

# CDSS NEWS

SPRING 2013



COUNTRY DANCE AND SONG SOCIETY

*Continuing the traditions. Linking those who love them.*

# Balance and Sing store update ~ spring 2013



**Promise of Spring**  
**Charlene Thomson**  
CD \$15

“Promise of Spring and Other English Country Dance Music” includes twenty-one dance length tunes composed by Charlene Thomson, for dances devised by choreographers Philippe Callens, Mary Devlin, Carmen Giunta, Terry Glasspool, Loretta Holz, Gary Roodman and David Smukler. The music, which has not been previously recorded, is played by three bands: Hey for Three (Eileen Nicholson, violin; Laurel Sharp, recorders and whistles), Watson Abbey (Jeff Bronfeld, mandolin; Rob Siegers, banjo; Curt Osgood, hammered dulcimer); and Greenwood (Julian Shepherd, cello; Suzanna Spiese, flute); Charlene Thomson plays piano or accordion with all three bands.

**Late Last Summer**  
**Dick Hyman, Judy Hyman**  
CD \$16

This beautiful, lyrical and sensuous set of father-daughter violin/fiddle and piano duets falls under the notion of “better late than never,” as it was recorded when famed jazz pianist and musical director Dick Hyman was 85 and his daughter Judy, Emmy-winning TV music composer and a founding member of the famed alt-rock/folk band the Horse Flies with her husband Jeff Claus, was closing in on 60. The disc consists of thirteen waltzes that Judy wrote over the previous ten years, all of which lend themselves beautifully to seamless collaborative magic. “Musically,” Judy says, “we entered new territory for both of us...not jazz, not fiddle music, not classical.”



**Rappers**  
**Ndrika Anyika (producer/director)**  
DVD \$25

An exciting documentary following various rapper teams as they compete at the 2011 Dancing England Rapper Tournament (DERT) in Oxford, England. Discover this traditional English dance and meet the teams that make DERT the vibrant competition that it is. Running time: 23 minutes; profits from the documentary go to the Save the Children Fund.

413 • 203 • 5467 x 3

[store@cdss.org](mailto:store@cdss.org)

[www.cdss.org/store](http://www.cdss.org/store)

# CDSS NEWS

ISSN 1070-8251 Spring 2013

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

This newsletter is published quarterly by the Country Dance and Song Society. Views expressed within represent the authors and not necessarily of CDSS. All material is published by permission.

## Contents

- 2 Balance and Sing (store update)
- 4 Letters and Announcements
- 6 Catalyst and Confluence (director's report)
- 7 CDSS Exec Travels
- 10 A Feast of Song ~ Attending the First Annual  
Youth Traditional Song Weekend
- 12 Talking About...Money
- 13 Growing the Dance Community via a Wiki
- 14 News from Canada ~ Contra Dancing Has Blown  
Downwind to Nova Scotia
- 18 Yoga for Dancers ~ Cranky Knees and Long Quads
- 21 Chinese New Year, a dance
- 22 The Mountain Dance Trail Preserves Appalachian  
Square Dancing
- 24 Country Dancers of Rochester Teach History with  
Pleasure
- 26 Advertisements

### Email Updates

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

### CDSS OFFICE

116 Pleasant Street #345, Easthampton, MA 01027-2759  
413-203-5467, fax 413-203-5471, [office@cdss.org](mailto:office@cdss.org), [www.cdss.org](http://www.cdss.org)  
Monday-Friday, 9 am-5 pm

### STAFF

Executive Director, Rima Dael, x 100, [rima@cdss.org](mailto:rima@cdss.org)  
Bookkeeping, Anna Mach, x 113, [anna@cdss.org](mailto:anna@cdss.org)  
Finance, Bob Blondin, x 111, [bob@cdss.org](mailto:bob@cdss.org)  
Development, Robin Hayden, x 107, [robin@cdss.org](mailto:robin@cdss.org)  
Education Associate, Mary Wesley, [maryw@cdss.org](mailto:maryw@cdss.org)  
Education/Publication, Pat MacPherson, x 106, [pat@cdss.org](mailto:pat@cdss.org)  
Office & Sales Assistant, Rowena Roodman, x 110, [rowena@cdss.org](mailto:rowena@cdss.org)  
Outreach, Linda Henry, x 105, [linda@cdss.org](mailto:linda@cdss.org)  
Programs, Steve Howe, x 102, [camp@cdss.org](mailto:camp@cdss.org)  
Promotion & Newsletter, Caroline Batson, x 101, [caroline@cdss.org](mailto:caroline@cdss.org)  
Publications American Dance, Nils Fredland, [nils@cdss.org](mailto:nils@cdss.org)  
Store & Group Services, Jeff Martell, x 103, [store@cdss.org](mailto:store@cdss.org)  
Web, Lynn Nichols, [webmaster@cdss.org](mailto:webmaster@cdss.org)

### CDSS Governing Board

#### Officers

President: David Millstone, Lebanon, NH  
Vice President: Jenny Beer, Lansdowne, PA  
Secretary: David Chandler, Metuchen, NJ  
Treasurer: Linda Maguire, Longmont, CO

#### At Large Members

Lynn Ackerson, El Cerrito, CA  
Jill Allen, Lawrence, KS  
Bev Bernbaum, Toronto, ON  
Nancy Boyd, South Hadley, MA  
Jan Elliott, Woods Hole, MA  
Gaye Fifer, Pittsburgh, PA  
Brian Gallagher, Indianapolis, IL  
Wendy Graham, Durango, CO  
Lorraine Lee Hammond, Brookline, MA  
Rob Harper, Atlanta, GA  
Scott Higgs, Wayne, PA  
Jesse Pearlman Karlsberg, Atlanta, GA  
Linda Lieberman, Ames, IA  
Carol Marsh, Washington, DC  
John Mayberry, Toronto, ON  
David Means, Seattle, WA  
Pat Petersen, Durham, NC  
David Smukler, Syracuse, NY  
Stephen Stiebel, Mebane, NC

Want to contact the Board? Write to them at [office@cdss.org](mailto:office@cdss.org); we'll be happy to forward your message. Biographies and photos of Board members are at [www.cdss.org/governing-board.html](http://www.cdss.org/governing-board.html).



The Country Dance and Song Society is a national leader in promoting participatory dance, music and song that have roots in North American and English culture. We believe in the joy that participatory dance, music and song bring to individuals and communities. Within the US and Canada, we educate, support and connect participants in these living traditions and we advocate for their vitality and sustainability into the future. Membership is open to all; benefits include the newsletter, online members list, 10% discount from the store, early registration for our summer programs, and associate membership in Fractured Atlas. CDSS is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization; membership dues and donations are tax deductible. For more information: CDSS, 116 Pleasant Street #345, Easthampton, MA 01027-2759; 413-203-5467, [office@cdss.org](mailto:office@cdss.org), [www.cdss.org](http://www.cdss.org).

front cover: Country Dancers of Rochester's demo team dancing Well Hall; photo by Lisa Brown; see article on pp. 24-25.  
back cover: Shoes at Campers' Week 2012; photo by Jeff Bary.

# Letters and Announcements

## SUBMITTING ADS AND ARTICLES

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](mailto:news@cdss.org) (maximum size for most articles: 1,500 words, 750 words for essays and event reviews). We may edit for length and clarity. Editor

Go to [www.cdss.org/upcoming-events.html](http://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](mailto:events@cdss.org).

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

## AD SIZES & RATES

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 to [news@cdss.org](mailto:news@cdss.org) (PDF, JPG or TIF, with 300-600 dpi, fonts and images embedded), with check or Visa/Mastercard info sent 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)



Follow us on Facebook,  
[www.facebook.com/cdss.org](http://www.facebook.com/cdss.org), or our blog,  
<http://blog.cdss.org>.

## SUPPORT

CDSS is a 501(c)3 organization; dues and donations are tax deductible. For the many ways you can support us and the community at large, visit <http://www.cdss.org/ways-to-give.html>. Your help is much appreciated.

## PLANNED GIVING

Does your will include the Country Dance and Song Society? If not, please consider ensuring 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](http://www.cdss.org/planned-giving.html).

## New Lifetime Contribution Awardees

We are delighted to announce that Michigan residents Glen and Judi Morningstar will be recipients this year of the CDSS Lifetime Contribution Award. Glen and Judi, between them, have played and written music, called and written dances, taught music and dance, published music and dance books, led international music and dance exchanges, and facilitated leadership workshops in the music and dance community. They were nominated by Paint Creek Folklore Society not only for the above accomplishments, but for their talent in fostering leadership in every organization they are part of. We'll speak more of them in a future issue as plans for the award celebration unfolds. Congratulations, Glen and Judi!

