



Country Dance and Song Society News



Issue 207 March/April 2009

In This Issue...

...there are letters and announcements, reports of the Exec's visit to Asheville, English country dancing in Missouri and last year's Buffalo Big Dance; articles about Ralph Page, campus publicity and teaching history using social dance; advice on dancing with children, listening to music and the caller's role; a dance and its tune, Anna's yoga column, a new group column from Jeff, events through May, goodies from the store (including two new CDSS publications), and an essay on marriage. Enjoy!

Changes Coming

New Website—We are redoing our website, working with a local designer, to develop pages that are easily navigable, searchable, colorful, with photos, music and interesting features. We'll introduce it in phases with each phase bringing new features. One of those features will be e-commerce—you'll be able to buy goodies from the store, purchase group services, renew your membership, contribute to the Fund Appeal, and (eventually) pay your camp deposit online. An announcement will be sent as soon as Phase 1 is up and running this spring.

Newsletter Going Quarterly—Beginning this summer, the *CDSS News* will be redesigned, have more pages and go to a quarterly schedule. It will continue to include articles, letters and announcements, the sales pages, events listings and ads, plus we'll have space for dances, tunes, songs, interviews and other good stuff on a regular basis. We also expect to offer both a paper and a digital version of the newsletter in 2010. As part of the transition process, we will not publish a May/June issue. The next issue will be the July-September one.

So look for our new webpage this spring and our new *News* this summer. Whoo-hoo!

Members List

You should have received with the last issue of the newsletter a copy of the 2009 Members List. Unlike earlier versions which had both an alphabetical listing and a state by state one, we went with the alpha listing only this time for financial reasons. A lot of our members rely on the latter version—"Joe, can't remember his last name, but it starts with W, he lives in Ohio."—but many people find the alpha list easier to use so we went with that this time. We hope to do both versions again soon.

Where Is the Group Directory?

An excellent question. It will be on the new website. We've not yet decided whether to publish a paper copy as well or publish in limited quantities. We know not everyone has easy access to the web and are trying to balance paper preferences with the high cost of publishing a printed directory. In the meanwhile, the CDSS Group Affiliates are up on our current website, with links to their websites—see www.cdss.org/groups.html. (Or go to cdss.org, and click on "related websites.") The online version will include all groups, not just the affiliates.

Corrections

"Goal—To Dance in the Fifty States," in the last issue, was written by Susan Michiels (the musician), not Susan Michaels (the caller). In Ms. Michiels' excellent attempt to set the record straight about which Susan is which, we inadvertently collaborated with the spellchecker to muddle it again.

In Allen Dodson's interview with Tony Barrand, I misidentified Mayfield's Morris and Sword's homebase—it was Palo Alto, not Berkeley.
~ Ed.

Country Dance and Song Society
Continuing the traditions. Linking those who love them.



An article from the CDSS News
issue 207, March/April 2009

Teaching American Art History With Social Dance by Louise Siddons

“By doing the dance in class I was better able to grasp the ways in which colonists would have used their bodies and movement to convey a message of social importance and awareness; also to understand how couples dancing engaged with one another.”

So wrote one of my Michigan State University students, Jennifer, after our nineteenth century American art class learned the English dance Hole in the Wall as a supplement to our study of colonial American architecture this fall. We began the semester learning about portraiture, discussing early Americans’ self-fashioning through fashion, dress, posture, settings and attributes. As we began to study colonial architecture, we had already considered how early Americans had manipulated their static image in order to express social status, relations, and values. How, I asked my students, did the buildings that they created reflect those same values?

One of the first buildings we looked at was the Virginia Governor’s Palace, designed and built in Williamsburg between 1706 and 1720 (floor plan, figure 1). Two features of this building seem remarkable to today’s viewers because of their relative prominence: the front entrance hall, and the ballroom. We discussed the former in terms of George Washington’s *Rules of Civility*—a list of 110 rules the future first President wrote out for himself as a young man, based on rules of comportment that dated back to the sixteenth

century. These rules were often very specific; for example, the fifty-seventh rule commanded: “In walking up and Down in a House, only with One in Company if he be Greater than yourself, at the first give him the Right hand and Stop not till he does and be not the first that turns, and when you do let it be with your face towards him, if he be a Man of Great Quality, walk not with him Cheek by Jowl but Somewhat behind him; but yet in Such a Manner that he may easily Speak to you.”

