

CDSS NEWS

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SPRING 2012



COUNTRY DANCE AND SONG SOCIETY

Continuing the traditions. Linking those who love them.

Balance and Sing store update ~ spring 2012

Philippe Callens Seasons of Invention

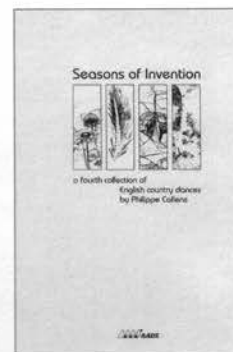
Seasons of Invention is the fourth collection of English country dances by Philippe Callens. Dances include The Pharmacist's Treasure, Spring in Sebastopol, The Marple Bridge Rose, Summer in Morland, Noisette, The Busie Body, Somerset Square, Winter in Brasstown, Simone's Semicentury, The Merry Musicologist, Mr. Stapledon's New Hornpipe, The New Attic, A Trip to Blenheim, Manage the Miser, and Autumn in Amherst. BK \$20



Joyful Noise and Hold the Mustard Seasons of Invention

A second collaboration between Belgian caller Philippe Callens and the American dance bands A Joyful Noise and Hold the Mustard. This disc features fifteen dances written or reconstructed by Philippe. Musicians are Daniel Beerbohm, Barbara Greenberg, Kathy Talvitie, and Paul Prestopino. CD \$16

Other books by Philippe Callens: Antwerp Antics, Belgian Boutades, Continental Capers; with Joyful Noise and Hold the Mustard: Red Star Line.



Getting a tax refund? Here's a good way to spend it.

Tom Hinds No Rest for the Wicked

Thirty-nine new contras and squares from Tom Hinds, many of which are based on two new figures: roll to a wave, and right and left by to an ocean wave. Also included: dances by Maggie Jo Saylor and John Michael Seng-Wheeler. BK \$7



Other books by Tom Hinds: Bad Hair Decade, Dance All Night III, Give Me a Break!, Teaching the Pre-Dance Lesson, Contra Dance Programming, and more.

Musica Pacifica Dancing in the Isles

This San Francisco-based Baroque ensemble, described by the press as "some of the finest baroque musicians in America," play Baroque and traditional music from England, Scotland, and Ireland. CD \$16



Soda Rock Ramblers Cafe Curioso

Okay, so this is not brand new, but we really like this tasty menu of curiously catchy and delightfully diverse original music, with a rich variety of musical styles, pleasing familiarity, and surprising melodic and harmonic twists. CD \$15



To order ~ www.cdss.org/store, store@cdss.org, 413-203-5467 x 3.
10% discount for CDSS members (prices above do not include shipping)

CDSS NEWS

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Editor—Caroline Batson
Tune Editor—Peter Barnes
Dance Editors—Mary Devlin, Robin Hayden, Dan Pearl,
Jonathan Sivier

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Contents

- 2 Balance and Sing (Store Update)
- 4 Letters and Announcements
- 6 The Power of Giving
- 7 Recent CDSS Outreach Fund Grants
- 8 Showing Off, Growing Up
- 9 Dance Local!
- 10 Community ~ the Exec Goes North...
- 11 ...and then West
- 12 Bob Dalsemer ~ a Life of Music and Dance
- 14 Yoga for Dancers ~ Twists for Spinal Freedom
- 16 Writing Dances ~ A Conversation with Erik Hoffman
- 19 *Folk Dancing* (book review)
- 20 News from Canada ~ Hamilton, Retooling for Dance Prosperity
- 22 Swan's Island Community Dance
- 24 Advertisements

► Email Updates ◀

CDSS occasionally emails store and office updates. Be sure your inbox will accept mail from news@cdss.org, office@cdss.org, and store@cdss.org to receive them.

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ADS & ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS

Articles, letters, poems, and photographs about contra and traditional square dance, English country dance, morris and sword dance, dance tunes, folksongs, and the dance and music community are welcome. Newly-composed dances and tunes also are welcome, as are new looks at historical dances and tunes. Please contact the editor for guidelines or send submissions to news@cdss.org (maximum size for articles: 1,500 words; 750 words for event reviews). Please send to news@cdss.org. We may edit for length and clarity.

Go to www.cdss.org/upcoming-events.html for UPCOMING EVENTS. To include an event, send date, name of event, town/state, sponsoring group, website or phone/email to events@cdss.org.

PERSONAL ADS (75 words maximum) are free for CDSS members and \$5 for nonmembers.

AD SIZES & RATES (NEW RATES as of January 2012)

full page, 7-1/8" wide x 9-1/4" high, \$440
half page horizontal, 7-1/8" wide x 4-3/8" high, \$250
half page vertical, 3-3/8" wide x 9-1/4" high, \$250
quarter page, 3-3/8" wide x 4-3/8" high, \$175

CDSS members may take a 50% discount from these rates. Anyone placing the same size ad in three consecutive issues may take a 10% discount. Please include a note saying which issue(s) your ad is for.

SENDING ADS

Ads must be black and white or grayscale. Please send electronically (PDF, JPG or TIF, with 300-600 dpi, fonts and images embedded), with check or Visa/Mastercard info sent the same day.

DEADLINES

Spring—February 1st (issue mailed early March)
Summer—May 1st (issue mailed early June)
Fall—August 1st (issue mailed early September)
Winter—November 1st (issue mailed early December)

Founded in 1915, Country Dance and Song Society celebrates and preserves traditional English and Anglo-American dance, music and song, promoting their new expression, connecting people who enjoy them, and supporting communities where they can thrive. Membership is open to all and includes this newsletter, online members list, occasional printed members list, ten percent discount from the store/mail order, and early registration for our summer programs. CDSS is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization; membership dues and donations are tax deductible.

front cover: English and American Week, Pinewoods 2011; photo by Doug Plummer
back cover: Harmony of Song and Dance, Pinewoods 2011; photo by Claire Morrison

Letters and Announcements

New Director Appointed



The CDSS Governing Board is pleased to announce the appointment of Rima Dael as Executive Director of the Country Dance and Song Society. She began working with the staff and Interim Director Marie Dalton-Meyer on March 5, and will be full-time on March 26.

Rima brings a strong arts background and more than 18 years of nonprofit professional and voluntary experience. A graduate of Mount Holyoke College (B.A., Theatre Arts and Anthropology) and the New School (M.S., Nonprofit Management), she currently teaches at Bay Path College in Longmeadow, MA, and is a founding faculty member of the Nonprofit Management and Philanthropy program at the school. She has worked as a consultant to organizations as diverse as the Shelter for the Homeless in Stamford, CT; Figure Skating in Harlem in NYC; Library for American Landscape History; MotherWoman; and the Springfield (MA) Symphony Orchestra. She has led workshops on fundraising, volunteerism, nonprofit governance and online teaching. Rima is passionate about the arts and arts-in-education and their power to inspire, connect and include people.

Originally from the Philippines, Rima spent her childhood in several Southeast Asian countries (she learned English country dancing in Hong Kong), and now lives in Amherst, MA, with her husband, Brandon, and daughter, Karana.

"I am thrilled to join the staff of the Country Dance and Song Society, and eager to connect with our members across North America and beyond, continue the legacy of CDSS, and celebrate our upcoming centennial. I brought my six-year old daughter to her first contra dance this past Saturday and when asked what her favorite dances were, she replied most enthusiastically, "All of them!" I echo her joy and enthusiasm! I look forward to getting started and the work ahead....and of course, the dancing and singing."

The Board and staff are delighted to have Rima join us and we look forward to a long and invigorating association with her.

Bruce Hamilton, CDSS President

Congratulations, George!

We're pleased to announce that George Fogg, of Boston, Massachusetts, English country dance teacher, author, volunteer extraordinaire, and more is the recipient of this year's CDSS's Lifetime Contribution Award. More on George in a later issue.

Want to Help Create a Southwest Conference?

We're seeking people to help organize a leadership conference in the Southwest as part of our Outreach program. Depending on the needs of the region, this weekend event can include workshops for dance organizers, callers, musicians, and more. CDSS has cosponsored conferences in the Northwest, Southeast, and Northeast, and will be cosponsoring another one in the Midwest, August 10-12, 2012, in Cincinnati, Ohio. For an article on the NE conference, see "We Are Not Alone" at cdss.org (click on Newsletter Archives).

Please contact Linda Henry if you're interested in creating a conference in the Southwest, linda@cdss.org, 413-203-5467 x 105.

Annual Thanks on our Website

We are grateful to our friends and members for the many ways they support our work. It's our habit to publically thank all the fine people who've contributed through the annual appeal, special sfunds and scholarships, matching gifts, etc. The list of donors for FY 2011 is on our website, www.cdss.org/our-donors.nhtml.

