CDSS NEWS
SUMMER 2012

COUNTRY DANCE AND SONG SOCIETY
Continuing the traditions. Linking those who love them.
New CDSS Publication: Classic English Country Dances

Gary Rodman and I have created another booklet with CD, to follow on the very successful booklet/CD combo 21 Easy English Country Dances, published by CDSS in 2010. But what is a "classic" English dance? Here's our criteria: it is fun to dance and has good music; it was part of the early English dance repertoire in North America; and, last but not least, the music for it exists on a CDSS recording.

Gary and I chose twenty-five dances whose music was recorded by CDSS in the 1970s and '80s and played by Phil Merrill, Chuck Ward, Marshall Barron and others. Dances are included from By Popular Demand (CDSS6), Popular English Country Dances (CDSS7), Step Stately (CDSS8), plus two dances recorded by the New York Renaissance Band on Country Capers (Arabesque Records, 1984), and a very spirited "Picking Up Sticks," found on CDSS, played by the Pinewoods Players and conducted by Phil Merrill.

Our selection of dances is suitable for dance leaders who have been enjoying English country dancing for a while, are comfortable teaching the dances we've introduced in our earlier booklet, and want to become familiar with the classic repertoire.

The dances in the new booklet are Aye Story House, The Boatman, Chestnut; or Dove's Figury, Come Let's Be Merry, The Dressed Ship, Dublin Bay, The Female Saylor, Jack's Health, Joy After Sorrow, Mad Robin, Mr. Beveridge's Maggot, Mr. Isaac's Maggot, Newcastle, Orleans Jigged, Picking Up Sticks, Prince William, Saint Margaret's Rib, Scotch Cap, The Shrewsbury Lasses, and A Trip to Turnbridge. And we've included a glossary of dance figures and steps not in 21 Easy Dances.

We hope you enjoy this introduction to those English dances which have been loved and learned by many English country dancers on this continent.

Pat MacPherson, CDSS Director of Education

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

Our new CafePress store offers beautiful and useful items featuring the CDSS logo and slogan. We've created tee-shirts, baseball jerseys, tanks tops, hoodies, beach and tote bags, s/s, stainless and trek water bottles; mugs and more! Go to www.cafepress.com/countrydanceandsongsociety to see the goodies.

CDSS NEWS
ISSN 1070-8251
Summer 2012

Editor—Carolyn Batson
Tune Editor—Peter Barnes
Dance Editors—Mary DeClin, 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.

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ADS & ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS
Articles, letters, poems and photographs about music and traditional square dance, English country dances, morris and related dances, dance tunes, followings, and the dance and event 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 newsletter@cdss.org (maximum size for most articles 1,000 words; 750 words for event reviews). We may edit for length and clarity.

Go to www.cdss.org/submissions.html for UPCOMING EVENTS.
To include an event, send name, event, location, sponsoring group, website or phone number to newsletter@cdss.org.

PERSONAL ADS (70 words maximum) are free for CDSS members and $5 for nonmembers.

AD SIZES & RATES
50 word, 7.88’w x 1.59’h, $20
100 word, 7.88’w x 3.19’h, $40
half page vertical, 3.69’w x 5.69’h, $150
quarter page, 3.69’w x 1.0’h, $15
CDSS members may take a 10% discount from these rates. Anyone placing the same size ad in three consecutive issues may take a 10% discount. Please refer to note saying which months you are in for.

SENDING ADS
Ads must be black and white or grayscale. Please send electronically to newsletter@cdss.org (GIF, JPG or TIF, with 200-600 dpi, text and images embedded), with check or VISA/Mastercard info sent some time.

DUE DATES
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, the 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.

from cover: Young English country dancers, Portland, OR; photo courtesy Mary DeClin (see article on page 12)
back cover: Celtic Carol Readhead at English and American Week, Pinewoods, 2011, photo by Doug Plummer

CDSS NEWS, SUMMER 2012
WWW.CDSS.ORG
Welcome, Lyn! Thanks, lydia!