The front hall was an important space in colonial buildings because it was the setting for complex performances of invitation and entrance. So what about the ballroom? Dancing, I suggested to my students, was a complex ritual designed to reinforce existing social relations and hierarchies—but at the same time, it offered participants some unexpected freedoms.

I chose Hole in the Wall for several

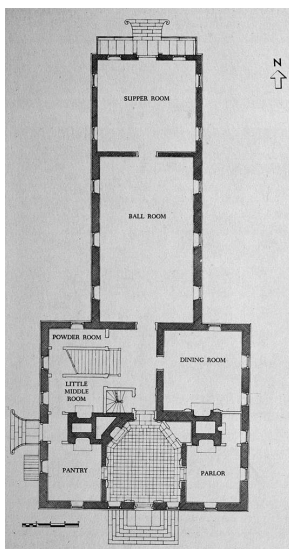


Figure 1—Virginia Governor’s Palace



Figure 2—Painting by William Sidney Mount

reasons: most importantly, it was appropriate for the period, first appearing in Playford’s *Dancing Master* at the end of the seventeenth century. It was also relatively simple to teach and to dance

successfully with no prior experience. Since this was my debut attempt to call a dance, that point was critical! As I played students the music for the first time, I asked them to describe the number of musicians, the instruments being used, and the music’s qualities (volume, tempo, melody). All of these things helped give us an experiential sense of how the Governor’s Palace ballroom might have felt and sounded during a dance. As I directed everyone into long lines, we noted the dimensions of the ballroom. “A hall

used for dance was designed to be long and narrow in order to adequately hold the members of the dancing party,” observed Rick, from the men’s line.

As we did a walkthrough of the dance, students began to observe how education, as well as wealth, was a status marker for colonial Americans. “Being able to participate in the choreographed motions showed one was educated”; “Those who were of [higher] status knew the dance, others didn’t,” noted Ashley and Audrey. “Dancing was a sign of wealth because it meant you had leisure time to dance. So having knowledge of dances and going to/holding a ball would show higher status,” agreed Emily. During the walkthrough, I introduced some of the more subtle rules of interaction along with the basic steps of the dance (honoring, casting, leading up and down, diagonal changes by the left shoulder, circling left). Maintaining eye contact, for example, had a surprising effect on the quality of students’ interactions with their fellow dancers. “By doing the dance you realize how [it] was personal,” wrote Emily, agreeing with her fellow student Racquel’s surprise: “I didn’t think that our dance would be ‘intimate’—but always keeping eye contact and being mostly with your partner I see how that could be.”

Looking at colonial portraiture, students had developed the impression that early American social life was “straight-laced” and “rigid” (Paul). “Dancing served to reinforce the existing social hierarchy (based on profession, age, family connections, etc.),” observed Elizabeth, “through adherence to its strict protocols and postures.” As we learned the dance and did it ourselves, however, students began to theorize that dancing presented an opportunity for temporarily escaping day-to-day protocol. Social dances were a way “to mingle with others of a high social class,” noted Kimberley. Moreover, as Sarah pointed out, “Dancing was important because it allowed people to interact with each other in a way that was usually not allowed. It was a way to have physical contact and conversation that was not going to happen of outside the dance.” Others agreed: “Dancing was a chance for men and women to have somewhat private conversations,” commented Christina, arguing that “the dance is

fairly intimate; though you’re part of a group, you and your partner are always changing groups.” Eric completed her thought: “The style of dance we performed was a very conducive space for a private discussion that could not be overheard.” In addition to the intimacy of the dance, its format also subverted the strict hierarchies that conventional protocol universally upheld. As Crystal noticed: “The most important people got to dance at the head of the line, but the dance was somewhat of an equalizer because each couple eventually got that role.”