Planned Giving

Does your will include the Country Dance and Song Society? If not, please consider helping to ensure that the programs, publications and services that matter to you continue in the future with a bequest. It's practical and tax deductible. For information about bequests and other ways to support CDSS, see our website at www.cdss.org/planned-giving.html.

Correction

The editor's apologies for misnaming Judy Chaves's book, excerpted in the last issue; the correct title is *Don't Stop Dancing*.

New Feature in the News

From time to time, we tell you how much we appreciate our donors and what their contributions enable us to fund, but sometimes the donors have a story to tell themselves about what promoted their gift. From time to time, we'll feature a story, beginning with this issue (see Nancy Boyd's story on the next page). Want to share your story? Write to Robin Hayden, robin@cdss.org.

How Many People Work at CDSS?

A CDSS member recently commented that the staff roster looks large, as listed in the masthead on page 2, and wondered how many people are employed here. We have the equivalent of nine fulltime staff, which includes full and part time staff, working from five to forty hours a week, depending on the position. On the masthead we also list staff by departments; some are listed twice since they wear two hats; for instance, Jeff is Store Manager and he handles the group services (insurance/tax exemption).

It's also true we've grown since moving from New York City to Massachusetts in 1987; then we had four staff and acquired two more shortly afterward. With the expansion of our camp programs and services, and the demands of keeping up with current business practices, we have doubled the staff in the last twenty-five years.

Contra Dance Videos for New Dancers.

Here is a no-cost way to support and encourage the newer contra dancers in your organization—the Chattahoochee Country Dancers' contra dance videos. Simply search on "youtube ccd contra dance," copy and paste the links you feel appropriate for your dancers, and send the links to them via email. Additionally, you can embed the links on your group's website. Our aim [in making] the videos is to encourage newer dancers to come back and dance again and again. (There are some promos for Chattahoochee Country Dancers, but it is limited.) Any contra dance organization can use any of these videos. Swing your partner.

*Jim Crawford, Tucker, GA
Chattahoochee Country Dancers
(producer of the CCD Contra Dance videos)*

Part 1—"Contra Dance Basics," instruction in several videos, by Ron Harper and Susan Davis of CCD, with experienced dancers demonstrating the moves/dances;
Part 2—"A Beginner's Session," more fundamentals, with caller Seth Tepfer;
Part 3—"Newer Dancers," talk about dancing at CCD;
Part 4—"Why We Contra Dance," dancers talking about why they dance; interesting for new and experienced dancers, and just fun to watch/listen to.

After an evening of dancing or singing, go home to a cup of your favorite drink in a new CDSS mug.



Our new Cafe Press store offers beautiful and useful items featuring the CDSS logo and slogan. We've created teeshirts, baseball jerseys, tanks tops, hoodies, beach bags (tote bags too), sigg, stainless and trek water bottles, mugs, and more! Go to www.cafepress.com/countrydanceandsongsociety to see the goodies.

The Power of Giving

Donor Story



For years, giving to the United Way through payroll deduction, I would agonize between helping with hunger, the environment, animals, education, justice, medical research, and other bottomless needs. It felt too selfish to give the most to CDSS activities because although dance and song was important, to me personally, I didn't perceive its social impact compared to other charities.

Then, somewhere along the line I had this epiphany—that in supporting CDSS, which promotes strong community as well as physical and mental health, I'm also supporting all the other "needs" that draw me.

It took me awhile to really internalize the big picture benefits of the community-building, and physical and mental health benefits, of the activities supported by CDSS. The dance/song communities I've been part of have all paid particular attention to fostering qualities I value, e.g., respect for people, the environment, property, ethics, teamwork, intellectual curiosity, giving back, history, and personal responsibility, no matter your age, situation, or baggage. Most of the kids I've watched grow up in my dance communities are now well-guided by these values in their lives.

CDSS builds strong communities among its participants, and encourages healthy activity and civil behavior all over the place. Strong communities are what address all the other needs I used to agonize over: the feeding, healing, protecting, teaching, governing, and so on. So, I'm no longer conflicted. I see my investment at work every day when I hear about all the interesting and good things that members of my community are doing in the world. Gifts to CDSS have a much broader impact than promoting and preserving traditional music, song, and dance; they also promote happy, responsible living.

Nancy Boyd, South Hadley, MA

The writer is a member of the CDSS Governing Board and a volunteer at the CDSS office.

From Robin Hayden, CDSS Director of Development: Every donor is special, every reason for supporting CDSS and every experience of giving is unique. What's your story?

Photos: Stewart Dean; Pourparler

Thank you, CDSS!



The Pourparler folks would like to say an appreciative thank you to CDSS for its years of support for our annual gatherings. Since the third one in 1999, when Brad Foster and Peter Amidon came to Chicagoland to check it out, through our three in New England organized by Peter and Mary Alice Amidon, Andy Davis, Linda Henry, David Millstone,

Marian Rose, and other wonderful people, and all the rest in different parts of North America, CDSS has been there for the Pourparler.

The Pourparler (poor-par-LAY, Fr., a chat, a parley) brings together annually people from all over North America who teach dance—folk, ethnic, world, traditional, historic, creative, whatever—in schools, community events, recreation groups, studios, wherever. Folks who do this important work come to share dances and discuss common concerns, to network and party with their peers, and to lead a community family dance together. Sharing is the important underpinning.

The National Folk Organization (www.nfo-usa.org) was PP's first sponsor. Bruce Mitchell, of the Stockton Camp in California, hosted our first West Coast weekend in 2000, and the next year many East coasters joined us at the CDSS-organized Pourparler in Colrain, Massachusetts. We have also met at Folklore Village in Dodgeville, Wisconsin; Los Altos Hills, California; Shepherdstown, West Virginia. The 2007 Pourparler in Williamsville, Vermont, was especially special when CDSS chose Pourparler as the place to present Dudley Laufman with its Lifetime Contribution Award. It was a treat to have Brad with us again, and to have Dudley and Jacqueline participating that weekend. The 2011 Pourparler met in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, hosted by Jan Baker. This big city was quite a departure from our usual bucolic and historic haunts, but it turned out to be another special time, including a live teleconference session on extending our careers by teaching dance long distance.

The 2012 Pourparler will meet in Salt Lake City, September 27-30. Anyone interested, please contact me at SannaMars@aol.com. And thank you again, CDSS, for helping make this possible.

Sanna Longden, Evanston, IL

Recent CDSS Outreach Fund Grants



Funding offered in October 2011

- 15th annual Pourparler (gathering for teachers of traditional dance in schools and/or communities, TX)
- Contra Affair (new contra dance series for college students and local community, OK)
- Cracking Chestnuts (historic presentation and evening of dance chestnuts in conjunction with monthly gender-free dance series, San Francisco Bay Queer Contra Dance, CA)
- Catapult! The National Contra Showcase (festival to showcase callers and bands, GA)

Funding offered in January 2012

- Spring Dance Weekend (English country and contra dance weekend with new aspect of including workshops for callers of both genres, Sun Assembly Country Dance, NC)
- Swan's Island Community Dance (new contra dance to revive dancing on remote island, ME)
- Contra Callers' Workshops (series of mentorship workshops for new callers with opportunities to call at local dances, NM)
- Mountain Dance Trail (revitalizing dances in ten communities, Heritage Arts Program, WV)
- Improprity Weekend (English country dance and music workshops in three cities in the Bay Area, CA)
- Contra Culture (contra dancing included in weekend Ecovillage event, Dance Rabbit Dance, MO)
- 2nd annual Dare to Be Square (weekend of square dancing and calling workshops, VA)
- Northampton Family Dance (supporting a monthly family dance series during change of venue, MA)
- Contra Dance Music and Calling Workshops (pre-dance workshops led by caller and musician, NH)
- Wallowa Fiddle Tunes Camp (adding contra dance to existing weeklong music camp for families, Northeast Oregon Folklore Society, OR)
- Open Contra Dance Band Practice/Workshops (several workshops for musicians leading up to playing for final dance, RI)
- Bicentennial Concert and Barn Dance (dance and concert in honor of Red Hook, NY bicentennial, NY)

Swan's Island photo courtesy Kate Webber; see article on page 22.

Upcoming funding deadlines are April 1, July 1, and October 1. For a grant application, see cdss.org/grants-support.html, or contact Linda Henry, linda@cdss.org, 413-203-5467 x 105.

**CDSS Outreach Funds at work ~
helping others make things happen.**

Showing Off, Growing Up

by Julia Wise

When I was a teenager, my family went to a folk dance week once a year. The young people there danced harder, stayed up later, and were generally way cooler than me. I desperately wanted to be a hotshot like them. Unfortunately, I was stuck in a town without much of that. I was the only young morris dancer within seventy miles. Our contra dances were infrequent and slow-paced. It was frustrating.

