us this day.

There is more going on here than I can begin to list, but Claire Takemori, a saint walking among us and my personal hero, has run up a list of events she's organizing, including these:

- Audrey Knuth and Jeff Spero are both doing **musicians' workshops**
- a regular **Sunday waltz**, just like the NBCDS has been doing on Saturday nights
- a regular **Wednesday concert/waltz...**
- ... and a Wednesday evening **Zoom check-in** with conversation/social time
- an online **Techno contra** on May 30
- and lastly, did you catch the Zoom Hayward contra on May 22? Stay tuned for more of those!

Those are some of the things Claire has kicked off. What's more, Sharon Green ([sharon@bacds.org](mailto:sharon@bacds.org)) is organizing online **English country dances** on some **Sunday afternoons**.

See the "Interactive Calendar" link at [bacds.org](http://bacds.org) to find more and stay up to date.

## We could use more help, And I Don't Just Mean Money

Claire writes, "I need **volunteers to help moderate Zoom events**. If you are comfortable on a computer, familiar with Zoom and have good internet, please let me know. Even one event helps." Find Claire and ask her, if you're interested: [claire@bacds.org](mailto:claire@bacds.org).

Also, we could *always* use a **few more Board members**. There's actually more work for us right now than when dances were going and the machine was humming and everything was in place. It's fun! It's helpful!

Some reasons to join a non-profit Board, taken from the internet:

- you want to **make the world a better place** and you care about the cause
- **build your network** and contacts
- gain expertise by **deep-diving into an issue**: employment law, taxes, financial statements, organization and management, fundraising, education, gender issues
- boost **your public profile** and enrich your resume
- spend time interacting with **smart, dedicated people**

These are exciting times we're living in, and I do hope you and the people you care about are all doing well, or at least surviving. **We will dance again!**

## Notes from the Shelter

By Sharon Green

It's been over two months since BACDS cancelled all our dances and everyone had to shelter in place. Oddly enough, I'm busier than ever. Yes, I'm spending hours cooking and ordering groceries online, but that's not what's keeping me busy. It's English country dancing!

As you may know, I'm a fanatic about English country dancing. I'm a charter member of Mary Luckhardt's carpool The Usual Suspects, which travels regularly from the East Bay to English dances in the South Bay, North Bay, and even Sacramento. So when we entered lockdown on March 17, it hit me hard. By the time a day or two had gone by, I needed a dance fix.

So that's what I did: I "fixed" a dance. On March 20th I took a classic English country set dance, Maiden Lane, and adapted it so that I could dance it by myself in the 6' x 6' empty space I had cleared in our bedroom. The version that I knew of the three-couple set dance was progressive: after one round, the first couple would wind up in third place, and a new first couple would take over. With only one person dancing, a progression made little sense to me, so I altered the dance, taking out some moves and importing some others from Pat Shaw's dance Kitty Alone. I called the resulting mashup Maiden Alone. And I posted Maiden Alone on Alan Winston's ECD list [[ecd@lists.sharedweight.net](mailto:ecd@lists.sharedweight.net)].

That was March 20th. On March 21st, I received two special emails. The first was from someone I had never met, Don Corson, a caller from Indiana. He had videoed himself dancing Maiden Alone, and had sent the video to me. What a kind gesture! (He danced the dance beautifully, by the way.) The second was from someone I had met, but hadn't seen in almost 30 years, the caller/choreographer Antony Heywood, whom we met when we traveled with Fried Herman to the Netherlands for the Christmas Course at Zeist. Antony wrote, "I write a dance column in our NVS magazine. I was going

to write about dances with no hands but of course social distancing is still a problem. May I publish your dance in our next issue?"