In 1830, the young artist William Sidney Mount painted *Rustic Dance After a Sleigh Ride* (figure 2). Mount’s subjects are rural and agrarian—exemplary of Thomas Jefferson’s ideal yeoman farmer—rather than part of the elite class who would have attended balls at the Governor’s Palace in Williamsburg. The passage

of time and the different social context are reflected in the relatively casual atmosphere, the fiddle player, and the informal organization of the dance. Mount’s painting is characteristic of the populist and democratic shift in American social values that characterized the presidency of Andrew Jackson between 1829 and 1837. By the middle of the nineteenth century the formal restraint of colonial era dances was being supplanted by a looser, more active style of social dance. My goal in using dance in the second half of the semester was to build on the students’ insights into how the physical activity of dancing reflected American social conventions. The changing values that made Mount’s paintings of the

middle classes so popular among nineteenth century audiences were reflected in the changing physical qualities of social dance that ultimately became what we know as contra dancing.

The dance I chose to teach the class was a modified version of the “Queen’s Favorite,” recorded as “traditional” in Larry Jennings’ collection, *Zesty Contras*. The main figures in this dance are a balance and swing, a grand right and left, and an allemand, as well as casting up and down. Again, as we listened to the music before doing the walkthrough, we discussed its specific qualities, contrasting the instruments, speed, and style with the earlier example. We lined up for the walkthrough (figure 3), and went through the



Figures 3 and 4: Lining up for the walkthrough (top) and enjoying it all.

figures. The speed of the dance caught students by surprise—gone was the careful formality and constant eye contact of the earlier dance, replaced by high energy, firm and frequent contact with one's fellow dancers, and a relaxed, easy demeanor. Whereas Audrey had joked that how the colonial era danced seemed designed primarily to "show off their clothing," the aerobic quality of the contra dance led Christina to exclaim at the challenge it must have posed to women in corsets and heavy dresses. As the laughter on their faces makes obvious (figure 4), the overwhelming impression of contra dancing was that it was "fun!"

Whereas we were unable to visit the Virginia Governor's Palace in person, mid-Michigan is home to several nineteenth century buildings that were designed as public dance spaces. We went to Greenfield Village, a branch of the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, Michigan, in order to explore architectural spaces at first hand. The Eagle Tavern, built in 1830, is an inn with a large front room that was primarily designed as a dance hall. We noted that although the basic layout of the room was the same as that of the ballroom in the Governor's Palace ("big and long," as Emily succinctly put it), the context of the room was quite different. A dance at the tavern was likely to involve a much broader swathe of the community than the elite balls of colonial Williamsburg. Several of the students subsequently came to one of the regular Lansing contras, which gave them an even better feel for the dynamism and informality of the dance. They noted the palpable sense of community among the dancers present; and suggested that in contrast to the colonial era dance, which was organized around status and only available to the elite, the contra dance seemed designed to bring small communities together and to engage as many people as possible.

Overall, our experiments with dancing were a small part of the semester's activities, but they left a lasting impression. While lectures and exams reinforced quantitative knowledge—artists' biographies, historical events, and cultural context—the use of activities like dancing offered the students an experiential insight into the past. Engaging in the actions and activities of the people we'd studied through their paintings and architecture allowed students to feel directly connected to a cultural moment that initially seemed distant and strange. At the same time, it prompted them to examine more closely contemporary conventions of architectural design, fashion, selfrepresentation and social interaction.

Louise Siddons is an Assistant Professor of art history at Michigan State University.



An article from the CDSS News
issue 207, March/April 2009

Marriage Is Like a Dance *by Bob and Laura Stein*

As you move to the rhythms of life, so, too, do you move as a couple to the music of the dance. Marriage, like a dance, is dynamic, playful, flirtatious, and sensual. It has its serious side also, of course.