## CDSS is Looking for Stars!

CDSS is always on the look out for star volunteers. Are you one? Do you know someone who is a star?

The CDSS Board will have a number of Board members completing their terms next year and are seeking nominations for those positions before the end of June. As well, we're often looking for people to participate in task groups and board committees as community member representatives. And in planning for our Centennial celebrations, we're anticipating all kinds of opportunities and will need volunteers. We're asking for your suggestions.

Think about yourself and the people you know in your local community. We're looking for people who have the appropriate mix of skills, experience, time, energy, teamwork style and have a passion for the country dance, music and song that we all love! See our website for more specifics about the experience we're looking for: <http://www.cdss.org/governing-board.html>. We're particularly interested in increasing the number of younger volunteers.

Please send your suggestions by June 30, to the CDSS Nominating Committee via email to [wturnip@sympatico.ca](mailto:wturnip@sympatico.ca) or by mail to 301-140 Bathurst St, Toronto, ON M5V 3N8.

*Bev Bernbaum, Chair, CDSS Nominating Committee*

## Donor Thanks for 2012 Now Posted

We are grateful to our friends and members for the many ways they support our work. Each year we publicly thank all the fine people who contributed last year to the annual appeal, special funds, scholarships, matching gifts, etc. The list for 2012 is on our website, <http://www.cdss.org/our-donors.html>.

*Robin Hayden, Director of Development*



**Camp registration is open!**  
[www.cdss.org/camp](http://www.cdss.org/camp)



### **New Membership Benefit—Fractured Atlas**

CDSS is pleased to announce that we are partnering with Fractured Atlas in their Open Arts Network to bring their services to our members. Any CDSS member can now become an Associate Member of Fractured Atlas for free and take advantage of the services they offer.

Fractured Atlas is a nonprofit organization that serves arts organizations nationwide. Services available to CDSS members include access to health insurance, online courses to help with fundraising, marketing and other business topics, access to their calendar, and special offers and discounts. The online courses, in particular, will be of interest to many of our members; the courses deal mainly with the business of art. And let's face it, many of us ARE in the business of art in one way or another. Fractured Atlas also offers some interesting cross-disciplinary networking opportunities for our members. We believe that this partnership will be a boon to CDSS members on many levels.

*Jeff Martell, CDSS Store and Services Manager*

### **Youth Intern Morphs into Education Associate**

The Youth Intern position has been held by Ethan Hazzard-Watkins, Max Newman and Mary Wesley. We have been so lucky to have these talented and proactive ambassadors working on behalf of CDSS, reaching out to their cohort, holding workshops, creating and adding to the How To Kits on our website, giving advice on the phone, and acting as consultants to groups.

At this point, with Mary moving into a new position as part-time Education Associate, we're going to take a hiatus from the Youth Intern program. While CDSS continues to nurture our next generations through scholarships, outreach and mini-courses during our camp season, now is a good time to reevaluate the use of our resources.

*Pat MacPherson,  
CDSS Education Department Director*

### **Speaking of Mary...**

In addition to working for us, Mary Wesley has begun a semester at the Salt Institute for Documentary Studies in Portland, Maine. This will give her a "whole new toolbox" for telling stories within our dance and song community, she says. While there she'll be taking advantage of the proximity of the University of New Hampshire in Durham, home of the CDSS Library and Archives at the Hampshire Library of Traditional Music and Dance.

### **Outreach Outlook**

**LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE**—Support from the CDSS Outreach Department is flowing in many directions these days. We recently kicked off initial plans for a leadership conference in the Southwestern US. With the help of Cora McCold from Durango, we hosted a first conference call and were joined by enthusiastic participants from several states. A second conference call in late February netted even more participants! If you or anyone else you know would like to help organize the conference, we would love to hear from you. Send an email to [dancethesouthwest@gmail.com](mailto:dancethesouthwest@gmail.com) or contact me at CDSS, [linda@cdss.org](mailto:linda@cdss.org). *Let me know soon if you are interested.*

**GRANT APPLICATIONS**—Other upcoming activities in the Outreach Department include reviewing the next round of grant applications and offering CDSS funding far and wide. If you need help with an event or project to support your community, please take a look at our online grant application materials: <http://www.cdss.org/support-funding.html>. Upcoming deadlines are June 1 and October 1.

**CAMP SCHOLARSHIPS**—If a scholarship would help make it possible for you to participate in our summer camp programs, please read the information at <http://www.cdss.org/scholarships.html>. (For info about the programs themselves, see [cdss.org/programs.html](http://www.cdss.org/programs.html).) To apply, fill out the Scholarship Form and return it to CDSS, with your camp registration and deposit, **by March 25** if possible. All scholarships may be assigned at that time, but later applications definitely will be considered if funds are still available.

For questions about scholarships, grants and CDSS-supported conferences, feel free to contact me at [linda@cdss.org](mailto:linda@cdss.org) or 413-203-5467 x 105.

*Linda Henry, CDSS Outreach Manager*



[massculturalcouncil.org](http://massculturalcouncil.org)

CDSS is funded in part this year by the  
Massachusetts Cultural Council,  
[www.massculturalcouncil.org](http://www.massculturalcouncil.org).  
We thank them for their support.

# Catalyst and Confluence

by Rima Dael, CDSS Executive Director

*Catalyst, a person or thing that precipitates an event or change.  
Confluence, a coming together of people or things; a flowing together.*

As I near the end of my first year as Executive Director I want to frame the work of CDSS with two special words.

We believe in the joy that participatory dance, music and song bring to individuals and communities. We spread that joy by being a *catalyst* and encouraging *confluence*. This is how I've come to see CDSS and how I would like us to be best used.

As I visited each of our programs last summer, I saw firsthand our role as a catalyst, from the teacher training courses taught by Dr. Jane Miller at Ogontz, to how my own daughter's passion for dancing was further ignited at Pinewoods, to conversations with homeschoolers in Huntsville who credit their start in dancing at a local dance supported by CDSS. In subsequent meetings with individuals and communities I saw how our work fosters confluence, where our work informs other communities and how that work strengthens CDSS in return. I've seen this happen in Huntsville, Sacramento, Tokyo, Washington, DC, and in my home community of Amherst. We have seen it happen in our conferences across the country but most recently in Cincinnati at our Midwest Leadership Conference. CDSS provides an opportunity for communities to come together for meaningful discourse. It gives individuals and communities a chance to discuss issues of importance to them and to engage with CDSS in how best to use our resources to assist their community.

Members or not, at CDSS-sponsored events or not, within the US or Canada, we educate, support and connect participants in our living traditions of dance, music and song. One of the visible ways we do this are CDSS Outreach Funds which have been supporting projects and events throughout the United States and Canada since 2008. Let me review a few of the ones we've done:

## Training Events

- Traditional Arts Weekend—instruction for contras, calling and rapper sword during an annual festival (MI)
- Fairbanks Musicians Workshop—weekend training event for English country dance musicians (AK)
- Fresno Callers Workshops—training sessions for beginning contra and English country dance callers (CA)

- Sun Assembly Spring Dance Weekend—caller workshops at an English country and contra dance weekend (NC)
- All Contra, All Day, the Right Way—contra workshop for all levels in building skill and community (BC)
- Contra Callers' Workshops—mentorship workshops for new callers with opportunities to call at local dances (NM)
- Open Contra Dance Band Practice/Workshops—workshops for musicians who played for final dance (RI)
- Impropiety Weekend—English country dance and music workshops in three cities in the Bay Area (CA)

## Youth and/or Family-Oriented Events

- World on a String—workshops to introduce young classical musicians to traditional music (DC)
- Wallowa Fiddle Tunes Camp—adding contra dance to weeklong music camp for families (OR)
- Youth Traditional Song Weekend—youth-focused participatory singing event including leadership training (MA)
- Dancing at Freedom Middle School—contra dance workshops and final dance with Wild Asparagus (FL)

## New Events

- Swan's Island Community Dance—new contra dance to revive dancing on remote island (ME)
- Mountain Dance Trail—revitalizing dances in ten communities (WV) (see article on pp. 22-23)
- Jim Thorpe Country Dance Series—new monthly contra/square dance (PA)

You, our members and donors help us do this work. You pay it forward for these activities to happen. Let us together continue our traditions by linking those, new and experienced, who love them. I look forward to the work we do together this year.