We welcome Lynn Nichols as our new webmaster. Lynn and her husband, Don Krüger began Starstruck Design in 1999. She is a graphic artist and experienced web developer with a background as a marketer, book and trade magazine publisher. A fan of folk music, she enjoys painting and play mountain dulcimer in coffeehouses, and first met English country dance in junior high school. We’re delighted she’s joining us.

Thanks and farewell to our departing webmaster, lydia ives. She’s gearing up to leave the country in August, bound for grand adventures studying folk fiddling and nyckelharps in Sweden. See her brand new Kickstarter project website, http://kck.st/kAfLve3, for an entertaining three-minute movie about the project and a chance to share in the fun.

Harmony Week Diary Online
Amy Sheon kept a wonderful diary of her time at Harmony of Song and Dance last year; you can read it at www.makingmusicmag.com/amat тор которой. (And sign up for this year while there’s time, www.css.org/camp.)

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 into the future with a bequest. It’s practical and tax deductible. For information about bequests and other ways to support CSS, see our website at www.css.org/planned-giving.html.

CDSS is Looking for Stars!

Thought we had enough morris bells so we’re moving to stars? Nope! But CDSS is always on the lookout for star volunteers. Are you one? Do you know someone who is a star?

The CDSS Governing Board is a group of hardworking volunteers who look at the big picture, the vision and direction of where the organization is heading. We are always looking for new board members to fill the vacancies on the Board. We welcome anyone who is interested in serving on the Board. For more information, contact Jennifer Arnaud, Executive Director, at jennifer@cdss.org.

The Board just concluded its annual meeting (see pp. 10-11) and several new task groups were created. These task groups, as well as existing board committees, would welcome and benefit from community member participation; please let us know if you’re interested. In addition, we’ll have a small number of board members completing their terms next year and we’re seeking nominations for those positions here in the fall.

The Nominating Committee submits a slate of qualified individuals for board “at large” positions each year. This year, we’re also putting together a list of stars willing to serve on task groups and committees. And as planning for our Centennial celebrations shifts into high gear, we’re anticipating all kinds of opportunities and will need volunteerstars. We’re asking for your suggestions. The requirement to keep in mind is that all board members must be members of CDSS. Community members serving on task groups and committees need not be board members.

Think about yourself and the people you know in your local community and afar. We’re looking for people who not only have skills, experience, time, energy and can work well in groups, but most importantly have a passion for the country dance, music and song that we all love! Professional experience in any of the following categories would be helpful: management, finance and/or banking, human resources, law, fundraising, public and small nonprofit organizations. We want to hear about active, organized, thoughtful, responsible, creative, innovative in your community who have come up with an idea and worked with others to make it happen. We’re particularly interested in increasing the number of younger volunteers.

If you, or someone you know is a star, please let us know! Send us a short summary of the following:

- Why you think they are a good board, task group or committee candidate
- What work/activities and skills/qualities you have that are useful and relevant
- What they do in dance, music and song
- How we can contact them (email, phone, mail)

Most of our work happens during the summer and early fall so please send your suggestions by July 31 to the CDSS Nominating Committee via email to turpin@spinstro.ca or by mail to 901-14 Bathurst, Toronto, ON MSV 4N8.

Bee Bernbaum, Chair, CDSS Nominating Committee
Recent CDSS Outreach Fund Grants

- TNKY Trad Square Revival (new series of monthly square dances, TN and KY)
- Young Tradition Weekend Youth Dances (family dance at local school, festival including contra and family dances, plus showcase of young singers and musicians, VT)
- Hilltown Spring Festival contra Dance (adding a contra dance at festival, MA)
- Festival of American Fiddle Tunes (youth scholarship to attend fiddle and calling workshops at non-CDSS program, WA)
- Silvery Moon and Golden Slippers (workshop to train young musicians to perform music from 1880s-1940s in a multi-media project, MA)
- The Pipers Gathering (3-day event including English, Irish and Scottish bagpipe traditions, VT)
- Fall Has Sprung (to increase youth participation at annual twelve-hour festival, CA)

Upcoming grant application deadlines are July 1 and October 1. In 2013, deadlines will be February 1, June 1 and October 1. To apply, see cdss.org/grants-support.html, or contact Linda Henry, lindah@edna.org, 413-203-5467 x 105.