Like marriage, dancing is a learned skill that improves with practice and experience. It takes time to learn the figures. After a while they become familiar to you and you recognize them when they reappear, even in a different context. As you learn, you should be patient with your own mistakes and the mistakes of your partner. A generous spirit toward yourself, your partner and the dancers around you helps you through the awkward moments and maintains the flow of the dance even after a stumble or fall.

Just as in a dance, in marriage both people retain their own identities. They must take responsibility for themselves, stand on their own two feet, while at the same time being able to call upon their partner's strengths to complement their own shortcomings. In dancing terminology we say, "Support your own weight and give weight to your partner to help complete the figure in time with the music." The essence of a successful dance is interacting with one's partner and the other dancers. Good partner interaction in a dance, as in life, is: Neither a wimp nor an autocrat be. Both members of the couple have to adapt somewhat to the movements and style of the other in order to move gracefully through the dance, or life. They must always be aware of and in tune with their partner's spoken and unspoken cues. They have to learn to compromise with each other and to strike a balance between assertiveness and compliance. Sometimes one takes the lead and sometimes the other. In marriage, as in a dance, a couple is not always together. Sometimes both move separately, sometimes they dance with other people. But, when they come back together they should be in synchrony with one another.

Not all dances are easy; nor is marriage always easy. When a couple joins the marriage dance they make a commitment to see the dance through. One should not expect that problems will not arise. There are times when one may get confused or out of step; one sometimes moves forward, sometimes backwards and sometimes in circles. Sometimes the individuals have different opinions as to the direction to go or how to do a figure, but the partners have made a pledge to each other to overcome the difficulties. One does not leave a dance in the middle. It takes patience and a willingness to work in order to solve problems and resolve conflicts. At times, new figures may be called for which you are not prepared. Then you have to pay particular attention.

Like dance, a marriage is part of a greater social happening. One must be aware of and respond not only to one's partner, but to the other dancers as well. It is one's responsibility as a dancer to make the dance better for everyone. Each of us has a similar responsibility to the world in which we live.

Marriage is like a dance.

Written by Bob and Laura Stein for the marriage of their daughter Mara Stein to David Benson in 1994, and displayed at Bob and Laura's fiftieth wedding anniversary dance, December 21, 2008, in East Lansing, Michigan.



An article from the CDSS News
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Buffalo Big Dance 2008 *by Mary Collins*

It was sunny and abnormally warm for April in Buffalo. Each of the three previous Buffalo Big Dances (BBD) was met with cool, cold, rainy or snowy weather, so this warm front was either exceptionally helpful or mournfully detrimental to our event. Since our attendance was a bit low for the event one would say that the weather played a part; but the caliber and “home-base” of those attending would belie that assumption. Most of the dancers in attendance were seasoned dancers and well versed in festivals, some were new to contra dancing, tango and bourréé,* the offerings of the day. Some were local to Buffalo, but others came to us from Cleveland, Toronto, Hamilton, Ithaca, Rochester and points farther away.

In addition, as we had hoped, the name Buffalo Big Dance has become one of the “places to go” for great contra dancing. Since the event, I have been approached by several organizers from nearby communities asking when next year’s BBD would take place, as they do not want to schedule conflicting events. I take this as confirmation that we have begun what can be a long running and successful dance weekend.

Financially speaking we did not do as well this year as in prior years; however, we did enter into the event knowing that a loss was a much greater possibility than in previous years. Some of the contributing factors to this are believed to be: a) a more expensive, better known band; b) better known callers; c) less volunteerism and higher over all expenses.

I will address each of these issues:

- a) The committee agreed to hire a well known band with a following at a much higher rate than in previous years in hopes of drawing strong dancers from farther way. Buffalo’s home dance, while fun, is not populated with many strong dancers. It is our hope that by

bringing strong dancers to our bigger events, the local dancers will appreciate their ability, have more fun and thus put more effort into making the regular Buffalo dance better.

