Role Terms Controversy in Portland [Oregon] Country Dance Community
Time Line

2015: Contra Committee began talking about nongendered role terms.

5/01/2019: Article about nongendered terms appeared in [Footnotes](https://portlandcountrydance.org/newsletters/footnotes_2019/2019-05%20Footnotes%20web.pdf) (PCDC bi-monthly newsletter) inviting feedback.

5/2019: Callers used nongendered role terms at two contra dances. Dancer surveys were available at all contra dances and online. The 141 responses showed more dancers preferred nongendered than gendered calling and the large majority would attend dances regardless of role terms.

7/2019: Survey results were published in [Footnotes](https://portlandcountrydance.org/newsletters/footnotes_2019/2019-05%20Footnotes%20web.pdf).

7/2019: Contra Committee began booking callers who used nongendered terms for half of our dances. This continued until February 2020 when we stopped dancing because of COVID.

Fall 2019: Survey sent to 52 callers who called regularly at PCDC dances. 36 callers responded. All but 2 preferred nongendered calling, were comfortable with nongendered calling, and/or wanted to become comfortable.

3/14/2022: Contra committee decision and announcement of exclusive use of nongendered role terms at PCDC contra dances.

4/09/2022: First PCDC contra dance held since February 2020.

5/15/2022: Letter emailed to PCDC board protesting the above decision, copied to 40+ recipients resulting in a flood of impassioned emails on both sides of the issue shared among many, many recipients.

5/23/2022: Date established that PCDC board and contra committee members could attend a community-wide forum on the topic of nongendered role terms.

5/29/2023: Invitation sent to all PCDC members to attend the forum and speak if they wished. Those who could not attend were invited to send comments if they wished.

6/05/2022: Message sent to participants outlining the format of the forum and the guidelines for speaking.

**6/07/2022: Forum.**

6/08/2022: Invitation sent to attendees to email follow-up thoughts (following the same guidelines as for speaking) for distribution to all attendees.

6/12/2022: Follow up comments from attendees and written comments from people who could not attend were sent to all participants.

6/28/2022: Executive board meeting was devoted entirely to the topic of role terms—personal perspectives about the terms, all the emails, the forum. It ended with focus on the benefits that the change could bring to our dance community.

7/01/2022: Short description of the forum appeared in [*Footnotes*](https://portlandcountrydance.org/newsletters/footnotes_2022/2022-07%20Footnotes%20web.pdf)

9/01/2022: Lengthy article in [*Footnotes*](https://portlandcountrydance.org/newsletters/footnotes_2022/2022-09%20Footnotes%20web.pdf) described the entire journey towards nongendered terms and the eventual acceptance of these terms by many (but not all) community members who were previously skeptical about or opposed to non-gendered role terms.

5/24/2023: Today. We have a vibrant community with reasonably well-attended dances. Long-time dancers, younger dancers, and brand-new dancers have settled into being larks and robins on the dance floor. We are continuing to survey and solicit opinions about nongendered role terms.

 *Sue Songer and Kathy Story, 5/24/2023*