When I was sixteen, I had an email exchange with a young dancer in the Boston area. She complained about how the youth rapper sword team she danced with wasn't really her favorite, and she would prefer to be on one of the other youth rapper teams. My jaw dropped. There wasn't a sword team in my entire state, let alone one with anyone under thirty, and she was complaining? I vowed to move north as soon as I could.

At age twenty-two, my dreams were coming true. Everyone wanted to dance with me, I was engaged to a hot young folk dancer and musician from Boston, and we were working on the crew that summer at Pinewoods. Of course, I was also terrified because the other workers at Pinewoods had grown up doing all this. These were kids who had been hot dancers for a lot longer than I had.

The crew worked all day together setting up the camp, and at night we danced. We formed a crew rapper team, and I was sure I wouldn't be good enough. My boss, the one I wanted most to impress, was the best rapper dancer of us. I was sure she would lead the set. Instead, she asked me to take the number one position. When I bungled things, she coached me. I couldn't understand. She knew the most, by far—why wouldn't she want to take the lead?

Eventually, I figured it out. She had passed through her hotshot stage. She knew she was a better dancer than the rest of us, and wasn't interested in showing off. She was moving on to the teaching stage.

Last summer, my husband and I went to a contra dance together. It was pretty tame, as Boston dances go—not many dancers, not many young people. Jeff was calling, so I couldn't even dance with him. But there were a few beginners there, and I made it my mission to be sure they had a good time. In the process, I had a good time too. If I had only been at the dance for my own enjoyment or to show off, it would have been miserable.

There are dancers who stay obsessed with The Best forever. They don't want to dance with beginners. They want to dance the fastest and coolest they can, all the time. But the more mature ones move on, and start bringing out the best in others.

Julia Wise lives in Somerville, Massachusetts. This essay was originally published at jdwise.blogspot.com/2011/11/showing-off-growing-up.html, and is republished by permission.



English Dance Week, where sometimes song reigns. (Not related to Julia's delightful essay above, but a delightful photo by Michael Siemon, 2010.)

Dance Local!

by Dragan Gill

To be a “dance gypsy” is a celebrated thing in the contra dance world. Groups and websites were quickly set up to support dance gypsies in finding dances wherever they roamed, and it is not uncommon to arrive at a dance and find several cars overflowing with people from out of town. These are all a great sign—dedicated people who are energized about following bands and callers they like, that organize themselves within the community, but...

Then there are dance series on the other end of these great migrations, series that look a little more empty, that exist in the downward spiral of not having enough money to bring in bigger bands and callers, precipitating a drop in attendance, resulting in less money for bands and callers. You see where this is going. This spiral is difficult to reverse, and the series runs the risk of fading away. At the same time, other venues become such high or low level series that they are uninviting to new dancers or boring to experienced dancers. The divide widens the longer this process continues.

While “Revitalization: How Do You Make a Dance Come Back to Life?” (CDSS News, Winter 2011), by Joyce Fortune, provides a great example for revitalizing a series from the organizers’ point of view, experienced dancers can also play a part. Here are my top five reasons for dancing locally:

1. Supporting Local Economies—Chances are your local dance series rents the space it uses. By supporting your local dance you help the building owner keep their hall open for you and others in the community. In helping my local dance series find a new home, and finding places for my morris team to practice, I found how few group meeting spaces there are, and there are fewer each year. Keeping up on the rent means more community space for all.

2. Community—A series helps maintain good community relationships. Organizers can coordinate with other local groups for festivals, workshops, and performances, and by sharing resources expenses are kept low for everyone. Internally, regulars at a series help form the culture and structure of that dance that creates a really great community off the dance floor. Anytime I needed help or had a question in a new town, I knew the regulars at my dance would know where to go. I’m sure many of you have also experienced this. When the locals are choosing a distant dance over the local dance, that ecosystem flounders.

3. Maintaining Accessibility—While many dedicated dancers carpool, couch crash, or drive long distances, some people don’t have the cash, time, or energy to quite pull that off. Others are simply less comfortable driving late at night. By keeping local dances going everyone gets the full benefits of great dancing and community without having to travel more than they are able or willing.

4. Distribution—When more dances support popular bands and callers, more dancers experience a level of excitement about dancing. Nothing is more tragic than new dancers arriving at a dance to see uninterested dancers who would rather be somewhere else. This also helps with the problem of too many people at one dance. When a hot band comes to town and everyone packs in, the dance floor can be a dangerous place to be. If dancers find the band and caller they like at more venues, they can pick the dance closest to home and everyone can have room on the floor.

5. Education and Stewardship—Closely tied for most tragic dance event can be a night filled with too many new dancers and not enough experienced dancers to help teach on the floor, either by example or gently guiding new dancers through the walk-throughs and dances. Experienced dancers can explain dance etiquette (changing partners, twirling, etc.) and give constructive and informed feedback to organizers, callers, and bands about what they enjoy and don’t enjoy in a series, a single night, or particular dance. Get involved in your local dance: if you hear a caller you like or a band that you think would be a great addition to your local series, talk to them! Bring in what you want to see at your local dance and be polite about what you don’t like.

I’m not saying you shouldn’t follow your favorite band, carpool out to dance to a great caller, or go to experienced dances and weekends. There will always be dances (bands and callers) that are great for experienced dancers or better at welcoming newer dancers, but you should consider helping keep your local dance a place you’d like to go too, instead of avoiding it. Yes, you.

Dragan Gill dances locally in Rhode Island at the College Hill Contra Dance, on first and third Fridays, at Community Church of Providence. She also dances with the Mystic Garland Dancers.

Community ~ the Exec Goes North...

by Mary Louise Chown and Sue Staunton

The CDSS Executive Committee came to town last November and though we were excited about the weekend plans, we really didn't know what to expect. We had a helpful hosting booklet sent to us by Exec Meeting Coordinator Linda Lieberman shortly after we agreed to host the meeting, and there were many emails flying back and forth between our organizing committee and CDSS Exec members. But how would the weekend go? Would there be an blizzard to make travel difficult and discourage people from coming out to dance? What will the Exec members be like? Will they like us? What will they want to see while they're here? Will there be enough food?

Our committee met six months ahead of time and laid out a tentative plan. Most important was to get one of our sister groups, MIFDA (Manitoba International Folk Dance Association) interested in hosting a Friday night contra dance, then book the two halls for the Friday and Saturday night dances. Then summer came, and in Winnipeg that means gardening, going to the cottage, or traveling. When classes started up in September, we began to talk up the weekend to our members, explaining what CDSS was, and why it was important for them to visit our community. By late October we had host families for all of our visitors, and an idea of how the Exec members who were callers and musicians wanted to participate in the dances. We had also decided to add a Saturday potluck supper before the evening dance.

Board members arrived at varied times, beginning with the Wednesday before the weekend, and there were many shared meals, and excursions around Winnipeg to museums, historical sights, and even the chance to see a play at the Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre. On Sunday evening fourteen of us met for a final meal together at a local Thai restaurant.

Some of us in the Village Green English Country Dance group have been fortunate enough to dance with English country groups in England, and the United States, but the majority has not had the opportunity to travel to other dance groups or attend dance camps, and have as their only experience dancing in Winnipeg. Because the CDSS Exec members were interested and curious about our dancing experience here in the heart of the continent, their visit has been a catalyst for us. They drew from us our stories of successful dances, fundraisers, the way in which we train new teachers, and the work of our resident choreographer, Liz Goossen. We have had an opportunity for our dance group to look at who we are and what are our strengths and priorities—a process that will continue long after the weekend.

Here is how our president, Sue Stanton described the experience:

"When you become a dancer you join a community; the CDSS weekend illustrated the vastness and richness of this vibrant community—it brought back memories of the beginnings of Village Green. In the mid-1970s, David Williams went to Pinewoods, run by CDSS, and experienced English dance. He was captivated and returned to Winnipeg and told John Trevenen. John went the next summer and he too was inspired; within a few years Village Green was meeting regularly, firmly rooting English dance in Winnipeg. None of this would have happened without CDSS. Two years ago when we were asked if we would like to host a board meeting we were happy to say yes! What an opportunity! What an honour!"