Coming up...

WANT TO HELP CREATE A CALLERS & ORGANIZERS CONFERENCE IN THE SOUTHWEST?

We're looking for people to help organize one!

Depending on the needs of the region, this weekend can include workshops for dance organizers, callers, musicians and more.

Please contact Linda Henry if you're interested: linda@cdss.org, 413-203-5467 x 105.

The conference will be funded in part by Country Dance & Song Society as part of our Outreach program www.cdss.org

CDSS Outreach Funds at work—helping others make things happen.

Doing Important Fun ~
A Conversation with Rima Dial, CDSS Executive Director

Having lived in her native Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Hong Kong (where she learned English country dancing), and Greenwich, CT, all before her mid-teens, CDSS's new Executive Director, Rima Dial (pronounced reem-a dial) has a passion and deep respect for traditional dance and music, and their potential for connection. We spoke for over two hours on April 11, 2012. It's almost impossible to translate her energy, enthusiasm, sense of humor, warmth and frequent laughter in these three pages, so I encourage you to read the transcript of the full interview which will be on our website later this month.

~ Caroline Baton, CDSS News Editor

CB: Your mother was a Philippine folk dancer.

RIMA: Yes, part of the Bayanhan Dance Company, my godmother and my mother. My mom learned Hawaiian and Tahitian and taught both for a while.

CB: Was there dance and music and song in your home?

RIMA: All the time, yes, there was always music. There was no television or radio accessible in English in a lot of places that we went to, but we would bring [records] with us: musical theater, John Denver, the Willy Wonka soundtrack, music from "The Ugly Duckling," and the Hans Christian Anderson movie with Danny Kaye, "Seasame Street." Then everything else was folk traditions of the countries we visited, so I was exposed to a lot of Indonesian music and the Muslim traditions, the Thai classical music tradition and the classical dance, and folk music from the Thai Girl Guides.

I had phenomenal music teachers, and the arts curriculum in the international schools that I went to was really great—being exposed to classical music and jazz and folk music and different kinds of folk music traditions, from a global perspective, as well as American folk music traditions too. I was telling Nils [Fredland] that American squares was a big part of PE, both in Thailand and in Hong Kong, especially; it was a big deal.

CB: You got your undergraduate degree in theatre arts and anthropology at Mount Holyoke. What made you combine them?

RIMA: I used to say that I study people and cultures academically during the day and I inhabited people and cultures on stage at night. My academic focus was around cultural anthropology, with a huge interest in urban anthropology, like how cultures came in contact with one another in urban environments and cities. But everything out of class time was in the theatre. Mount Holyoke [had] a summer theatre [then]. Working at the summer theatre totally rocked! [Laughter] John Howard, who taught lighting design and was the technical director for many years, was a HUGE contra dance fan, so one of my early intersections with CDSS was from my college days.

CB: You were an arts administrator for a time and then got your master's in nonprofit management at the New School in New York. Why nonprofit management in particular?

RIMA: I had a great mentor who was pushing me to go to graduate school, but asked what I wanted to get out of it. Did I want a degree that was practically-based, and practicum-based, or become more academically focused. I knew I wanted to go back to the field [and] the New School's classes had a field component to it. I really wanted to go to Yale which had a great MBA/MFA program in stage management and arts administration, but having worked in the arts field for so long and around, specifically, fundraising, what I noticed was everyone, all the funders, were pushing arts organizations to partner with human service organizations, and with this whole notion of what is the relevance of arts to the greater community and how can arts become more inclusive. And looking
at that whole notion of inclusivity and doing so many more partnerships with just the nonprofit sector in general, I thought I should get a general degree in the nonprofit sector.

CB: You told us during the job interview that you’re “extremely passionate about the arts, and arts and education, because of the transformative power of art, music and dance—the power that they have to bring people and communities together.” Would you speak more of that, and how you have been transformed or seen others transformed by the arts?