Since that time, solo dancing has taken off. Dozens, possibly hundreds of solo dance adaptations have been created by callers and choreographers all over North America and across the Pond. Links to directions for many of them appear on the Carolina Country Dancers web page under the heading Dance Pandemic List Links [<https://carolinaenglishcountrydance.com/dance-pandemic-list-links/>]. Videos also exist of some solo dances: I spent several nervous days learning to take videos of myself teaching my dance adaptations, put them in Dropbox, and upload them to YouTube. Bob Green has archived a few of these videos at <https://carolinaenglishcountrydance.com/dance-pandemic-list-links/>

Meanwhile, callers in Sheffield UK, Toronto ON, Victoria BC, and throughout the US have started running online solo English country dances using Zoom. On April 12th Kalia Kliban and I joined the crowd, putting on our first solo dance, an almost two-hour-long event at which I called to recorded music and Kalia called to superb playing of Jon Berger. We were fortunate to have the Zoom guidance of Lindsay Verbil, a Southern California caller and dancer who handles tech support for Darlene Hamilton's Historical Tea & Dance Society webinars, online conversations with active ECD leaders. BACDS members already interviewed in this series include Kalia Kliban, Rebecca King, Bruce Hamilton, and me.

Kalia and I are continuing to lead solo English dances. We've switched to a 1st, 3rd, and 5th Sunday schedule, with 5th Sunday dances being "experienced." We alternate calling these dances: I call next on June 7th; Kalia, on June 21st. We post invitations on Alan Winston's ECD-list; invitations also go out via email. We now have an email list containing the addresses of more than 300 English country dancers. (Our list master is David Brown, who is great at handling the technical side of things.) Getting on the email invitation list is simple: Just email me the following information: your name, email address, dance group, city, and state. Send the information to [Sharon@bacds.org](mailto:Sharon@bacds.org). It's as easy as that.

One last note: Everything I have written to this point has been upbeat. However, I know full well how hard sheltering in place is for everyone, and how hard COVID-19 has hit people everywhere, including three of my good caller friends. This is a horror show, and we're all helping one another to get through it as best we can. If you need to talk, or just want to see a friendly face, please email me or friend me on Facebook. Keep safe, and carry on!

## **A Musician's Life After Dances Stopped**

*By Audrey Knuth*

If you asked back in January what I would be doing right now, I would have either not believed you or would have had a really ugly cry. It was when my first dance weekend cancelled, that it really sunk in. A million questions came rushing through my head with no answers. Two months and some change into all of this, I'm sitting here at my new desk with a 1080p webcam, USB microphone and some fancy speakers preparing for my next Zoom contra dance happening later tonight.

I've gone through several phases during the pandemic. After the initial shock, I was overwhelmed with the financial generosity of my friends, family and dance community. Without even asking, I would wake up every morning to a new PayPal alert, letting me know that I was far from being alone. After the initial comfort, the next scary phase dawned on me: What the heck (well another word really) do I do with myself now? There was a time when new cancellations would happen pretty much daily. Even though expected, each one hurt just as much as the previous one. Receiving notification in one day that three of my summer camps were canceled was not an easy day.

With my love/hate relationship with Facebook, I did something I rarely do - I put out a cry for help: What can I do to sustain my financial stability (whatever that means as a folk musician) and keep my sanity? It was Claire Takemori that commented on the post about being able to help, offering to get me off the ground with Zoom. Now worth more than the seven biggest airlines combined, Zoom was very much unknown to me before this. Talking with Claire gave me the courage and support needed to explore the possibility of having a weekly music class. With the grant I received from BACDS and the technical (and emotional) support from Claire, I've been going five weeks strong with Tunes 'N Stuff.

Each week, I've been teaching one tune and taking the time to dive a little deeper into the world of how to play it for dancing specifically. With an average of 40 participants, I hope to continue this until we can reunite again.

My tune class is just one example of what has been possible now that we've been forced to re-evaluate what it means to be a community. With multiple waltz and contra sessions a week, we're turning to Zoom as a way to stay united and remind ourselves of what once was. These sessions aren't easy. There's a lot of back end work that goes into it and I believe that BACDS has stepped up to the task while taking the risk to try new things.