Visit our website for more information on support and funding resources we provide (<http://www.cdss.org/support-funding.html>); for questions on other ways we can help you or your community, email us at [office@cdss.org](mailto:office@cdss.org).

# CDSS Exec Travels

*As you know from reading this newsletter, the Executive Committee, a subset of the CDSS Governing Board, meets in different locations; since the last issue of the newsletter two meetings have been held. Below are reports by Board member Jill Allen for the November meeting in Huntsville, and by Vice President Jenny Beer for the February meeting in Sacramento. A recent blog, "What Does the Exec Do?" is on our website, [blog.cdss.org/?p=3830](http://blog.cdss.org/?p=3830).*

## **It Is Rocket Science! The Traveling Exec visits Huntsville**

*by Jill Allen*

Driving to the airport on Friday, November 16, I knew that my fellow CDSS Executive Committee members were orbiting the globe in much the same way, heading to Huntsville, Alabama, to meet the movers and shakers of the North Alabama Country Dance Society. Huntsville has a diverse topography of mountains, valleys, lakes and forests, and the deep and wide Tennessee River. There is a healthy diversity of business and art and a strong historic connection to NASA, and to the US Space and Rocket Center.

We blasted off into a rich weekend of dancing, sharing and learning. It is clear that Jane Ewing and her fellow organizers know how to turn out large and diverse groups for dancing. After a pizza party, three long lines of multigenerational dancers filled the hall at the Friday night English dance, convened by Harriet Grable, with a sprinkling of CDSS Board members on the stage and on the dance floor. Many were dancing English for the first time and they learned quickly.

The Executive Committee (the Exec) met all day Saturday, and Huntsville seemed a fitting place to focus on exploration and new launches of our own. We discussed task group reports on technology, dance musician support, board development and governance, a new dance camp in the middle of the country, our 2015 centennial and more. One topic of discussion

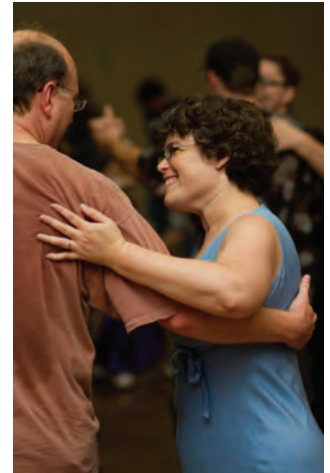
was how to best reach our constituencies and share information about programs and projects. Many rely on digital form, while others prefer material in print, and a lot of information is passed on, accurately or not, via word of mouth at dances, camps and weekends.

Yet another lively discussion centered on how CDSS can more effectively use volunteers to carry out projects. So many are eager to assist, but coordinating such efforts is a complex task. The topic will appear on the agenda for a lengthy discussion at the annual meeting of the full Board in April.

Rima Dael, Executive Director of CDSS, reported that the staff is energized, moving full steam ahead on website initiatives, a much-needed new database, the end of year fund appeal, the store, member services, camps, collaboration with the Board, and much more! It is a dizzying time of moving forward on many fronts at once. CDSS is busy supporting and reaching out to communities and volunteers in Huntsville and all over the continent and beyond.

Saturday evening, Huntsville dancers gathered for a potluck dinner and community meeting. We learned about some of their local successes. Of particular interest to dance groups everywhere were their tested strategies for bringing in new dancers:

- using the "herd phenomenon" and social media to bring in young dancers
- building the local contra with carry over from "one night" dances
- encouraging a sense of community pride





- using online surveys to reach dancers
- fostering a good relationship with the local radio station to get the word out
- following up with newcomers
- a “getting to know you” focus on individual dancers in their newsletter
- “dance buddy” buttons
- keeping a welcoming and friendly atmosphere



Several expressed appreciation for CDSS's help with 501(c)3 status, insurance and bylaws. The group plans to investigate CDSS camp scholarships for their community. Some of the challenges facing the Huntsville dance community include long driving distances to local dances, the long distance from typical

touring musicians' routes and a desire to increase ethnic diversity.

We then enjoyed the Huntsville Saturday night contra dance, which was celebrating its thirtieth year anniversary! Another huge group of dancers, with ages from seven to eighty, enjoyed the compelling music of Wolves A Howlin' (Bob and Cathy White, Curt Lewis, John Blakely), Chuck and Katrina Weber, then Ed Baggott and Elsie Peterson, and the calling of Exec members, and local caller Jane Ewing. Midway through the evening, we celebrated the event with cake. Mark Mohan (Jane's co-chair) arranged dancers in groups according to how long they have danced. The twenty-five-plus year veterans were heartily applauded, then CDSS President David Millstone inspired those on the youthful end of that spectrum to carry on the torch.

Sunday sent the Exec members back into orbit, freshly oxygenated to carry on with CDSS's future tasks. Our computers awaited us, full of messages, minutes and action items. The Exec plans to dock next with the dance communities of Sacramento, California in February. Magic is happening in local groups, in the far corners, in dance halls and meeting rooms of every community large and small, far and near. Blast off!

*Photos previous page by Kevin Riggs (l-r): Jenny Beer, Rob Rettew; Pat Petersen, Mark Mohan (Huntsville co-organizer), Lynn Ackerson; Linda Lieberman; locals Mark Mohan, Sarah Sharlet Harvey; above: Rima Dael; photos next page by Linda Lieberman: Sacramento musicians and dancers; Sharon Green; group shot of Lynn Ackerson, David Millstone, Pat Petersen, David Chandler, Stephen Stiebel, Rima Dael, Jill Allen, Jenny Beer, Bruce Hamilton*

## Sacramento Hosts the Exec

*by Jenny Beer*

A flushed and smiling new dancer came up to me on the sidelines of the Sacramento contra dance. “I haven't had fun like this in a long time,” she said, “It's so...WHOLESONE!” Another convert.

This special contra evening kicked off a first February weekend of wholesome dancing and partying to coincide with the CDSS Board's Executive Committee coming to town. Organizers were uncertain whether anyone would come out on a Friday night, but an overflow crowd of beginners and regulars showed up. Callers David Millstone (CDSS President) and Bay Area local Lynn Ackerson (CDSS Board), pulled a great variety of accessible and lively dances out of the hat, helped measurably by the joyful music of the popular band Crabapples who had driven three hours up from Monterey.

The next day, Sacramento's English dance threw itself a fine tenth anniversary party. Again, more people came than could fit on the dance floor! Brooke Friendly (ex-CDSS Board member) led afternoon review sessions that enticed dancers to come make a day of it. The potluck dinner was dressed up with linen tablecloths and roses, then there were fizzy toasts and two large cakes at the evening break. For the evening dance, organizers had invited every caller and every musician who had ever participated in the Sacramento monthly English dance to take a turn at the mike or sit in with the house band, Quite Carried Away. Many of these folks come from the wider Bay Area, and their carpools made the party into a regional celebration.

As a visitor, I was impressed by how a celebratory event can bring out a burst of community good feeling—“Look what we have made happen!”—and also by how many newcomers and occasional dancers had responded to the extra publicity.

After a brief sleep, many local and visiting folks gathered Sunday morning to talk with the Exec members and CDSS director Rima Dael over a restaurant brunch. Here are some of the successes and challenges they shared which might interest other dance and music groups:

### Welcoming Newcomers

- Several visiting Bay Area dancers commented on how well Sacramento dancers take care of newcomers. “You're greeted with smiles up and down the line. People screw up and everyone smiles at them.”
- We make an effort to connect person-to-person, to pay attention to who they are as people, not just that they showed up to a dance.



- The people working “the welcome table” (not “the door,” notice) make sure everyone has a name tag, is oriented, and getting partners.
- Adding half hour beginner sessions before the English and contra dances have been very helpful, as has giving half-off coupons to new dancers who attend those sessions.

### Attracting New Attendees

- We have created colorful business cards with basic information about Sacramento dances. One dance enthusiast hands them out everywhere (“cashiers in the supermarket”) saying “I don’t have time to tell you how much fun this is, but here, look this stuff up on YouTube, check it out.”

### Music

- Both the contra and English dances were started by musicians who wanted to play for dancing. These musicians continue to develop local music with regular jams as well as slow-as-molasses jam sessions where more skilled musicians play their second or third instruments.