CDSS holds two meetings a year in communities throughout North America to build connections and strengthen the dance community and, without a doubt, their goal was met here in Winnipeg. The contra dance on Friday was spectacular, the callers so good and the evening so lively. The next day they worked until 4 pm; by 6 pm they were at the potluck—what great food, conversation, and dancing. Sunday morning brought a community meeting which turned out to be a highlight of the weekend. After breakfast we danced to music provided by our singing voices. The theme of the community meeting was building connections within the dance community. The Exec listened to our comments and learned about who we are. They asked about the dance manual, the instructional video, the teacher's training program, and the soon-to-be released CD and dance book. We heard of initiatives that other communities have undertaken. It was inspirational! Exciting! Energizing! The atmosphere became electrified when we discussed the future. My dream of a dance camp close to home found a receptive audience. Even more interesting for me was my discovery that this was a dream of others in our own group too.

What a wonderful weekend it was! Thanks to the organizing committee: Mary Louise Chown, Jeannie Gilbert, and Katherine Himelblau. Thanks to all who hosted, cooked, decorated, and participated. Thanks to CDSS for choosing Winnipeg for their meeting. Thanks for their vision and hard work. How wonderful to be part of such a dance community!

Village Green ECD was featured in the "News from Canada" column in the Fall 2011 issue. For more information about the group: <http://www.villagegreenenglishcountrydancing.org/>.

...and then West

by Marie Dalton-Meyer, CDSS Interim Executive Director

At the CDSS Governing Board's annual meeting last spring I was intrigued by a big map on the wall with cities and dates and was told it showed the "traveling Exec meetings." There were two this year—one in Winnipeg in November and one last month in Albuquerque. I attended the latter, hosted by New Mexico FOLKMADS, and am so glad I did.

The event went like this. Nine members of the Exec Committee and I arrived on Friday afternoon. A cousin I haven't seen for forty years met me at the airport and delivered me to the home of my charming hosts, Peter and Trylla Esherick. Following a cup of tea and a change of clothes we were off to the Lloyd Shaw Center for a potluck and a dance called by legend Doc Litchman, backed by wonderful musicians. We mingled, we talked, we danced, and we laughed. We were greeted and welcomed by old and new friends in the vibrant Albuquerque dance community. A good time was had by all.

The Exec meeting itself was an all-day meeting on Saturday, graciously hosted by the Anthropology Department at the University of New Mexico and held in the Maxwell Museum, thanks to Erica Gerety who is an academic advisor for the department. The meeting encouraged dynamic discussions, decision making, and good thinking. Among the items on the agenda were the Search Committee's recommendation for the new CDSS executive director, committee reports, Q & A on my report, proposed committee slates, topics of governance and best practices, as well as all the nuts and bolts.

The meeting concluded with a rousing acknowledgement and gifts for Bruce Hamilton for his crucial leadership, dedication, and tireless work on behalf of CDSS during his tenure as president.

The meeting's discussions and decisions were all important for moving the work of CDSS forward. Equally important in creating momentum is the work and play that takes place on either side of the meeting and on Sunday. It takes place when CDSS representatives are out in the community and with the community.

It is the value of these bookends—the home stays, the potlucks and dances on Friday and Saturday nights, and the brunch on Sunday that nourish CDSS. On Saturday we joined enthusiasts at the Heights Community Center for a potluck, followed by a contra and English dance. Over dinner each CDSS Exec member introduced him or herself and told why CDSS is important to each of them and how CDSS resources might help dancers, callers, and musicians in the

Albuquerque and Santa Fe communities. CDSS Exec members who are callers were invited to call, adding to the camaraderie and fun of the evening.

On Sunday, FOLKMADS member Meg Adams hosted a brunch and community conversation at her house, during which all present shared ideas, challenges, hopes, and plans. This culminated in what the "traveling Exec meetings" are and do. It is all about what happens around and through the meeting:

- meeting new people
- connecting with old friends
- hearing new bands
- sharing resources
- experiencing the dance communities
- networking
- building outreach
- listening and connecting

CDSS is grateful for the gracious welcome and hospitality we received from the New Mexico FOLKMADS and the Albuquerque and Santa Fe communities. Thanks for living our mission—continuing the traditions and linking those who love them. It was a joy and pleasure to be part of it all.



Board members Linda Lieberman and Jenny Beer, May 2011, looking at the map of Exec meeting locations since 1996; photo by Max Newman

For hosting, coordinating, and arranging, many thanks to Dave, Noralyn, Meg, Becky, Donna, Kris, Kit, Mary, Peter, Trylla, Hamish, Deb, Simona, Trish, Donna, Doc, Merri, Bob C, Bob F, Linda S, Nancy, Jane, Erika, Gary; to the fine musicians: Scott, Linda A, Bruce, Della, Gemma; to the excellent people who fed us so well; and, again to the NMFOLKMADS community.

In November 2012, the CDSS Exec will be in Huntsville, Alabama; in February 2013, they'll visit the San Francisco area.

Bob Dalsemer ~ A Life of Music and Dance

interviewed by Brad Foster

Bob Dalsemer, recipient of the 2011 CDSS Lifetime Contribution Award, specializes in calling traditional American contra, square, and circle dances. He has composed a number of new dances in traditional style and published two collections of traditional square dances ("Smoke On the Water" and "When The Work's All Done"), and West Virginia Square Dances, about old time square dancing in several West Virginia communities. Raised in Baltimore, he cofounded the Baltimore Folk Music Society and helped start the dance program for the Folklore Society of Greater Washington. Bob has been an integral part of CDSS for many years: a member of the National Council in the 1980s, vice president (1988-1990), and president (1990-1996), and as been on staff or served as program director for a number of our summer programs. He became Coordinator of Music and Dance Programs at the John C. Campbell Folk School, and moved to Brasstown, North Carolina in 1991.*

Late fall Brad Foster, CDSS Executive and Artistic Director Emeritus, talked with Bob shortly before the Lifetime award presentation. This is an excerpt from the full interview which is at www.cdss.org/awards.html.

BRAD When and where did you first start dancing or playing music?

BOB Well, I started playing music when I was fourteen. I went to a summer camp where there was a counselor who played guitar and got a bunch of us interested in singing. We learned a lot of songs, took a canoe trip, and sang all the way down the river. When we got back we wrote a little musical show using tunes from a lot of the songs we'd learned. I got interested in that, bought some records, and my parents gave me some records by The Weavers for Christmas. I decided I wanted to learn to play guitar, and took a few lessons, but I didn't really like it so I continued on my own.

When I got to high school I got a banjo, and started to teach myself with Pete Seeger's book [*How to Play Five String Banjo*]. From the banjo, I got interested in bluegrass. I played in a bluegrass and jug band through at least three years of college.

I didn't really get into dancing until I came back to Baltimore after college. I met some folks who worked for the American Friends Service Committee who had been to Berea [Christmas Country Dance School at Berea College in Kentucky], and they got me interested and took me down to Berea in '69. While I was there I met some people from the Baltimore/Washington area who had a very small dance group in Baltimore. That was Mary Harrell and John Owen, and I joined their group. The Hardings [Barbara and Mart Harding] were in that group, also Joe and

Gwynne Blundon. When Mary left town, I decided to keep the group going on my own.



That first time I was at Berea, in '69, I met a number of people. [Future CDSS director] Jim Morrison was my roommate. We were standing next to each other when they were handing out the roommate assignments, he had a fiddle and I had a banjo, so we said "Hey, do you want to room together" and said "Okay." Gene Murrow was there. I think I met John Wheeler around that time, and some other folks.

John and Mary also took me to Pinewoods the first time, probably in '70. Then things really got started! I met Marshall [Barron] and Phil [Merrill] and had a great time. Marguerite and Otto Wood [who played for the John C.

Campbell Folk School for many years] were also on staff.

I got very involved pretty quickly. I guess I was twenty-six in '69. I started calling in '71 or '72. When Mary left town, I found a church hall that was near where I lived in downtown Baltimore and we started a group there. We had that hall for a couple of years, dancing two Wednesday nights a month. It got popular enough that at one point I found a second hall, and we were having dances every Wednesday night but in different locations. I think about '75 I found the Lovely Lane Church hall where they are still dancing today.

About that time too I was running a series of monthly folk concerts in Baltimore with a friend of mine named Michael Quitt. The series was called "Sweeney

Todd Presents.” We had been bemoaning the fact that all the coffee houses in Baltimore had gone out of business, and there wasn’t any folk music. In 1975 we decided it was getting to be too much work for just the two of us, so we got a group of friends together and founded the Baltimore Folk Music Society.

BRAD Didn’t you work for CDSS at some point?

BOB I did, just a few months. Jim [Morrison] and I got to be pretty good friends. He was working for CDSS in New York. This would have been in ’70. He got me a job as an office assistant. I probably went up in the late spring, worked through end of summer, and I was at Pinewoods for a few weeks. The CDSS office was on Christopher Street. Jim and I had an apartment close to Eighth Avenue.

BRAD What was [longtime CDSS director] May Gadd like? What was it like working for her?