I'm encouraging BACDS and everyone else to continue this exploration. We're in this for the long haul and we need to continue exploring how to stay connected. This is the time to be creative, empathetic and kind. I believe BACDS can represent what a community can do when presented with a challenge while staying open minded.

Thank you for all of your help (seriously), and I just ask that we keep on and not lose momentum when it matters the most.

I can't wait to return when it is safe and we can dance as an even stronger community.

## **In Memoriam: Barbara Bickerman**



In May 2020, Barbara Bickerman passed away in her home. She is survived by her companion of more than twenty years, Scott Johnson, her brother John, and a nephew and niece, Greg and Melissa. She was cremated at Sinai Memorial Chapel.

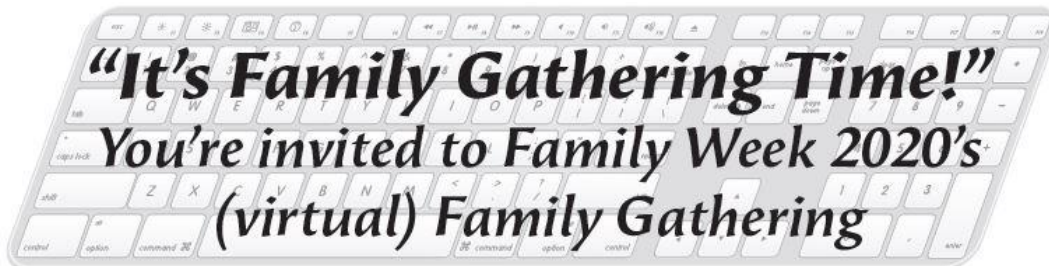
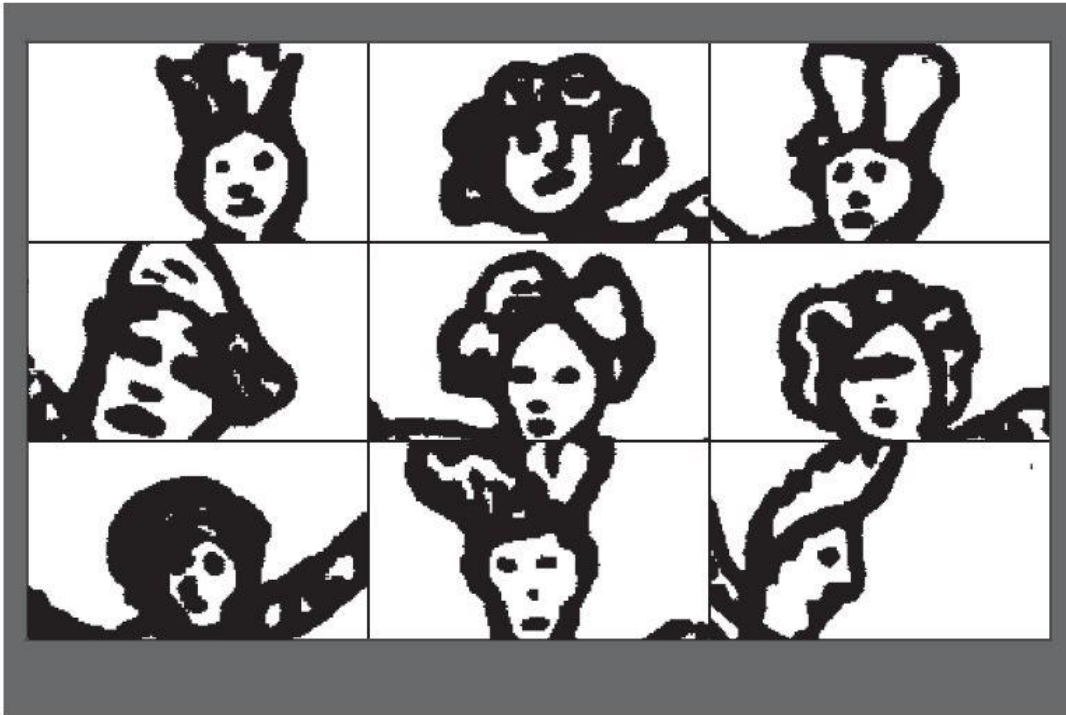
Barbara was born in 1949 at Beth Israel Hospital in New York City. She grew up in Stuyvesant Town, a close-knit housing complex built for returning servicemen. For twelve years, she attended the local public schools. In 1962, her family moved to Atlantic Beach on Long Island, where she graduated from Lawrence High School in 1967. She spent the summers of her formative years in Woodstock, New York, a place that held a very special place in her heart and soul. She attended Cornell University during the end of the tumultuous anti-war era, serving in the Student Senate following the student uprising there. She held several jobs after graduation, most of them involving writing, which was her passion. Notably, she held positions of responsibility at IBM, where she was a speechwriter for the president of IBM's premier marketing division. She produced IBM quarterly stockholder reports and the Report of the Annual Meeting. She left IBM to be a manager at Merrill Lynch, where she provided communications support for major human resources initiatives.