- b) The reasoning for a stronger, well known caller is as above. The better the caller the more likely we are to attract outside dancers, and it is better to help the new and struggling dancers to integrate with the others.
- c) We agreed this year to pay more of our professionals, specifically our sound person and all of our bands and callers. In the past, some have graciously volunteered their time and energy to help make this event a success. Since this year’s dance started earlier and used more space our rental expense increased, more money spent on incidentals and as mentioned before, less volunteerism, more pay-for-services and higher fees for bands and callers.

As before, we offered a different event or focus as an alternative to our attendees. This year we offered a bourréé workshop led by one of our members who is extremely well versed in several forms of traditional dance. Everyone who attended expressed enthusiasm for it. We also offered tango instruction and held a milonga** opposite our main contra dance in the evening. While the instructional portion was sparsely attended, the participants all agreed that it was fun, interesting and they were glad they did it. However, they did not attend the milonga, choosing contra instead. This may have been because of poor communication about publicity. Some of the tango regulars said that had it been more widely publicized there could

have been upwards of seventy people in attendance. This would have not only helped us break even but would have made us profitable. The lesson learned here is to really take on all aspects of publicity and to help and nurture the newer organizers and guide them in getting the best response possible.

One other thing that is important for all event planners is participant feedback. A questionnaire addressing dancer and performer's concerns and interest, is, for the organizers, a most useful tool and was instrumental in helping with decision making for the last two dances. This year, our questionnaire was more comprehensive, printed and forgotten. A major faux pas that should and will not be repeated. I have, however, learned from this that the questionnaire should be as generic as possible, to be used repeatedly; this way, those forgotten questionnaires could be used for the next event.

Our sound was the most significant improvement over previous years. We worked with our sound person over several months discussing ways to improve the sound quality in our venue. The result was due to a great response from our community in providing quilts and blankets to sound proof not only the adjoining dance room from our main event, but to help with the acoustics in the main hall. This resulted in the best sound we have ever experienced in this particular venue. Several of the quilts used were donated, by request, to a local shelter after the dance.

Preplanning and booking is another area in which we saw improvement. By being attentive to this area we were able to book really talented bands and callers, thus ensuring one of the best possible experiences for our dancers. This year our publicity was again a weak area; we seem to be floundering with this. A conversation was held with a marketing person, and while ideas were helpful for the longterm, for this event were not really applicable or cost effective for our budget. We need to address this more with each subsequent dance. Other things that affected our budget adversely were the potluck dinner and snacks. Buffalo contra dances are well known for our snacks and living up to this reputation seems to have become costly. We budget for this portion but each year we seem to overspend. This is something else we need to address as organizers.

In spite of all the negative aspects and disappointment in the financial areas, and due

to the exceptional sound and dancing, we have agreed to forge ahead and are currently in the planning stages for the next Buffalo Big Dance. We have high hopes that it too will be a successful dance event.

We gratefully acknowledge and thank the May Gadd/Phil Merrill Fund for their financial support of our matching grant award and the administrative support of CDSS in completing the application.

* Bourrée—a dance of French origin common in the seventeen century; it is danced in quick double time, somewhat resembling the gavotte.

** Milonga—an evening of dance; in this case, an evening of tango.

The author is vice president of Queen City Contra Dancers. QCCD dance on first and third Saturdays (October-June) and third Saturdays only (July-August), from 8-11 pm, usually at Unitarian-Universalist Church, at Elmwood and West Ferry in Buffalo, New York. They recently began a quarterly family dance which precedes the first Saturday dance; the next one will be in the spring. The next Buffalo Big Dance will be in the fall of 2009. For more information, see their website, www.qccd.org.



Photo courtesy Mary Collins



A dance from the CDSS News
issue 207, March/April 2009

Bat's in the Belfry *by Terry Glasspool*

A genderless jig for two couples in a diamond,
set to the tune Midweek Meltdown by Charlene Thomson

Formation: Four dancers in a diamond, each standing in the place of a couple in a square set. Partners face each other, either up and down (the head dancers) or across the dance (the side dancers). Individual dancers are numbered by position: #1 has their back to the music and the other dancers are numbered counterclockwise from #1. There is no specification of men's and women's places because each dancer will dance in every position.