BOB She was great; she was a character, and she had her little peculiarities. She didn’t always like what Jim and I were doing, but most of the time she let us do it. The big thing that I remember was we organized a dance with Dudley Laufman. We made a publicity flyer for it, and put it all over the place in New York. I don’t think she was happy about spending the money to publicize it. But she did let us do it. She had her particular vision and we had to work around her a bit. She was always complaining to me because Jim liked to sleep late, and never quite got into the office on time. She used to complain to me about that, and I told her that there wasn’t anything I could do about it. I grew to really love her a lot. I thought she was a remarkable teacher. It was very difficult to watch her get to a point where she really couldn’t teach any more [late in her life]. I remember spending a couple of summers at Pinewoods where it was heartrending to see that she couldn’t remember things anymore. I was really sad when she died. I owe her a lot, as I do you.

BRAD I think I first met you at Pinewoods, and you were calling and playing accordion. When did you start playing accordion?

BOB I started playing accordion right after my first time at Berea, in ’69. I’d taken the beginning English country dance class with Bicky McLain. Her son, Bun

McClain, the middle Raymond and the dad of the McLain Family Band, played accordion for that class. I suddenly realized, whoa, there is an instrument you can have at a dance and be the whole band. You’ve got everything you need, you’ve got bass, you’ve got melody, and you can carry it around. I talked to Bun a lot that week. The family band had just started, and they were playing a lot of bluegrass, which is something I’d been involved in. We’d get together and play music. [Bun’s son] young Raymond was still in high school, I guess Alice [White] was maybe fifteen or sixteen, Ruthie [McLain Smith] was probably twelve or thirteen; they were pretty young. They were very impressive even then. I asked Bun to show me how the accordion worked. When I got back to Baltimore. I took some lessons from a Mr. Tedesco who had an accordion studio. I took about a month’s worth of lessons from him mostly to figure out how the bass section worked and I bought an old Excelsior accordion from him. When I went up to New York and lived with Jim, that was probably most of what I was doing, working on the accordion, trying to figure out how to play the thing.

BRAD When did you start playing fiddle?

BOB I started fiddle a little before accordion but I didn’t get into fiddling very seriously until I moved to West Virginia for a year in ’78-’79. I had a lot of time to myself, and hung out with a great fiddler named Woody Simmons. It was a severe winter. I was supposed to be doing school programs, but schools were closed a lot. I’d stay home and play the fiddle.

BRAD Was this when you did your fieldwork collecting dances?

BOB I was hired by the Randolph County Arts Council to be artist in residence in West Virginia that year. I helped to organize dancing in Elkins, and I did both music and dance programs in probably every school in Randolph County at one time or another. I had a weekly program for the Sheltered Workshop for mentally handicapped folks. And while I was there that year I made it my business to go and visit old time square dances in West Virginia. That is when I started writing my book [*West Virginia Squares*,* published by CDSS]. As you can see I had way too much free time that year. I visited a lot of traditional

continued on page 18



Award celebration, (Bob at far right) Brasstown, NC, December 2011; photo by Keather Weidman

Yoga for Dancers ~ Twists for Spinal Freedom

by Anna Rain

Back in the old days, before I had a consistent and directed yoga practice, sometimes I would sleep funny and wake up with a stiff neck (it still happens, but now the incidents are years—and not weeks—apart). When my neck hurts, the action that seems most challenging is...parallel parking. Cranking my head around? Ow. But if I twist my entire torso and not just my head, well, hey, it's not so painful. As we age, any part of our body that is not unfurled and shaken to get the dust out becomes hard and dry. The spinal column houses the superhighway of energy and nerves that keeps us wired and connected to our extremities. Twists keep the spinal column unfettered, which helps the infrastructure of the nervous system stay clear of impingements. Twists also cleanse and activate the kidneys and the abdominal organs, flushing the system of the normal buildup of toxins in the same way you might squeeze a sponge. Many people find relief from backaches in a regular practice of twists. A flexible, supple spine more readily absorbs the shocks we experience from walking and dancing, which keeps unexpected jarring motion from hitting us in our more tender hip and knee joints.

Twisting the whole torso: if this is not a regular part of your body-care regimen, likely your spine is not as fluid and flexible as it could be, and that inhibits your range of motion in many areas. If you're a musician—of course, if you sing or play winds, but even if you play percussion or strings—your ribs need freedom to provide space for the lungs which give you breath, the coin of your realm. If you dance and your spine doesn't twist freely, you'll notice that your hips take the brunt and will ache more and your neck will be sore and stiff more frequently. The remedy? Twists!

Two concepts are important to understand before embarking on spinal twists: 1) Go easy. Subtle movement will have a deep effect if done properly, and if you work gently, you'll become more intimate with your capabilities and less likely to strain or

injure yourself. 2) Protect your sacroiliac (SI) joints. To find your SI joints, take your fingers to the two dimples on your low back. These are where your sacrum (the triangular bone at the base of your spine) meets your ilium (your pelvis) (see top photo). The SI joint has a very slight amount of mobility, but for it to function healthily, it must be stable. Any twisting you do (without the guidance of a trained body worker in your presence) should bring the pelvis along with the spine so the SI joints are not strained or destabilized.



A seated twist is the easiest twist to incorporate into your life. Sit sideways with your right side to the back of a medium to low-backed chair, with knees together and spine lifted and straight. Adjust accordingly to make the thighs parallel to the floor: if your thighs slant down (i.e., your knees are lower than your hips), rest your feet on two equally thick books; if your

knees are higher than your hips, sit on a folded blanket that covers the seat of the chair. Notice that both sides of your chest are equally long and lifted: maintain this evenness in the twist. The axis of your spine is the tailbone to the base of the skull. Keep that line long and vertical.

With an inhalation, draw your spine up (but keep your shoulders relaxed!), and as you exhale, turn to the right, toward the chair back (lower photo this page, upper photo next page).



- Let your left knee move slightly forward—straight ahead from the left hip: that's an indication that your right SI joint is stable and moving with the pelvis and the spine.
- Press your right hand on the back of the chair to deepen the twist; with your left hand, pull gently to draw your left ribs further around toward the right (lower photo next page shows left knee forward and position of hands).

- Turn from the base of your spine and move up:

abdomen from left to right, waist from left to right, low ribs from left to right, middle chest from left to right.

- Roll your shoulders easily away from your ears and release the skin of your back down toward your waist.
- Align your nose with your sternum, the center of your chest: this ensures that the twist involves the whole spine and not merely your neck. In a twist to the right, when we look over our right shoulder, we feel like we're moving a lot, but in this case, only the head and neck are mobile and not the entire spine (cf. cranking your head to parallel park).
- Take your attention to your thoracic spine—in between your shoulder blades—and bring that part of the spine in, toward the front of the chest.
- Draw the right side of the rib cage in toward your mid-line, then take the right ribs back, further to the right.
- Lift the left ribs away from the left hip (don't lift your left shoulder! Keep it soft and relaxed and released down the back), and bring the left ribs forward, around to the right.
- Remember: a subtle, correctly-performed action is infinitely better than an action that feels big and dramatic but is wrong and potentially injurious.
- Use your breath: with each inhalation, make the spine longer and taller; with each exhalation, deepen the twist from the base of the spine up.
- As you get more familiar with how your body responds, and you are confident that you're following all the previous guidelines, allow the neck gently to receive the twist originating from the base of the spine: the neck follows the spiral rising from the

tailbone, extending the twist all the way up to the base of the skull and thence to the crown of the head.

To come out of the pose, exhale and return your spine to neutral, and take a few moments to feel symmetrical and even. Any time we do an asymmetrical pose, we pause in between sides to re-establish the balance and symmetry of our body. Sit facing forward in the chair, with your buttock bones near the front edge. Lift the spine, draw your abdomen gently in and up, and notice how each side of your body feels. Often after doing a twist to one side, our body yearns to even out by twisting to the other side.

Now swing your legs around to sit sideways in the chair with your left side toward the chair back, and repeat all the instructions, this time to the left.

Twisting twice to each side (right, left; then right, and left again) is even better. The second time a pose is practiced, the body has a clearer idea of what to do and where to go, and the subtle improvements in the second iteration deepen the benefit more than twice over.

If you add only one yoga pose a day to your systematic plan of caring for your physical self, a seated twist, done mindfully, will bring increased flexibility to your spine far beyond the investment in time and attention.

Do you have a physical issue you'd like to see addressed in this column? Have previous columns left you craving more information about what happens in your body when you practice the poses? Write me at annarain4@gmail.com.

Anna Rain is a certified Iyengar yoga instructor. Her English country dance band, Hot Toddy, with Melissa Running and Edith Coakley Stowe, plays for the Stockade Assembly in Albany, New York on Sunday, April 29 (with Tom Spillsbury calling).