Barbara's other passion was dance. She was an active member of CD\*NY, a group which shares with the New York community their love for contra and English country dancing. She was a fixture at the spring dance weekends in Hudson Guild, NY and the Pinewoods summer dance camps near Plymouth, MA.

In 1997, she attended George Marshall's Tropical Dance Vacation in St. Croix, where she met Scott. They clicked, and she moved to Santa Clara to be with him. In California, Barbara worked for Stanford University Lively Arts, which merged her love of the arts with writing. She later worked as a writer and editor for LSI Logic and Stanford Hospital. Before retiring, she worked at the Apple Store in Palo Alto selling computers and conducting workshops.

Barbara was a graceful and elegant dancer. She and Scott participated in California dance events as far north as Healdsburg and as far south as San Diego. From Pāhoā, HI to Coeur d'Alene, ID, to Hopewell Junction, NY. The acclaimed bass player Stuart Kenny said, "I loved Barbara's grace and beauty that she always showed on the dance floor. When there are people like Scott and Barbara out there it always makes the treks across the country to provide you with music worth it. I will miss her moving forward and a part of my groove I put out in the music will have her in mind."

Barbara was never without a book and always had several recommendations of what you should read. She even tried her hand at improvisational acting. She was generous of spirit and loved to engage with people, even total strangers. Anybody within ten feet was in danger of becoming a friend, whether they knew it or not. We will miss her dearly.



# Haiku

By Arike van de Water

Brisk sweep of my broom  
Whisks me around the backyard  
Until we dance again

## This, Too, Shall Pass...

It is evident that this devastating pandemic has dealt a crippling blow to our dance community, but it is no less clear how creative and resilient we are. With virtual dances, music and gatherings, we will persevere until the happy day on which we can all start assembling on the dance floor once again.

To keep up-to-date on what's going on, be sure to subscribe to bacds-Announce (bacds-announce@bacds.org).

## Upcoming ZOOM Events

Alternating odd Sundays	<b>English Dancing</b>	<i>Sharon Green, Kalia Kliban</i>
Mondays	<b>Tunes N' Stuff</b>	<i>Audrey Knuth</i>
Wednesdays at 8pm	<b>BACDS Check-in</b>	<i>Various</i>
Sun Jun 28 – Fri Jul 3	<b>Virtual Family Gathering</b>	<i>Associated with Family Week</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), [montereycontradance.org](http://montereycontradance.org) (MCDC), [cccds.org](http://cccds.org) (CCCDs), [facebook.com/NorthOaklandSquareDance](https://facebook.com/NorthOaklandSquareDance) (NOSD), [lcfid.org/sf](http://lcfid.org/sf) (QCD)