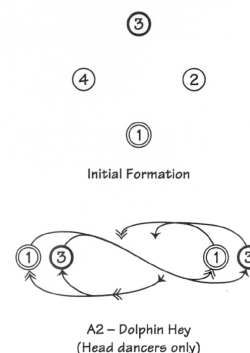
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|----|-----|---|
| A1 | 1-4 | Head dancers #1 and #3 side, right shoulder to right shoulder. |
| | 5-8 | Head dancers turn with the right hand. #1 finishes in front of home position, facing #4. #3 finishes ready to follow #1. |
| A2 | 1-8 | #1 and #4 pass right shoulders to begin a dolphin hey. The head dancers finish in the center of the set, slightly below the side dancers, facing up, with nearer hands joined. (See notes.) |
| B1 | 1-4 | Head dancers lead up through the side dancers, separate, and cast around the nearest side dancer. #3 finishes in original place, #1 finishes by dancing up the middle toward original place. |
| | 5-8 | #1 and #4 turn with the left hand to finish in original places, facing each other. |
| B2 | 1-6 | #1 (only) dances three changes of rights and lefts counterclockwise around the set. #1 and #4 start by changing places with the right hand, then #1 and #3 change places with the left hand, and finally #1 and #2 change places with the right hand. |
| | 7-8 | All face the center and set. |

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AUTHOR'S NOTES: If the turn in phrase A1 goes too far, #1 will be tempted to start the hey with the left shoulder.

The dolphin hey in A2 is similar to a shadow hey in that the head dancers (#1 and #3) dance as a unit, one following the other, and the side dancers (#4 and #2) treat that unit as a single person in a hey for three. It differs in that one dancer in the unit always leads from left to right, and the other leads from right to left. To accommodate the switch of lead dancers, the track of the hey becomes longer and narrower than a normal hey.

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 1 | #1, followed by #3, pass #4 by right shoulders to begin. |
| 2-3 | #1 and #3 dance "straight out." At the end of bar 2 and beginning of bar 3, both dancers turn individually to their own |



right so that #3 can lead #1 back into the dance.

4 #3, followed by #1, pass #2 by right shoulders.

5 #3 and #1 pass #4 by left shoulders.

6-7 #3 and #1 dance "straight out." At the end of bar 6 and beginning of bar 7, both dancers turn individually to their own left so that #1 can lead #3 back into the dance.

8 #1, followed by #3, pass #2 by left shoulders. To finish, the side dancers return to original places, while the head dancers finish in the middle of the dance, slightly below the side dancers, facing up, with nearer hands joined.

The first time the dance is introduced it may be easier, for both teacher and dancers, to replace the dolphin hey with a shadow hey. In this case, #3 would follow #1 for the entire figure.

This dance commemorates an event in the fall of 2006 when a bat visited the Binghamton Country Dancers. We dance in a room with high, open rafters and it swooped along the room while most of us cowered against the walls. Julian, a naturalist and the bass player for the Fine Companions, tried to catch the bat by chasing it up the room with a tablecloth. However, the bat repeatedly regrouped in the rafters and chased Julian back down the room.

Midweek Meltdown by Charlene Thomson



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COMPOSER'S NOTE: I was there when the bat flew across the dance floor in Binghamton; it was a memorable occasion, to say the least. I wrote the tune on a warm and lazy Wednesday in Ampleforth, the dance pavilion near the Camp House at Pinewoods. I was happily exhausted! Long Pond was in the background, the piano was free, and I needed to write down my feelings after the exhilarating dance and music I had experienced the previous days.

Yoga for Dancers—The Upper Spine

by Anna Rain

Most of us spend much of our day with the upper spine curved forward: computer work, driving, cooking, caring for (and carrying!) children. The dorsal spine, located in the stretch of the back between the shoulder blades, has a natural curve that goes toward the back body. To support that natural curve, we must learn to draw it forward, toward the chest. If we don't make an effort to support the dorsal spine, gravity draws the shoulders forward and the upper back collapses.