Writing Dances ~ A Conversation with Erik Hoffman

by Evo Bluestein

Erik Hoffman attended contra dances in Santa Barbara, California in 1980 and five years later started calling. He helped incorporate Santa Barbara CDS and served on its board of directors. In 1994, Erik moved to the Bay Area and served on the board of directors of Bay Area CDS. He is a driving force behind the Bay Area dance scene and a well-known caller throughout the west. I've seen Erik completely at ease and masterful with a one-night stand of beginners and just as able to please a veteran dance crowd with advanced contras, many of his own pen. Curious about his dance composing process, I asked him a few questions. -- E.B.

EVO You've written a lot of dances. Why and when did that start?

ERIK It started a long time ago. The first memory I recall was going to the Bay Area CDS dance week at the Mendocino Woodlands—it must have been in 1984. There were a number of my mentors and gurus there: Sandy Bradley, Fred Park, Larry Edelman. Larry led a callers workshop. Among many topics we covered was writing new dances.

At that time, an evening of contra dance included square dances, circle dances, Sicilian circles, and others. Having Larry, Fred, and Sandy, as well as our local Santa Barbara caller, David Woodsfellow, as models, I too started calling squares. And, I was noticing that the rhyming rhythm of square dance "patter" and the then new rap music seemed related. So I made up a dance, "The Rap Square"; we did it as a joke at the end of the week. The following year, I was back at Mendocino where it was revived on the main dance floor. It has gained some notoriety over the years.

Then in 1986, besides being one of the regular callers in Santa Barbara, I became the house caller for the monthly San Luis Obispo dance. That meant a roughly two-hour drive to that town. During the drive, I listened to lots of cassettes I made of itinerant callers. Besides Larry, Fred, and Sandy, I had tapes of Steve Zakon, Bob Dalsemer, Sherry Nevins, Brad Foster, and more. I'd listen to their teaching styles, calling styles, and, of course, where the dances came from. Then I would find myself going on flights of fancy—what would happen if you did this, then that, then this? Thus, besides collecting dances, teaching ideas, and presentational jokes, I started making up dances.

Like many dance composers, I'd discover that I didn't understand some transition, so, when I finally got to test the idea, a big OOPS! It failed to work; back

to the drawing board. Repeated tries did make me much more familiar with transitions, for all dancers. I started walking through dances in my kitchen, working through moves for men, women, ones, and twos. I think this helped a lot because now I can visualize dances from all positions.

EVO What is the process like for you? Do they jump out of you or how does it happen?

ERIK It varies. Sometimes I've been commissioned to make up a dance. Then I ask the honorees what their favorite moves are, and try to come up with a sequence that fits their desires. Here's an example.

Mendo Wanderer, by Erik Hoffman
(composed for Chris Brooks)
Contra, improper, June 1998

- A1 Allemande right neighbor, men allemande once; half hey, neighbors start (right shoulder)
- A2 Gypsy neighbor; swing neighbor
- B1 Circle left three-quarters; swing partner
- B2 Women chain; half hey (women start, right shoulder)

Other times I have a seed of an idea, and try to fit it into a dance. I've taken a dance to play a thought game—if I started with this, I'd like to do that—and come up with a dance. The dance "Curly Cues" is one of these. I was looking for a way to make "Chorus Jig" more equal.

Curly Cues, by Erik Hoffman
Contra, proper, late 1980s

- A1 Ones down center past one couple, mirror gypsy next, ones moving towards the outside (number one man right shoulder, number one woman left shoulder) all the way around; number one couple come up the outside to place, then cross set, out

- the other side. All face down to make a line of four: woman, woman, man, man, with ones on the outside, twos in center
- A2 Down center four in line, fold (bend) line, twos let go of partner, ones join hands, so the line faces up with the ones now in the center, twos on the ends; return, hand cast to long lines
- B1 Ones turn contra corners
- B2 Ones balance and swing

And sometimes it's just a flight of fancy, or taking a tune and making a dance fit it. One time I was doing a gig with the Contrabandits, and they wanted to play the Monty Python theme song, "Liberty Bell." It seemed to have a phrasing that wanted a balance at the end of every part. I couldn't quite accomplish that, but came close with the dance "Flying Circus."

Flying Circus, by Erik Hoffman
Contra, Becket, January 1999

- A1 Pass through to an ocean wave (short waves across, women in center, partner in right); balance; allemande right partner into long waves (men face out left hand with first shadow); balance
- A2 Allemande left with first shadow into waves with men in the middle; balance; walk forward into wave with partner in left hand; balance
- B1 Men pull by with right to swing neighbor
- B2 Women chain diagonally to the right (to second shadow); swing partner (all fall into your partner's arms)

Also, I've made up dances on the spot, because I want a dance to include some "next step" figure (taking dancers to the next level or next move). Most of these are glossary dances (a dance containing simple or common figures), with the redeeming quality of having fun while teaching a new move, but not so notable to name and pass on.

And I modify dances as needed. If there are many beginners, I might change the mildly ambiguous (where does it start, where does it end?) "star left" into the well-connected "long lines forward and back." Sometimes I change enough of these things to where it becomes a new dance. Here's an example, a major variation of the late Gene Hubert's "A Nice Combination."

- A1 Neighbor balance and swing
- A2 Circle left three-quarters; partner swing
- B1 Hey (women start, right shoulder)
- B2 Women chain, star left

I changed the A2 and B1.

Original: A1 Neighbor balance and swing/A2 Four in line down hall, turn as couple, return, bend into circle/B1 Clockwise three-quarters, partner swing/B2 Women chain, star left

EVO Are there any hits?

ERIK A couple of my dances have gone around. "There is No Way to Peace, Peace Is the Way" and "Missing Duck" have both traveled. And I think one caller actually called "The Rap Square."

EVO Do you have any thoughts about the country dance scene today that inspire you or disturb you?

ERIK Although I love contras, I've lamented the loss of interest in other forms of dance, like squares, circles, triple minors, and more. When I started, it was all like icing on the cake. As I've gone around calling, people now groan at dancing a circle mixer, or even shouts of disgust for a square dance. Also, I learned that a balance was a chance to show off. I love playing around with balances and fancy feet. I'm sorry that, for many, the balance has deteriorated to step-stomp-step-stomp, often followed with clap-clap.



NOTE: Of the many Erik Hoffman dances I have enjoyed calling, here is a nice one I recently discovered, dancing to Erik's calling in Berkeley. ~ E.B.

Malcom's X, by Erik Hoffman
Contra, improper

- A1 Right hand balance neighbor and box the gnat; pull by neighbor to meet next neighbor for all to face old neighbor
- A2 Star right three-quarter; gents turn around to swing partner
- B1 Clockwise three-quarter; swing neighbor
- B2 Long lines forward and back; half hey (women start, right shoulder)

Evo Bluestein teaches dance in public schools and calls monthly community dances in Fresno, California; his articles, "Dance in the Classroom—Another Piece of the Logic Puzzle," appeared in the CDSS News, Fall 2009, and "Dare to Teach Kids Dance—Thirty-three Weeks in California Schools This Year!" was in the May/June 2008 issue. For a video about his school residency, see evobluestein.com.

(DALSEMER, continued from page 13)

musicians in Randolph County. I wrote a little article for CDSS about Currence and Minnie Hammons who were ballad singers in Randolph County [*Country Dance and Song*, volume 10, 1979, pp. 30-38].

BRAD Were the Augusta Heritage camps there then, or did they come later?

BOB They were, but they were not run by [Davis and Elkins College] yet. It was still under the auspices of the Randolph County Arts Council. The summer following the year I was there I was on staff at Augusta. And then I ran the dance week for them the first year it [was run by] the college, in '79 or '80.

BRAD In '78, '79 you were doing the Arts Council work and that lead to the publication of *West Virginia Squares*. Can you tell me more about that project?

BOB I started out just going to dances the year that I was in residence there. I made recordings and wrote extensive notes, and when I got back to Baltimore I continued working on it. I don't know how many drafts I did, all hunt and peck on a little portable typewriter. I ended up getting a little grant from NEA—not much, really, a few hundred bucks—so that I could go to a few more dances in West Virginia as part of that project. They paid for my transportation plus some blank tape. I shot a little bit of super-8 film at a dance in Independence, Pennsylvania, which is right on the West Virginia line.

BRAD When did you come to CDSS with the project?

BOB Jim encouraged me. After I showed him what I was doing, he passed it along and they agreed to publish it. Jim and Bertha Hatvary [then CDSS director] were the editors.

BRAD The finished product arrived in '83, in February or March, soon after I started working for CDSS. I was very impressed with the material you had there, and very pleased to have that out. Later on you published "New England Quadrilles"—is that right?