RIMA: It started on a very personal level—I was born flat-foot and pigeon-toed, and I wore corrective shoes. My mom said “The reason we put you in ballet right away was literally to straighten you out.” [Laughter] And dance [did that] naturally because of the alignment that ballet teaches you. For better or for worse, right? I went from being pigeon-toed to walking like a duck for a while. [Laughter]

You know, my daughter’s six, and watching the transformation for her, when she all of a sudden is now an early reader, and then connecting that to be able to write words to the pictures, and then write words to tunes that are coming up in her head is just phenomenal. That’s transformative, in and of itself, because you can literally see the “aha” moments come to her as she’s going through that process; that’s wonderful to watch. And I think, having grown up in so many countries, there is definitely a through-line of what connects different communities together, and that is always for me been most evident in the artistic sensibilities. In Thailand, we couldn’t speak Thai well enough to really communicate with our Girl Guide folks, but it was a festival through music and song that bonded us together. We became really good friends after that. In all of the countries that I’ve been to how you bring people together has always been through song, how people get welcomed into communities and villages has always been through song.

[For] each of the countries I’ve lived in it’s always been you take someone by the hand and you show them how to dance. It doesn’t matter if you don’t know how to do it. That’s not the expectation. The expectation is you take someone by the hand and you join the circle. There’s always a circle dance in every single community. There is always a circle dance, always handclapping games, always games that they teach the kids first, so when you’re new to a community you are put with the kids and you learn the kids’ games, and there are rituals associated with how you learn [them]. It’s funny: how do you learn the games that you learn on the playground?

CB: You just learn them from each other.

RIMA: You just learn them from each other, exactly. I love the fact that my daughter comes home and she says “Mom, I learned a new one!” [Laughter] There is so much good that can come out of reconnecting one another and different communities, and on an intergenerational level, through the arts. I’ve seen what’s done for me personally: that’s why I’m passionate about the work that we do here at CDSS because it focuses on the participatory nature of a communal arts that doesn’t have to be demonstrated to you. You can literally take someone’s hand, jump right in.

CB: You told us a story [that after your daughter’s] first contra dance she was asked which dance she liked best, and she said “All of them!” I have this image of her dancing around the house.

RIMA: Yes, she will break out into her own version of contra or Irish step dancing at the bus stop. So if you ever come by [here] and see her in the front, that’s what she’s doing.

CB: Do you sing, either yourself or as a family activity?

RIMA: [My daughter] Karana has organized the three of us into varying kinds of bands and impromptu family concerts on occasion, but usually we’re relegated to the audience and she sings. I sang in a choir [and] musical theatre. I’m horrible at reading music and can get a little pitchy sometimes because my ear isn’t great.

I love children’s theatre, just as I love children’s literature, and Tom McCabe, who is the artistic director of Paint Box [Theatre in Northampton, MA], is a friend and he was a director from Mount Holyoke summer theatre days, so we’re patrons of the Paint Box. You know what I love about their work? It’s very similar to what we do; it’s participatory. They have the audience read the stage directions. I love that. This whole notion of getting people to participate in what we do, and to interact with the art is just fun, and it’s important fun.

CB: I like that—“important fun.”

RIMA: It is! Not only does it connect us with each other in a communal sense, but it gives us a really important sense of creativity as a mom. I love seeing that in my daughter, in her being able to participate artistically and creatively in these endeavors, because it gives her a greater sense of who she is and who she can be as is. There’s an exploratory nature and a confidence that comes out of her [and] I think that’s also what we see in the kids that have grown up at camp at Pinewoods and at Timber Ridge and at Ogontz; they have a very, very clear understanding of who they are.

CB: What do you think the strengths and opportunities are for dance and music groups to make a difference in their towns?

RIMA: Hmm. First of all I think we need to recognize—we [CDSS], the umbrella organization—need to better recognize that there’s so much good work already happening, and the big opportunity [for us] is to better connect the good work that is happening in other parts of our organization.