### Relationship with BACDS

- Being located at the edge of the high-powered Bay Area CDS (BACDS) dance scene in the San Francisco metropolitan area gives us lots of expert callers and musicians to draw from although having such excellence near at hand has slowed the development of local leadership—there’s less need, and local dancers accustomed to high level playing and calling may not be as patient with people who are learning the craft.

### Younger Participants

- Younger dancers enjoy the camp and other opportunities for regional gatherings with their peers, but the distance from the urban center can feel isolating.
- It is a challenge to figure out how to move the monthly Davis contra dance onto campus to attract more students.

### Money

- We’re struggling to keep events affordable. It’s increasingly costly to find and pay for halls, also to bring in callers and musicians from the Bay Area. We have a “family maximum” and our price notice page invites people to contribute extra, and thanks them for supporting the dance.

After our meeting, most folks headed out to the monthly Roseville dance, leaving thirty-eight million of their California neighbors glued to their couches watching the Forty-niners and Beyoncé. Three full longways lines worth of dancers, and eight musicians showed up for DIY exercise and music. When it’s a choice between watching or moving, between listening or playing, CDSS says “Jump in! Play away!” (Though the couch and quiet felt mighty nice on Sunday evening.)

During a weekend that was packed with activities and invited guests, the Sacramento dance community hosted us all most graciously. Super-organizers Mike Silver and Sue Jones deserve special mention for pulling it all together. Sharon Green put all the pieces together and served as a cheerful MC of the evening. The CDSS Executive Committee deeply appreciates everyone’s dedication and kindness. Thank you, Sacramento!!



# A Feast of Song ~ Attending the First Annual Youth Traditional Song Weekend

by Emma Schneider



Cake in hand, I walked into the opening night potluck of this year's Youth Traditional Song (YTS) weekend. Although no singing had started yet (as far as I could hear), the dining room of the Prindle Pond Conference Center (Charlton, Massachusetts) hummed with excitement and conviviality. Potlucks can be risky, but if enthusiasm could be measured by food offerings, YTS was already off to a hearty start. The room full of merry voices and warm hugs is bright in my memory, even though it was already dark when I arrived.

Almost before we'd finished licking chocolate ganache from the corners of our mouths, the singing began. Introductions of the enthusiastic organizers and excellent staff were followed by a booming chorus of "Country Life." Singers of all ages, styles and backgrounds united in jubilant harmony.

Perhaps one of the most delightful parts of a new weekend is figuring out how it will work. With several rooms and halls to choose from, Friday night's singing was characterized by its spontaneity. I wandered from a dorm room with people perched on bunk beds singing chorus-heavy songs to a bigger circle sing more respectably situated on chairs. Singing sprang up in the middle of a hall as someone thought of a song as she stood up from dinner and all around began joining in. Even the bathroom's resonance was tested!

All these song clusters made it practically impossible to go to bed. When I finally got up the gumption to leave one, I'd run into another on my way down the stairs that was just starting the loveliest tune! By four in the morning, we'd been singing goodnight songs for at least an hour and had passed around another pitcher more than once. A quiet tune in the chilly night sent these weary stragglers to bed, ready for new harmonies not quite when the sun herself rose, but soon thereafter.

Saturday's workshops presented nearly as many tempting offerings as the potluck had the night before. From Ken Schatz's Work Songs to Ian Robb's discussions of traditional song to Lissa Schneckenburger's Performance



Craft, the staff kept our vocal chords vibrating and our thoughts ticking. In addition to the classes offered by the staff, there were a number of fantastic workshops offered by anyone who wanted to lead one, ranging from Shape Note to Basic Conducting to Bawdy Songs. With so many enthusiasts together, song sources became a particularly common discussion topic. The staff members presented an excellent panel describing the stories of a few of their songs and then singing them with hair-raising beauty.

The open-mic on Saturday night proved to be one of the weekend's highlights. Engaging, varied and consistently superb, the many talents of the participants delighted us all. Having had a full twenty-four hours of resonant bliss at this point, the jury began to come in: the weekend was a brilliant success, and we all nodded as Ian Robb said, "I hope the YTS weekend becomes an annual event and continues forever."

Luckily, even after the jury's decision came out, there was plenty of time for revelry. Having belted to the world that Cornish lads are indeed fishermen and miners, I skipped off to the contra dance to twirl down a set and promenade around my singing square. Rosy-cheeked, I returned to the singing hall to find the building's high-ceilinged foyer filled with melody. After all the location searching of the night before, the acoustic sweet spot had been discovered. The group gradually grew and grew until the room was packed with singers. That night, we learned that Minnesota is south of Manitoba and that Canada is, indeed, really big. In a crowd that large, someone always knew the chorus and everyone else was eager to learn. Choruses buzzed with chords that may or may not have come out quite as intended, but always added warmth and vibrancy to the sound reverberating off every wall.

As night turned to morning and the circle began drawing closer together, the tone modulated from boisterous rabble-rousers about ponies on boats and raising the rafters to softer, lilting melodies. Tears accompanied more than a few songs. All too soon, morning arrived heralded by a gospel chorus. After a few more stimulating workshops, the farewells began as all of us rolled up our sleeping bags and began wending our way homeward. The final singing circle joined hands and closed the weekend with appreciation of each others' voices and hope for reunion next year.

Ian Robb called YTS "the best weekend of social singing" that he could remember. Elizabeth Null said that YTS was "one of best events" she's been to due to its "incredible sense of community, great singing and superb organization." With any luck, they and many more of us will say so again next year. YTS is a weekend with room to grow and with enormous energy to fuel that development. I know I'll be happy for a reprise!

*CDSS was pleased to offer financial support to the YTS; for an additional enthusiastic review, see Natty Smith's comments at [blog.cdss.org/?p=3562](http://blog.cdss.org/?p=3562). Photo facing page: Anna Nowogrodzki, Ian McGullam, Jean Pauly-Jennings, by Suzanne Mrozak; below: Lissa Schneckenburger, Ken Schatz, Ian Robb, by Natty Smith*





# Talking About...Money

by Brendan Taaffe

Money, for many of us, is a taboo topic. It is certainly not a topic of polite conversation. And yet money underpins a lot of our decisions—how we eat, what we drive, how we recreate. So I'd like to start a discussion about money in the contra community. Since I'm a musician, I'll admit to a bias that comes from years of making my living as a musician.

If money is impolite generally, it is especially taboo for artists. Artists should be above money, after all, and there's a history of cultural perception that the purity of art can be tainted by money. Damien Hirst, the well-known British artist, is criticized as much for his commercial success as he is for the provocative nature of his work. And while I don't find his work beautiful, I think the question of how an artist can survive in the absence of aristocratic patronage or government support is a vital one that affects us all.

As a contra dance musician, I love putting music under people's feet and I love the energy that flows between the dancers and the musicians. But I'm playing fewer dances these days because my other musical life (as a composer and song workshop leader) provides a steadier financial footing. So, a look at the economics of being a full-time dance musician: for dance musicians, the pinnacle of achievement, both in terms of popularity and finance, is playing for the many dance weekends around the country. I've played a number of these with Magic Foot, and they're a totally fun deal. You get flown someplace new, play for a nice crowd of dancers, and then head home. These dance weekends tend to pay between \$500 and \$600 per person. This means a musician who makes dance weekends a full-time job would make \$25K to \$30K annually (assuming fifty weekends during the year). This hypothetical schedule would be incredibly grueling and entail as many or more hours than a full-time job: with travel, each weekend is a four-day experience, and you easily spend a day a week on administrative tasks (booking future gigs, taxes, etc.) when you're at home. Not to mention actually practicing.

Regular dances vary in how much they pay out to musicians. Two hundred dollars and up is widely considered a good night, so playing two dances a weekend comes in below (and sometimes well below) playing for a dance weekend. There are other things that musicians do to earn money—teaching, recording and summer camps among them. It is entirely possible to piece together a good life as a musician, though it definitely demands flexibility, a flair for self-promotion, and the ability to juggle the demands of different bands and gigs and teaching schedules. Oh, and never

having any health problems.

That's what it looks like from my side of the table. What's less clear to me, as I've been thinking about this piece, is how this information is useful to the dancers and organizers also sitting at the table. The many dances, weekends and camps around the country are independent groups, most often run by dancers and volunteers, all of whom have the best intentions. Which is to say, all of you reading this.