BOB I did a little booklet that I put together. I think CDSS carried it for a while. The idea was to show contra dance callers how to call New England style squares.

BRAD I'm going over the publication history I can remember. Sometime later you did your paired [booklets and recordings] "Smoke on the Water" and "When the Works All Done This Fall."

BOB That was in the '80s, and another example of having too much time on my hands. I don't remember

exactly the years. That was a lot of fun, really. Especially with the musicians who I got to do it. We ended up recording it in the Boston area because Peter [Barnes] knew a guy who was a good recording engineer up there. Peter and Bill [Tomczak] were both there. Steve [Hickman] and I went up there, and we got together and did it. I don't think we spent more than two days in the recording studio, knocking those things out. It was really a lot of fun. You can still get everything on Do-Sa-Do.com [www.dosado.com/smoke.htm]. You can get individual dances with or without calls in mp3 format and the book is in pdf format. It's a Western square dance site.

Read the full interview at www.cdss.org/awards.html; for photos from the award party, see www.flickr.com/photos/folkschool/sets/72157628410005233/; for our blog about the event, see blog.cdss.org/2011/12/yay-bob/.

** West Virginia Square Dances is available for purchase as a CD-ROM from the CDSS store, www.cdss.org/product-details/product/west-virginia-square-dances-cd-rom.html. The text and audio files also are available free online at www.cdss.org/publications/cdss_pubs.*



(REVIEW, continued from page 19)

be cited by future researchers—no. As an overview of twentieth century group dance for the interested layperson—definitely. Nielsen has gone where scholars fear to tread, and emerged nearly unscathed.

(Full disclosure: I am listed in the Preface as one who enhanced the author's understanding of square dance, and I appear briefly in the contra dance chapter. I am also a professional proofreader and copyeditor.)

Tony Parkes is the author of Contra Dance Calling: A Basic Text.

Erica Nielsen has been busy dancing and selling books on several book/folk dance tours the last few months; read about her travels on her blog, ericawritesdance.wordpress.com. She'll be in New England this spring selling books and giving a presentation about square dance at the Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association conference in Boston, April 11-14, and she and her husband plan to visit regional dances as much as possible; her schedule is on her blog.

Folk Dancing by Erica M. Nielsen

reviewed by Tony Parkes

Erica M. Nielsen. *Folk Dancing*. Series: *The American Dance Floor* (Ralph G. Giordano, series editor). Santa Barbara, Calif.: Greenwood, an imprint of ABC-CLIO, 2011. xx + 153 pages, 23 illustrations. Hardcover: ISBN 978-0-313-37688-9 (\$35.00); E-book: ISBN 978-0-313-37689-4 (\$19.25).

The term "folk dance" in American English is often taken to mean international dance. If your main interest is contra, square, or English country dance, you might well pass over Erica Nielsen's new book after seeing its title. You would be making a big mistake, as *Folk Dancing* deals with all these forms and their place in American recreational dance history—and for the most part, deals with them quite well.

Nielsen's aim is at once generic and specific. In one slim volume she treats several dance forms, each of which alone could easily fill a much larger book. But she keeps the task manageable by focusing on folk dance as recreation in schools and community groups. Thus, you will not find much about the origins of folk, square, and contra dance, or more than a few words about their choreographic evolution. But there is a wealth of information about how and why these dances were revived, who promoted them, and to whom they were taught.

It may come as a revelation to some readers that the revivals of the three dance forms are closely intertwined. The nationwide square dance revival that began in the 1920s was a direct outgrowth of the promotion of English country dance and European folk dance in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. And of course, the contra dance revival that continues to this day had its roots in the square dance scene of the 1940s and 1950s, when Ralph Page's work inspired Dudley Laufman. These facts are well known to dance historians, but Nielsen may be the first to present the big picture concisely to a lay audience.

Nielsen briefly enumerates the European dances that gave rise to today's squares and contras and to the early international folk dance repertoire. She describes the origins of the folk dance movement among educators and social reformers in the late nineteenth century, the successive revivals (folk, square, contra) of the twentieth, and the large

recreational dance communities that coalesced around these forms. Seeing different dance styles as equally valid expressions of the human need for recreation and connection, Nielsen makes no judgments of their relative merits.

The book has been a labor of love for Nielsen: she immersed herself in the folk dance world for three years, doing research in libraries and at dance events nationwide. She conducted hundreds of interviews and consulted many books, including some of the latest and best. As a result, her work strikes a nice balance between "book larnin'" and first-hand acquaintance. Unlike some previous authors who based their suppositions on the views of a few opinionated leaders, Nielsen has talked to enough people to develop a well-rounded picture of the recreational dance world.

Sources are cited for a large percentage of the author's statements; I would have liked to see even more of her assertions substantiated, but she has taken more care in this respect than many of her predecessors. Some of her conclusions (and even some of her facts) are open to question, but the book makes no pretense of being a primary source, and one would hope that future scholars will not treat it as one.

Alas, Nielsen's publisher has not served her well. There is at least one error on nearly every page, and multiple errors on many. Names are misspelled, dates and locations are wrong (Pinewoods Camp is placed in western Massachusetts), words are missing or repeated, spaces between words are doubled or omitted. This would be annoying in an \$8 paperback; it is hard to excuse in a \$35 hardcover that aspires to be a college text. Most of this housekeeping is the publisher's job; even when the author is at fault, the publisher ought to allow time for repairs. This book shows signs of having been rushed into print; if it sells well enough to justify reprinting, Nielsen should demand a thorough edit.

Do I recommend *Folk Dancing*? As a source to
continued on previous page



News from Canada ~ Hamilton, Retooling for Dance Prosperity

by Les Francey, Ben Bolker, and Tara Bolker

The Ambitious City, Steeltown, The Hammer. Most people in the United States have never heard of Hamilton, Ontario, the ninth largest municipality in Canada, standing in the shadow of Toronto. However, Hamilton's thriving traditional dance community compares with some of the larger North American cities. As well as having a long-established international folk dance club and Canada's oldest branch of the Royal Scottish CDS, Hamilton is home to a variety of Anglo-American music and dance, including a monthly contra dance, a weekly English country dance, and an organized pick-up band.

This February, Hamilton Country Dancers marked twenty-five years of contra dancing while laying a strong foundation for the next twenty-five. This was not inevitable, though—the beginning of 2012 could equally have found Hamilton with no contra dance at all.

In Fall 2010, HCD was at a crossroads. A plan to alternate the monthly dance with the Hamilton English Country Dancers initially backfired—attendance fell—but the experiment did give way to more ideas and conversation. A second experiment, combining the two dance genres in a single evening, starting with English for the first hour and contra for the rest of the evening, also didn't fly. Previous English dances that had substituted for contra dances had drawn a substantial crowd with a high ratio of experienced dancers from nearby dance communities, most of whom were happy to contra dance as well, and the typical HCD dance drew relatively inexperienced dancers, most of whom were willing to try English. But this time, there were problems. The newer contra dancers didn't get ECD ("Where are those great fiddle tunes?"), and the newer English dancers didn't get contra ("All that spinning!") Experienced English dancers were willing to do both but not at an advanced/beginner level, and experienced contra dancers were just plain frustrated.

Cut to the present. The HCD dances are steadily growing, with new dancers joining (and returning) each month and veteran dancers rediscovering the dance; the blend of enthusiasm and experience is invigorating.

What happened?

Over the last year a committee of five new and veteran organizers* and others has set about renewing and reinventing the contra dance scene in Hamilton. The committee strives for consistency, scheduling the

dances for the same Saturday of every month, even where it falls close to winter or spring holidays, and encouraging a consistent schedule within a dance evening. Keeping the halftime break short while allowing an extra few minutes for socializing between dances has helped maintain HCD's reputation for friendliness and balance the social energy with the energy on the dance floor.

The community has also turned its attention to encouraging and developing local talent. Tara Bolker introduced Contra Schoolhouse, workshops devised to develop dance callers and dancers at a wide range of different experience levels. A few regular dancers who had called a dance or two, in a pinch or as part of an open mic night, were game to practice the skill and call from time to time to help out HCD; while these novice callers didn't stick (this time), longtime dancer and Hamilton English Country Dance organizer Les Francey decided to dust off his box of cards and start calling contra dances again after a long hiatus. Contra Schoolhouse also turned up experienced dancers from the area who didn't know about HCD's dances in their backyard, and it brought back some former HCD dancers who had drifted away from the community.