Increased flexibility of the upper back brings two immediate benefits: First, the chest opens and the rib cage is not compressed, which allows more space for the lungs to expand. Better breathing! More chance that each breath you take is used efficiently to deliver the fuel of oxygen to your dancing muscles! The second benefit to upper back mobility is better support to the low back. The low back is naturally more flexible and it tends to take the heat if the upper back isn't doing its share of supporting and aligning the body. Calling on the dorsal spine to bear the load for which it was designed can ease the ache of an overstressed lumbar spine.

Here is a restorative yoga pose that gently opens and supports the upper spine and releases the muscles surrounding the dorsal vertebrae. Start with a firm woolen or Mexican woven blanket (towels and polyester blankets are not firm enough). Fold the blanket in quarters until it is a rectangle about two and a half feet by three and a half. From the shorter

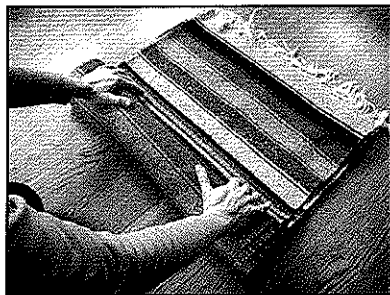


Figure 1

end, make a tight roll. How big the roll is depends on your comfort and flexibility. Start with a roll two and a half to three inches high and adjust as needed (see Figure 1).

Reach to your back and find the bottom tip of your shoulder blades. They are higher than you think—about nipple level. Now, sit on the floor in front of the roll, and lower yourself so that the bottom tip of the shoulder blades rest on the apex of the roll. You want to feel a slight challenge to the dorsal spine, one that opens the back and chest but that you can relax into after a minute or so. Adjust the roll smaller or bigger until you reach that balance of challenge and ease. Keep your knees bent and feet on the floor, and draw your buttock flesh toward your heels, especially if you tend to have lower back pain. (If it feels good, straighten the legs, stretch them well, then relax them completely.)

See that the back of your neck is long and that your head is not tipped way back. Lengthen the back of the neck, and perhaps even rest the back of the head on another folded blanket. Stretch the arms over the head, then let them relax, either in a diamond shape, in a "cactus" shape, or straight out from the shoulders. If your arms are not comfortable, support the bent elbows with small pillows or rolled towels so that you can release into the sensation of the roll in your dorsal spine (see Figure 2). You might feel a generous stretch in the front of the armpit-shoulder space. This is good! When the shoulders habitually roll forward, these pectoral muscles shorten and inhibit the full opening of the front body.

Stay in this passive backbend as long as you can rest comfortably, anywhere from two to ten minutes. The longer you are able to release and relax, the more your dorsal spine will extend and open, and the more you remind it to open, the more easily you will stand tall, lengthened and aligned.

To come out of the pose, straighten your legs and stretch from your heels through your fingernails. Bend your knees, and without lifting your head, roll to your right side. (Rolling to the right lets the heart be on the



Figure 2. Photos courtesy Anna Rain.

side that's up, which is more restful). Keep your neck soft and your head heavy and roll even more to your right, so that you're almost facing the floor. Use your right elbow and your left hand to press yourself up. Let your head roll gently upright to rest on top of your spine. Come up

from the floor safely and evenly: tuck your toes under and roll up to standing. Stand tall with your feet parallel and hip-width apart and notice how the dorsal spine moves toward the front body with more ease.

This pose is a wonderful gift to give yourself every day. Resting with support under the dorsal spine is deeply relaxing and restorative to the nervous system. You'll gradually increase your dorsal flexibility and stand taller, which makes for ease and elegance in your dancing.

Next issue: Saving your knees!

Anna Rain is a certified Iyengar yoga instructor. She started contra dancing in the mid 1980s in her native Colorado and is a seasoned contra caller, a novice English caller, and she dances with Dread Pirate Rapper. Scottish, English and Norwegian are her current favorite genres, and she blows a collective kiss to all the excellent musicians who provide dancing music.