To me, this diverse structure is a huge strength and one of the most beautiful things about the community. But though each organization operates independently, there are consistent financial norms within the community—most dance weekends pay a similar amount and many dances have a similar guarantee. One obvious suggestion is that we move that community norm upwards. If dance weekends paid \$100 more per musician, that translates to another \$5K per year in my hypothetical schedule (\$200 more per musician would be even better). I suggest this realizing that increased revenue can only come from the dancers attending the weekend—not necessarily a group of people with large tax shelters in the Cayman Islands. The question is whether dancers would be willing to pay \$20 extra for a weekend if they knew this was going toward a cost-of-living raise for the musicians? That \$500 per weekend figure, by the way, has been pretty steady for the past fifteen years. In those same fifteen years, my grocery bill has definitely gone up.

At regularly scheduled dances, it all boils down to attendance. And attendance is influenced by myriad factors: the popularity of the dance series and of the band, the economy, the weather, the price of gas. In New England, where I live, there are a lot of dance opportunities.

These are some opening thoughts to a much larger discussion. Underpinning all of them is the assumption that having a group of dedicated, professional musicians is of value to the larger community. It's not the only way to get good music for dancing, but it does mean you have people with the time to practice, travel and play at the highest level they can. Which seems to translate to a good time on the dance floor. Thanks for listening.

*Brendan Taaffe is an instrumentalist, singer and composer living in Vermont. He performs with Magic Foot and the Bright Wings Chorus and leads singing workshops around the world. For more, visit [www.brendantaaffe.com](http://www.brendantaaffe.com) and [www.turtledoveharmony.org](http://www.turtledoveharmony.org).*

# Growing the Dance Community via a Wiki

by John Nash, Ottawa English Country Dance Club

Sharing information is central to getting new communities established, and this is especially so for dance groups. We need information on dance instructions, sheet music, recordings, advice on teaching and calling, and, of course, where and when events are going to happen.

As part of my own career as a management prof, I was interested in organizing what academics refer to as semi-structured multimedia data. Dance material is a perfect example—instructions and advice are text, recordings can be audio, and there are videos, animations, photos, drawings and a host of other forms of material that are needed or useful. In 2007, I decided to combine the interests, recognizing that if the scholarly pursuit diminished as I took retirement, the body of information would still be useful.

The result—though it will always be a work in progress—is Playford's Progeny, a web-based collection of information on English and American dance that can trace some ancestry to John Playford and his 1651 publication of *The English Dancing Master*. This is built on the MediaWiki software developed and used by Wikipedia, and it is hosted on a (virtual) server that is kindly provided by the Telfer School of Management at the University of Ottawa.

A wiki is a website that allows many people to add or edit the content. In this case, we let anyone view the content, but only allow those logged in with a username and password to make changes. The MediaWiki software uses a simple interface that lets text be formatted with bold or italic or different font sizes as well as links to multimedia files. There are some restrictions to stop virus-laden files from being attached, but overall MediaWiki is quite easy to use.

Some of the possible uses of the wiki:

- Dancers can find instructions, suggestions for music and notes on different dances. Currently we are closing in on six hundred sets of instructions, not all of them as well-structured or checked as we would like. Nevertheless, we have had thank yous from several dance groups in formation.
- Our callers can check which dances we have done in the past on an area for our local dance group. (We have no objection to other groups having such an area, especially for plain text which does not tax the disk space seriously.) We also welcome links to other groups.
- There may be links to videos of some dances actually being danced.

- Some tools for use by callers or for structuring dance information are on the site, but as yet not very well organized. For example, Graham Thompson developed a tool for tidying the format of dance instructions.

From comments made by dancers at different events, it appears that the wiki is being used much more widely than we realized. That is good. However, it is also clear that not many dancers realize that they can contribute material, or else they are afraid they will get it wrong. While someone with malicious intent could cause a lot of trouble, it is unlikely a mistake will do very much damage. To comply with rules of the University of Ottawa, we always ask for real name and non-Internet contact information of those we give a login, a small price for the value of the server resource (and we don't share that information).

There are, of course, some copyright issues. So far we have put up dance instructions from our own notes. Many of these appear in different words in publications. We will remove anything immediately if asked, but, so far, people have mostly wanted to correct errors or add material. Dancers are a sharing community!

We have not offered recordings, though would love to link to a site that offers legitimate (and likely for-money) downloads. We would also like to offer downloads of recordings that we are properly permitted to make freely available. Sheet music or midi files are also of interest, again with possible links for remunerated downloads.

On the downside, we have noticed that requests to add material often go unheeded, but a scrappy few lines with errors will get action quite quickly. Perhaps that will change as people realize that good wikis are operated by one or two people, but really belong to and are built by their users.

The wiki URL is <http://macnash.telfer.uottawa.ca/playford>. If you are willing to add/edit material, please contact the author ([nashjc@uottawa.ca](mailto:nashjc@uottawa.ca)) and ask for a login. We would also be pleased to find someone interested in mirroring the wiki, as single machines are always vulnerable to going out of service. Anyone with ideas for improved tools to manage the data is encouraged to get in touch.

Happy dancing.



## News from Canada ~ Contra Dancing Has Blown Downwind to Nova Scotia

by Dottie Welch and Eliza West

The frost was on the pumpkins the last few nights and the fall foliage is at its peak with gorgeous red and orange maples all along the roads. The crisp evenings encourage folks to search out opportunities to warm up on the dance floor. "Let's have a céilidh" we say, meaning come and enjoy Gaelic music and dancing. Lots of talented musicians thrive here in the Cape Breton and Scottish culture that brings tourists to Canada's east coast. Yes, there is contra dancing here. It is part of a recreational dance community that includes Cape Breton square sets, modern square, round, ballroom, Scottish and English country, step and folk dancing (visit [dancens.ca](http://dancens.ca)). Currently, there are two groups active in Halifax that focus on contras: Contra Time Dances and the Halifax Contra Dances. This is the story of how these two groups came to be!

### **Dottie's Story: New England Roots and Contras in the Square Dance World**

The evolution of contra dancing in Nova Scotia is a typical example of the strong connections between Nova Scotia and New England. In 1943 Ralph Page began leading a weekly square and contra dance evening at the YWCA in Boston, Massachusetts, partly to provide recreation for sailors and soldiers off the ships. Among those helping to teach were Bob Kinraide and Dottie Dickson; after the dance they would take Ralph for fruit and ice cream before he caught the milk train at 4 a.m. back to Keene, New Hampshire. Bob and Dottie were my parents, so I have wonderful memories of ski weekends in New Hampshire that included a Saturday evening square and contra dance. In later years my parents danced in Massachusetts with Ted Sannella at the Scout House in Concord and Roger Whynot in Belmont. (Roger, who began square dance calling in Nova Scotia in the 1950s, moved to the United States in 1969.)



In 1974 we moved to Nova Scotia and joined a modern square dance club in Halifax. At that time there were several square dance callers who also called contras as part of their program including John Essex, Brundage MacDonald and Vern Carmichael. In 1983, our advanced square dance club needed a caller, so I began calling and soon added contras to my programs. Our annual Maritime Conventions have always included some time featuring contras so I was soon recruited to participate along with Nelson Labor, Alex Ritchie, Chris Ayres and Ron Lowe.

After joining Callerlab (International Association of Square Dance Callers) in 1995, I became involved in the Committee for Community and Traditional Dance. This committee organizes an annual Beginner Dance Party Leaders Seminar. While attending the seminar before the Louisville Callerlab Convention in March of 2005, a group of callers attended the local Saturday evening contra dance. Bev Bernbaum of Toronto was calling and during the evening she used a delightful circle mixer by Cis Hinkle. As editor of the *Community Dance Journal*, I contacted Bev in order to publish the dance. Thus another connection was forged. (These journals are all available at [www.callerlab.org](http://www.callerlab.org) under Documents.) By 2003 I had been calling contras for twenty years to mostly recorded music and as part of the square dance world. Then the New Times/Old Time Dance in

Halifax came to our attention and 2004 we attended one of these dances and were delighted to find the familiar New England contras of my childhood being danced to live music.