Another new venture is the HOB (Hamilton Open Band), founded to provide local music for HCD dances. Although still just getting started, the HOB aspires to the tradition of open contra dance bands like Boston's Roaring Jelly or Philadelphia's SPUDS. While half the band are contra or English dancers, most of the rest had never been to a dance (after giving it a whirl, most have decided that they'd rather be up on stage than down on the floor). Some of the traditional folk musicians were surprised by the Zen of dance music—all those times through the same tune—and a few of them have started a tradition of slipping out to the pub for a pint during the break, after which they say that the second half of the dance is much more entertaining! The HOB debuted with leaders Ben Bolker and Gwen Harper as a piano-fiddle duo; it rapidly added several more fiddle players, and then diversified to include the usual range of contra dance band instruments. Since its inception the HOB has played for six HCD dances and four Contra Schoolhouses; beyond Hamilton, they played at the Mill Race Folk Festival in nearby Cambridge, and will be playing for an upcoming community dance in Waterford and an English country dance in Simcoe.

Meanwhile, back at the English country dance...

While HCD has concentrated on reviving the local contra dance series, HECD is focusing on improving the small but thriving weekly English dance. Since 2010 the group has moved from an affordable but pillar-impered room, using only recorded music and averaging ten to twelve dancers a week, to a hall with a beautiful wood floor, live music every other week, and the additional dancers needed to help sustain the changes (with a record attendance so far of 28). HECD has now taken on a year-round schedule (no summer break) and extended its dance from two to two-and-a-half hours.

When Les Francey and Lynn McIntyre decided to start an English country dance in Hamilton five years ago, he wanted to go big and have a monthly dance on a Saturday night with live music, but she argued that a weekly dance series with recorded music would be the best way to go, so that people who were looking for weeknight activity would get into the habit of going each week and the cost of admission could be cut down. He eventually came around to her point of view, people kept coming, and HECD kept dancing.

This past summer Tara organized an English Infusion weekend, the first ever English country dance weekend in Hamilton, which drew about sixty people and gave the local dancers their own enhanced vision of English country dance. In November HECD was able to subsidize Tara's attendance at the Puttin' On the Dance organizers' conference in Vermont.

Just this week Les taught the dance "Mary K" to a roomful of dancers of varying levels, with great success and enjoyment for all. He says, "I remember coming back from Pinewoods one year and stopping in Amherst, Massachusetts for one of their summer dances at Whately Barn. There were about thirty dancers there, live music, and quality dancing. I thought that if I had a local dance like that, I would

never travel anywhere else to dance. I am still traveling to other places but my local dance is still inching toward that vision."

Different groups with different visions. Definitely related but not the same. The Hamilton contra and English dance groups have found strength in diversity; while sharing the joy of dancing, the two dance communities support each other even when running separately.

* Nora Gaskin continues in her role as HCD coordinator; she is joined by Stephen Fuller, a founder of HCD and the fiddler for Back Up and Push, the HCD house band for sixteen years; Susan Hassell, a longtime contra dancer and volunteer who returned to dancing after an extended absence; Stephen Skilbridge, contra dancing less than five years and filled with excitement and ideas from his new-found dance world; and Tara Bolker, contra and English country dancer who brings an international perspective after her recent move from Gainesville, Florida.



The Hamilton Open Band, a.k.a. The HOB; photo courtesy Tara Bolker

Les, Ben, and Tara all dance contra and English country in Hamilton and beyond. In addition to organizing and teaching for the weekly Hamilton English country dance, Les calls for contra dancing from Toronto to Buffalo and plays recorder with the HOB. Ben also fiddles outside the HOB for contra and English dances throughout the region and dances with Cold Barn Morris in Hamilton. Tara shares in the teaching for HECD, calls for contra, English, and community dances throughout the region, and dances with Wolf at the Door Molly in Cambridge, Ontario.

See these Hamilton websites for more information about contra dances, www.hamiltoncontra.ca; English country dances, www.hamiltonenglishdance.ca; and about the HOB, www.thehob.ca.

"News from Canada," which debuted last year, features news about Canadian events or groups. Ideas for articles should be sent to Rosemary Lach, rosemarylach@yahoo.ca, or Bev Bernbaum, wturnip@sympatico.ca.

Swan's Island Community Dance

by Kate Webber

The scene: Swan's Island Community Dance, Friday, February 3, 2012 in the Swan's Island K-8 School gymnasium, organized by Kate Webber, Island Institute Historical Preservation Fellow. The event was a recent recipient of a grant from CDSS Outreach Funds.

The event was inspired by my work with the Swan's Island Historical Society. In the process of collecting oral histories and cataloging historical photographs, I'd come across stories and images of a past era of Swan's Island history in which community dances were a common event. As a fellow with the Island Institute, I've been in the mindset of looking at ways to bring back some of the sense of a vibrant community life that has been lost in recent years on the island. There haven't been regular "contra" dances on the island since the 1950s, and their loss is felt.

This event was designed as a way to introduce island residents to a dance form that's been forgotten on the island, and serve as the first of hopefully many such dances. Financial sponsorship was necessary to get things rolling with professional musicians and a dance caller, but hopefully this event has provided the inspiration needed to make future, community-sustained dances a possibility. An island band was formed for the purpose of this event, and we played a few numbers halfway through the dance—which was a fun way to make people aware of the local talent that can be drawn upon in the future!

The intention was to draw from a wide spectrum of island residents, and an emphasis was made towards the family nature of the dance in event publicity. About forty-five people attended the dance, which was a great success given the time of year and the small island population. Ages ranged from babies (dancing in their mother's arms) to people in their eighties. Both native island residents and people who have moved to the island "from away" were in attendance.

Contra dances were called for the first two-thirds of the dance, there was a break in which the Swan's Island band played two waltzes and a couple two-step pieces before the hired band came back for a few more contras. The evening concluded with all the musicians joining in on the waltz "Goodnight Irene."

I think that word of mouth publicity really paid off; there were islanders at the event that I had never met before. Once people started talking about the event, it encouraged others to try out something they would not ordinarily attend; I believe that this effect will only grow greater in future as more dances are held. At the event itself, I think we succeeded in creating the welcoming, informal atmosphere that was needed to make people comfortable trying out the dances. There were many people who had never danced before or who had not done so in decades who got up and participated. I was also glad that people felt comfortable attending to hear the music and socialize even if they were physically incapable of



dancing. They had a great time on the sidelines! While we packed up after the dance, I was approached by many people who were excited about the event, wanted to reminisce about their older dancing days, or were just generally happy to be out doing something fun on a winter night.

It seems to be particularly difficult to draw the younger island population out to community events. Young families and workers are too busy or too tired after a long day, or perhaps need more incentive to try something new. There were also more wives present than husbands; in the future they'll hopefully succeed in drawing them out! Apart from that, the logistics and expenses of travel to the island (long drive, navigating around



Photos courtesy Kate Webber

ferry times) were the main difficulties.

[Next time] I might hold the dance on a weekend afternoon, when families are more likely to attend and we don't have to worry about the second half of the dance cutting into people's bedtimes. I would also enlist people to do even more verbal promotion of the event, and talk their more reluctant friends into attending.

CDSS funding made this event possible; without it, we couldn't have found a way to get musicians and callers all the way out here and also compensate them for their time. Let me know if anyone wants to come out and attend an island dance in the future!

For a list of other recent recipients of CDSS Outreach Fund grants, see page 7. Thank you to our friends and members whose donations make this possible. ~ Editor





Register online, or print the registration form from the website and mail/fax it, or use the colorful flyer mailed in February. Questions? 413-203-5467 x 2, camp@cdss.org

OGONTZ, Lyman, NH, July 28-August 4

Family Week, Andy and Robin Davis, program directors
Teachers Training Course: Folk Arts in the Classroom, Jane Miller

PINEWOODS, Plymouth, MA, July-August

Family Week, July 14-21, Becky Tracy and Keith Murphy, program directors
Harmony of Song & Dance, July 21-28, Peter and Mary Alice Amidon
English Dance Leaders Course, July 21-28, Brad Foster
American Dance & Music Week, July 28-August 4,
Ethan Hazzard-Watkins and Anna Patton
Contra Dance Callers Course, July 28-August 4, Lisa Greenleaf
English & American Dance Week, August 4-11, Owen Morrison
Early Music Week, August 11-18, Frances Fitch
Viol Intensive Course, August 11-18, Mary Springfels
Campers' Week, August 18-25, Sarah Henry and Michael Gorin
English Dance Week, August 25-September 1, Brad Foster

TIMBER RIDGE, High View, WV, August 12-19

Adult & Family Week, Gaye Fifer, program director
Singing Squares Callers Course, Ralph Sweet & Nils Fredland
Leadership in Dance & Music for Young Adults, Gaye Fifer & Adina Gordon
American Dance Musicians Course, Eden MacAdam-Somer & Larry Unger

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