### **Dave's Story: History of the New Times/Old Time Dances, 1990-2007**

The New Times/Old Time (NTOT) dance started as the Saturday Night Country Dance in the fall of 1990. It was a spin-off group from the weekly International Folk Dances, which were mainly focused on the Balkan countries; through the 1980s, these dances had included some contras, waltzes and polkas. Something had to give! It was too much variety to pack into one night of dancing, so a subgroup started up with many of the folk dancers and peripheral friends. We danced monthly and included English country, New England contras, a smidgeon of Irish, Scottish and Welsh, and some old time waltzes, polkas, schottisches and British versions of tango. There were even a Polish Kujawiak and a couple of Czech polkas. In the fall of 1993, the event became known as the New Times/Old Time Dance.

During that first year recorded music was used, but the search was on for live music. The group had a succession of bands: Great Blue Heron, with popular local musicians including Ronnie MacEachern and Bill Plaskett; Snow Monkeys, a band from the



Halifax Contra Dances, October 2012

Shambala Centre; and then Gordon Stobbe and friends, starting in 1995 and continuing through to the final dance in 2007. By then, Joe Pratt sometimes filled in for Gordon, who was often out of town due to developments in his own music career. Gordon's versatility and geniality helped greatly through those years.

Dave Schlosberg called the dances. He had cut his teeth running set dances in Pictou County from 1975-1981, and he attended contra dances in Boston off and on. Jane Schlosberg taught most of the partner dances and often prompted the longways sets. They and the Folkdancers' Association of Nova Scotia, the sponsoring group, got a wonderful boost when Marianne Taylor came down (yes, "down," for sailors, we are downwind) from Boston) in the fall of 1991 to give a workshop in longways and contras. All through the years, attendance varied unpredictably between fifteen and fifty-five, probably averaging about twenty-eight. As the 1990s came to a close and many of the original group faded away, the European partner dances left the repertoire, except for the waltz. The dances became almost exclusively longways and

contras, with a few western Canadian and Québécois set dances and an occasional novelty dance.

In the fall of 2005, Eldon Cooper and Dottie Welch started calling dances. Eldon had recently moved from Ontario, where he had his own popular longways and contra group. Dottie, one of the premier square dance callers of the Metro area, had been involved with contra dancing since her childhood in New England. They energized the group greatly. However, by May 2007, due to various health problems and Gordon Stobbe's career developments outside of the province, the NTOT came to an end. Fortunately, Dottie started a new sequence called the Contra Time Dances, and a younger crowd started up the Smokin' Contra Dances (now known as Halifax Contra Dances). These two groups have kept the contra dance scene hopping in Halifax ever since.

### **Dottie's Story Continues: Contra Time Dances**

Since January of 2008, we have held a Contra Time Dance about once a month from October to May. Our musicians are usually Joe Pratt on the fiddle and Skip Holmes on guitar or banjo, but we have welcomed

Dottie Welch calling at the Contra Time Dances, October 2012





several other excellent musicians when needed or possible. A typical evening includes mixers, contras of various kinds, one English country dance and waltzes. Attendance averages about twenty dancers who are a mix of dedicated contra dancers from the NTOT days, modern square dancers, new recruits and beginners. Our schedule is available at [www.squaredance.ns.ca](http://www.squaredance.ns.ca) in the Calendar of Events. Being delighted to see a second and younger group of contra dancers, those of us with calling experience have shared our knowledge with the newer callers through workshops and personal mentoring sessions.

### **Amy's Story: The Smokin' Contra Band**

Amy Louder grew up playing classical violin, but she finally found her calling playing dances in Grey County, Ontario: "I lived in Durham and was tutored by Bettie who was a much loved caller with the Glenelg Township Full Moon Dance Band. We had a contra band there and she showed us how to run the dances before she passed away from cancer."

Attendance at dances in Greenfield, Massachusetts, inspired the creation of a group of assorted musicians who called themselves the Smokin' Contra Band. "We loved the music and the community spirit that shapes this kind of social dancing." In 2007 the band began performing at local contra dances at least once every month in Halifax. Shannon Lynch accepted the challenge of learning to call for these events. The dance community was built from their circle of friends and it spread from there. Suddenly there was a rollicking and thriving young adult contra dance advertised as "like a square dance, minus the square, plus an East-Coast flare."

### **Eliza's Story: Halifax Contra Dances**

As a native Vermonter, contra dancing was always in the periphery as I was growing up. I began dancing in earnest in high school, when I discovered the local English country dance group and from there made my way to Border morris, and finally became a frequent and fervent contra dancer. Contra became such a big part of my life that when I moved to Halifax for university, I sought out local dances and began attending Smokin' Contra Band's dances whenever I could. In 2011 the band asked the community to take over the running of the dance and a handful of community members began Halifax Contra Dances to meet the need. Along with our small group of principal organizers, HCD has the help of many other volunteers to keep the dance running. Halifax Contra Dances is truly run by a love of dance as much as by a group of people—we know that to have a dance to attend we all need to pitch in and make it happen.

While some of our dancers have been to contras elsewhere, many only dance in Halifax. We have folks who faithfully turn up to every dance and we also welcome around a dozen new dancers each month. Dances generally have fifty to a hundred people, and are held in a local church hall. The atmosphere is always friendly and playful and much effort is put into welcoming newcomers. Since Halifax has such a rich culture of traditional music, HCD is lucky enough to always have wonderful local bands playing for us. One of a handful of regular bands is Papilio, a neo-traditional group playing the music of Ireland, Scotland, the Maritimes, Québec, Brittany, Scandinavia, Galicia/Asturia, the Balkans and beyond, presented with a distinctive creative twist alongside folk songs and original compositions. The band consists of Anthony Rissesco on fiddle and vocals, Jennifer Publicover on flutes and bodhran, and Phil Schappert on guitars. Local caller Shannon Lynch is a longstanding part of the community, but other community members have been picking up the calling torch of late. To foster this in the past two years we have held a handful of calling workshops and launched new callers on our stage including Jonathan Franklin and Kat Kitching.

While Halifax has lots of cultural ties to New England, Quebec and other areas with great contra traditions, geographically, it's a bit off the beaten path, and a lot of dancers from away don't know that we're here. We'd love for this to change! We always welcome dancers, callers and bands from away. You can find out about our upcoming dances by following us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/HalifaxContraDances](http://www.facebook.com/HalifaxContraDances) or emailing us at [HalifaxContraDances@gmail.com](mailto:HalifaxContraDances@gmail.com).

*Dottie Welch has a lifetime history of contra dancing as described in her story. She taught math for twenty-five years and has been calling for nearly thirty. Traveling to dances is often combined with camping, hiking and birding. She can be contacted at [dwelch@eastlink.ca](mailto:dwelch@eastlink.ca) and on Facebook.*

*Eliza West has been contra dancing since high school. She came to Halifax from Vermont four years ago to attend University of King's College. An organizer of the Halifax Contra Dances, she is also a longtime member of On the Border Morris of Burlington. Eliza plans her vacations home around the Montpelier and Burlington contra schedules.*

*"News from Canada" features news about Canadian events and groups. Ideas for articles should be sent to Rosemary Lach, [rosemarylach@yahoo.ca](mailto:rosemarylach@yahoo.ca) or to Bev Bernbaum, [wturnip@sympatico.ca](mailto:wturnip@sympatico.ca).*



# Yoga for Dancers ~ Cranky Knees and Long Quads

by Anna Rain

If you dance at all, at some point your knees have spoken to you in a demanding and cranky voice. Perhaps you have responded to their needs with rest or an elastic band or ice. All of these can be palliative. Cranky knees, however, demand regular, sustainable, appropriate range-of-motion challenges so that the muscles around the knee comfortably support correct action and alignment.

The actions of bending the knee in correct alignment and lengthening the quads gently and gradually do (at least) two things: 1) the knee learns the proper track for healthy bending, and 2) the compressing action of correct bending presses excess fluid from the joint, which helps the knee bend more comfortably.

Approach these knee-centric poses carefully, and listen attentively to what your knees report to you. While we most certainly want to protect our knees, protecting them from everything is like protecting your children from everything: the knees need to have some experiences on the edge (and occasionally over it?) in order for you to understand exactly what helps them. Be cautious; be inquisitive.

(These previous CDSS articles might be helpful: Fall 2008—engage the quadriceps; Summer 2009—ease of the knees; Spring 2011—tackling the calves.)

## Engage the quadriceps

This is most easily learned while seated. With the leg straight and relaxed, feel your right kneecap. Most of us can wiggle the kneecap from side to side. Now, straighten the right leg and lift the right heel one inch off the floor. The action of

lifting the leg requires that the quadriceps engage; this engagement then tightens and stabilizes the kneecap. Feel it: no longer can the kneecap move from side to side. Can you keep the leg straight, heel on the floor, and engage the quads without lifting the leg? Now take that same action while standing: make your feet parallel and about ten inches apart. Engage the quads (it might feel as if you are “lifting” the kneecap away from the shin and toward the thigh); observe the stability of the kneecap. Not only is the knee aligned and stable, the engagement of the front thigh muscle lifts weight off the knee joint, which relieves unnecessary pressure on the joint.

NB: This is NOT “locking the knee.” The knee receives the action of the front thigh. I have seen in some of my students and in my own body the mistake of always keeping the knee slightly bent to avoid locking the knee. Engaging the quads allows the knee to use its full range of motion, which is more beneficial to its overall long-term health than protecting it from being “locked.”

## Create space in the knee joint

Pain from bending the knee can come from inadequate space behind the knee—in the knee pit, if you will. Give your knee experience bending unimpeded, which trains it to know what’s comfortable.

Sit on some support two to four inches high (a firm folded blanket or two, or a couple of coffee table books) with both legs in front of you, feet parallel. Keeping the heels on the floor, firm both thighs; engage the quadriceps. Keep the left leg firm and relax the right leg. Using your hands (and not the leg

#1



#2



#3



muscles), draw your thigh toward you (photo 1). With the leg half-bent, take both thumbs to the knee pit and draw the calf muscle away from the knee joint, toward the right heel (photo 2). Bring the right heel as close to the right buttock bone as you can. Hug the right shin, stretch out through the inner heel of the straight leg, and lift both sides of the chest (shoulders back and down; side ribs up!, photo 3). If you have been successful in moving the calf muscle out of the knee pit, your knee will enjoy this bend.

Straighten and firm the right leg and repeat the same actions of adjusting the calf muscle and bending the knee with the left leg. If you do each side twice, that's even better for training the knee.

### Lengthen quads and align knee properly

Stand with your left side near a wall or counter and catch your right foot with your right hand. Hold the top of the foot, with your hand coming around on the little toe side of the foot. Roll your right shoulder back, and bend the elbow if you need to (photo 4). (If you can't reach your foot, use a strap around your foot and hold the strap as close to your foot as you can, (photo 5).

An important note on the correct alignment of the knees for these poses: in order for the knee joint to track evenly on both the inner and outer kneecap, the part of the bent knee that faces the floor when you're standing must be parallel to the floor (photo 6). Follow these actions:

- Keep your knees close to each other (don't let the right inner thigh move away from the midline of the body).
- Draw the right heel gently toward the right

buttock bone (see below for deeper action in Lengthen Quads 201).

- Keep the right front thigh even with the left front thigh (when your quads are tight, the right thigh wants to be forward).

When you've got the Big Picture alignment in place with those actions, you can explore this subtle action:

- Lengthen from the inner right groin to the inner right knee.
- As if you could stand on the right kneecap (which *is* parallel to the floor, right?), press the right kneecap straight down.
- Take the buttocks down, away from the waist; move your top front thighs back; and lift both sides of your ribs away from the waist (see CDSS column Winter 2012-2013).

### Lengthen Quads 201

Do this only if you are confident that you are practicing all the previous actions with attention and intelligence.

Start by drawing your right heel gently toward the right buttock bone (your elbow bends to bring the heel close to your body), then let the heel release (elbow straightens). Continue this action, a sort of gentle "pumping," and each time, bring the heel closer to the outer right hip. See that you keep all the actions from above! As your quads gradually lengthen, and knee joint gets "oiled," the heel will more easily move toward the outer edge of the hip (photos 7 and 8). Do the other side, substituting "right" for "left."



Photos courtesy Anna Rain



NB: Many people who “stretch” the quads pull the right heel across the body—toward the left—and this is not healthy for the knee, particularly the outer edge of the knee, which can get overextended and cause misalignment of the joint. (Ow!)

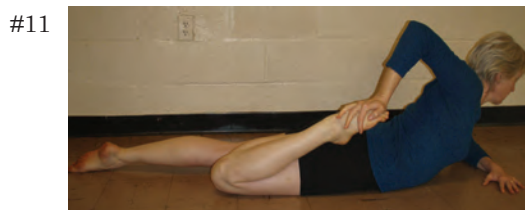
## Lengthen Quads 202

This pose is the same as the last, except you are lying on the floor (which keeps both front thighs in place).

Lie face down on the floor, and bring your left arm across your body in front of your chest (photo 9). As you did while standing up, catch your right foot with your right hand. Hold the top of the foot, with your hand coming around on the little toe side of the foot. (Use a strap to catch the foot if you need to—see the actions for the standing version.) Roll your right shoulder back, and bend the elbow if you need to (photo 10). Perform the same actions as you did while standing up:

- Draw the right heel gently toward the right buttock bone, and then, keeping hold of the foot, let it release away from the buttock.
- Gently “pump,” each time drawing the right heel closer to the outer right hip
- As long as the knee is comfortable, once you have the heel close to and just outside the hip, draw the foot gently and slowly toward the floor (photo 11).

Do the other side, substituting “right” for “left.” Note how your knees feel during and after these poses. Does the sequence of bending soothe them? Further healthy knee-bending poses will come your way in the next newsletter; stay tuned!



*Anna Rain is a certified Iyengar yoga instructor. She'll be teaching English country dance at CDSS's Early Music Week this summer, [www.cdss.org/early-music.html](http://www.cdss.org/early-music.html). One of her ECD bands, *Hot Toddy*, will play at NEFFA in April.*

*Yoga questions can be addressed to [annarainyoga@gmail.com](mailto:annarainyoga@gmail.com). What would you like answered in a future column?*

(Mountain Dance, continued from p. 23) what it has been for many generations. It should be an aspect of mountain culture that becomes a social activity, that strengthens communities, and becomes an outlet for joyous celebration. Isn't that what dance has always been? We think that is how it should be," stated Milnes.

A complete dance schedule is available online at [www.mountaindancetrail.org](http://www.mountaindancetrail.org) and in the 2013 brochure. Information is also available by calling the Augusta Heritage Center at 304-637-1349. Support for this project was provided by the West Virginia Humanities Council, West Virginia Division of Culture and History, the Country Song and Dance Society and the National Endowment for the Arts.

*CDSS was pleased to support this program through our Outreach program, [www.cdss.org/support-funding.html](http://www.cdss.org/support-funding.html). Another West Virginia project supported by CDSS is a CD-ROM of Bob Dalsemer's book, *West Virginia Square Dances*, <http://www.cdss.org/elibrary/wvasquares> or <http://www.cdss.org/product-details/product/west-virginia-square-dances-cd-rom.html>.*

Photos of the Sutton (page 22) and Harmon dances (page 23) courtesy Becky Hill

*From J. D. Borthwick's book, *Three Years in California (1851-1854)*:*

"At the Lake's Hotel (in Angels Camp), though there were no women in the camp, a ball was given. The dancers depended for music on two amateurs, a fiddler and a flutist. The fiddler shouted out the various figures of the quadrille and the merry-making was kept up for several hours. After each dance had come to an end the fiddler, remembering the dancers' thirst and the welfare of Mr. Lake's ballroom, called out in tones louder than usual, 'Promenade all to the bar and treat your partner!'...The absence of women in the camp was a difficulty easily conquered for it was arranged that any man wearing a square patch on the seat of his jeans was to be treated as a 'lady', at least for the time being. It was a strange sight to see a party of long-bearded men in heavy boots and flannel shirts going through all the steps and figures of the dance with so much spirit and often with a 'great deal of grace'."

*courtesy Allen and Alisa Dodson*



# Chinese New Year

by Chris Page

Formation: Duple, improper contra

Dance starts in long waves at the sides of the set; neighbors join right hands, men face out; women face in.

- A1    Balance long waves (4)  
      Box circulate (4)  
      Balance long waves (4)  
      Box circulate (4)
- A2    Balance long waves (4)  
      Box circulate (4)  
      Partner swing (8)
- B1    Circle left three-quarters (6 or 8)  
      Neighbor swing (8 or 10)
- B2    Long lines forward and back (8)  
      Right hand balance with partner (4)  
      Pull by partner by right, turn to face current neighbor (2)  
      Current neighbor allemande left about halfway to long waves at sides,  
      new neighbor in right hand (2)

© 2010 Chris Page

Teaching Tips: For the box circulate, the four members of the minor set will stay in their minor set. In the first box circulate, women cross the set to their neighbor's place as men loop right to their neighbor's place. In the second box circulate, men cross the set to their neighbor's place, women loop right to their partner's place. In the third box circulate, women cross the set as men turn over right shoulder to meet partner.

Author's note: Written for Joyce Fortune of the Bay area who won a dance written for her at an auction at the 2010 Spring Fever dance camp at Monte Toyon (California). She requested a dance with long lines, some balances, and a swing/circle/swing transition. (A surprisingly tough set of requirements to fulfill.) This sequence was the option she liked best.

~ CP

*Chris Page is a dancer, choreographer and caller of contra, squares and English dances. He lives in San Diego, California.*

*Editor's note: Our thanks to Lynn Ackerson for suggesting the dance for the newsletter. You can see/hear it at <http://youtube.com/watch?v=Zj6AefDCs9k>, being done at the Scout House in Concord, Massachusetts.*



## **The Mountain Dance Trail Preserves Appalachian Square Dancing**

**by Becky Hill**

During the resurgence of old time music and dance in the 1970s, West Virginia community square dances were for the most part overlooked, and had no appreciable revival that generated interest from younger generations. Now, forty years later, these square dances are still happening in VFW halls and community halls throughout the state of West Virginia. These square dances are community gatherings, everyone knows each other, and if they don't know you, they will by the end of the dance.

These dances have been "caught, not taught" and have been passed on from generation to generation through participation. Many of the communities have callers who prefer to call while they are dancing on the floor. Some dances don't even hire a caller, they merely say "let's have a square dance" and a caller shows up. Each dance is unique and offers an authentic cultural experience.

"West Virginia has a real treasure in its old time square dance traditions," said Gerry Milnes, Folk Art Coordinator for Augusta Heritage Center. "No other state in the Appalachian region has a comparable tradition."

Augusta Heritage Center of Davis and Elkins College launched a new heritage tourism initiative in April 2012 called "The Mountain Dance Trail." This project will ensure this traditional Appalachian folkway is preserved and maintained. Today the project is in its second year and it expanded to include fifteen communities where square dances take place on a regular basis. Each dance features live old time string band music and local dance callers.

The dance forms change as you travel. For instance, on the eastern side of the state, "big circle" or "mountain



circle” dancing is customary. On the western side of the state, the dancers square up in traditional four-couple sets. “Round dancing,” meaning waltzes and two-steps, are played between squares at most locations.

Many of these communities have had square dances as long as anyone remembers. Harman’s square dance was first documented in 1872 in the *Harpers News Weekly Magazine*. In the early 1970s the Harman High School Senior Prom was a square dance! In the Swiss Community of Helvetia, dancing has been occurring since its founding in 1869. In addition to mountain circle dances, there are waltzes, polkas and the Helvetia Polka (a Schottische) danced there. In Gilmer County, the West Virginia State Folk Festival shuts down a street in Glenville and, some say, the best square dancing anywhere is held on Thursday, Friday and Saturday night of the festival. The music is always solid with optimum West Virginia fiddlers and numerous talented dance callers from throughout the state. Bill Ohse, a square dance caller from Ripley believes anyone who square dances should, “Come to Glenville! Come to Glenville!” Each of the locations are being documented by Gerry Milnes and Becky Hill through interviews with elder callers and musicians.

This year, the Dance Trail has extended across the state line into Virginia. Ellen Ratcliffe, a caller from Highland County, Virginia, says “These square dances are part of our tradition and it needs to be passed on to the rest of the world. It’s just a little bit of our heritage and it’s in our blood; it should be in our blood.”

Whether you dance or not, the joy of square dancing to live fiddle music entertains both dancers and “wall flowers” alike. All dances involved with The Mountain Dance Trail are beginner friendly and open to all ages and levels. Admission is \$5 for adults and \$2 for students. You can find a square dance somewhere in the heart of West Virginia every weekend.

The Mountain Dance Trail is hosting a Dare to be Square dance weekend, July 5-7, 2013 at Rich Mountain Battlefield in Randolph County. Dance workshops are for aspiring and experienced callers, dancers and musicians. The weekend will feature and highlight many of The Mountain Dance Trail callers with the hope to pass on the heritage and tradition to others.

“We have high hopes that the traditions will catch on, once more become entrenched, and this age-old form of entertainment and activity will become

*continued on page 20*



# Country Dancers of Rochester

photos and text



The day began with everyone gathered in the village square to hear the declaration of war between Great Britain and the United States. After that ominous news it seemed prudent to omit the word “English” when describing the afternoon’s dancing demonstration. The Springfield muskets and shiny bayonets of the US 23rd Regiment looked like they meant business. Besides it was simply called “country dancing” back in the year 1812.

Every June for the past four years, the members of the Country Dancers of Rochester’s demonstration team travel from all over upstate New York to Genesee Country Village and Museum’s War of 1812 and Jane Austen Weekend to give an exhibition of English country dancing. The historic Genesee Country Village in Mumford recreates a nineteenth century western New York town with authentic nineteenth century and late eighteenth century buildings rescued from destruction and safely relocated to the museum grounds. The demo team, formed five years ago and led by Lisa Brown and Leslie Phillips, performs English country dances written prior to 1812 and wears costumes from the Regency era (1795-1820). The costumes are made by the dancers or rented from Lisa’s costume rental business, Regency Rentals. The group has twelve to eighteen members who range in age from 18 to 84. In addition to Genesee Country Village, the demo team also gives exhibitions for libraries and church groups. The demonstration programs consist of four to six exhibition dances, followed by two or three easy audience participation dances which are taught and called by a member of the team. Lisa provides historical information about each dance before they are performed. The group practices with recorded music but generally performs to live music, especially at Genesee Country Village where recorded music is not allowed.



# Teach History with Pleasure

by Lisa Brown



Rochester's English country dance community, led by Richard Sauvain, dances four Sundays a month at 6:30 pm at the First Baptist Church in Brighton (a suburb of Rochester). Modern English country dancing began in Rochester in 1982; previously, the Country Dancers of Rochester were solely a contra dance group. The Country Dancers of Rochester joined CDSS in 1982.

Dance demonstrations (clockwise, starting top left, facing page): Well Hall, Kelsterne Gardens, another figure from Well Hall, the audience joins in for Hole in the Wall (all at Genesee Country Village); Jack's Maggot (Jane Austen Singing School for Young Ladies in Skaneateles); Richard Sauvain and Veree Woodbridge (weekly dance in Rochester); Take A Dance (Jane Austen Singing School); Braes of Dornach (Genesee); Jon Gerhret, Lori Anschuetz and Vicki O'Brien (Rochester). For more information about the group, see <http://www.rochestercontra.com>. For a recent video of the demo team at the historic Granger Homestead in Canandaigua, NY, see <https://vimeo.com/61541972>.



**CDSS NEWS**  
**Country Dance and Song Society**  
**116 Pleasant Street, Suite 345**  
**Easthampton, MA 01027-2759**  
**[www.cdss.org](http://www.cdss.org)**

*Change service requested*

### CDSS Camp Dates & Program Chairs for 2013

**OGONTZ (August 3-10, Lyman, NH)**  
**Family Week, Bettie and Steve Zakon-Anderson**  
**Teacher Training Course, Jane Miller**

**TIMBER RIDGE (August 11-18, High View, WV)**  
**Adult Week and Family Week, Gaye and Rachel Fifer**  
**Community and Classroom Dance Leaders Course, DeLaura Padovan**  
**Contra Dance Callers Course, Rick Mohr**

**PINEWOODS (Plymouth, MA)**  
**Early Music Week, June 27-July 4, Frances Fitch**  
**English Dance Musicians Course (EM), June 27-July 4, Peter Barnes**  
**Viol Intensive, June 27-July 4, Sarah Mead**  
**Family Week, July 20-27, Steve Howe**  
**Harmony of Song and Dance, July 27-August 3, Nils Fredland**  
**English Dance Week, August 3-10, Brad Foster**  
**English Dance Musicians Course (ED), August 3-10, Shira Kammen**  
**English and American Dance Week, August 10-17, Owen Morrison**  
**Campers' Week, August 17-24, Sarah Henry and Michael Gorin**  
**American Dance and Music Week, August 24-31,**  
**Ethan Hazzard-Watkins and Anna Patton**  
**Sound Operator Course, August 24-31, Tony Hernandez**

Details are on our website, [www.cdss.org/programs.html](http://www.cdss.org/programs.html).