We have tons of dance gyms. [Laughter] I think using them is an [opportunity] for us to work better with our affiliates, to spread the word better; some of that already happens, but I think we need to do more of it. I also think there’s a better opportunity for our affiliates to communicate back to us a lot of the good work that’s being done, so that we can share it with everyone generally. I definitely see the use of videos and web-based kind of reporting as a way to better connect with our affiliates. How cool would it be if we could standardize a way that we can regionalize the report in so every quarter [we] get a report from all corners of the country—snippets of videos of all of the different dances, or conferences, or resident artists’ experiences to share. What a wonderful tapestry that could hang up with all of these experiences because that’s so much joy to share. I also would love to hear from our affiliates what they see as their opportunities that we can help them achieve, [how we can] provide to our affiliates beyond what we already do with fiscal sponsorship and insurance.

One of the skills sets that I bring to this job is to ensure that we have a solid infrastructure. When you’re buying a house, you talk to your realtor and your realtor says “this house has good bones.” I want our organization to have good bones [because] that’s how we’re going to be around for the next hundred years. Separate from our artistic mission and vision, from a financial management point, I want to make sure that we can run our organization well. We have a really dedicated board and so we already do have good bones as an organization, but I do think we need to figure out what that means in twenty-first century vs. twentieth century.

CB: Has anything surprised you about CDSS and its community?

RIMA: You know, I wasn’t surprised, but I was glad to be validated that everyone is very passionate about their involvement and the work that they do. Everyone really has their heart in the right place when they want to do good work for us. That’s a wonderful place to come into as a new executive director because makes all the othericky stuff of making the tough decisions, okay.

While some of the work has been tough, coming in with a steep learning curve to get ready for the annual meeting [laughter], and people [say] “You seem to be doing a lot of hard work,” I’m like “Well, yeah, but it’s hard work for a fine cause.” I’m really lucky I have a good board, a brand new board president, while new to his term as president, he’s not a newbie, so I’m supported by some really great people, and grateful that we have such a wonderful, busy, business manager in Bob [Blondin who can help us build the organization and create sustainability for us moving forward.

I’m having fun, I like being here [and] I’m really excited to see where we can take ourselves. That’s what I want to let membership to know, and let our friends know, that this is just a really fun and exciting place to be right now, and it’s important fun. It’s important work and it’s fun work, that’s why it’s important fun. Is this job hard? Absolutely, but it’s fun! I think it puts us in a very important place in the arts because we really embody what we mean when we say participatory and community.

CB: ...and fun.

RIMA: ...and important fun.

A transcription of the full two-hour interview will be posted on our website mid-June, www.cdss.org/cdss-news.html. Hear Rima talk about her time living abroad, the importance of “cotillion” in Hong Kong, why she decided to go to boarding school, community volunteerism and connections, Anna Pavlova’s place in her life, and more.
Into the Future ~ CDSS Governing Board Meeting 2012

by John Mayberry

Wednesday, April 18. It’s 6:30 a.m. and I’m getting in my rented Kia with a hot cup of tea and a couple of sandwiches. As I get on the highway leaving Toronto, I see the incoming traffic starting to build up but it’s smooth sailing south. I have a blissfully uneventful border crossing at Buffalo (thank you, NEXUS pre-clearance car!), and before I know it seven-and-a-half hours have rolled by and I am following good old-fashioned written directions into Easthampton, Massachusetts, turning into the parking lot of the CDSS office at Eastworks at 2:00 pm. This means I have some time to decompress before the 5:00 meeting.

This is my second CDSS board meeting, not counting the conference calls we have had since the annual meeting last May, as I am a little better prepared this year for the whole experience. I remember last year being surprised by a few things. The first was the number of people on the board. Now, I know that as a dutiful member of the J-camp I should have known this sort of thing, but frankly, until I became a board member I paid scant attention to the workings of the organization. When I walked into the meeting room last year and saw there were chairs for only three people, I was a man in amazement. With nineteen at large board members, four officers, and the office staff, the whole complement makes for a sizable bunch. Another thing that surprised (and delighted) me was that halfway through each meeting day we all got up to do a dance. None of the other boards I’ve been on ever did this, more’s the pity. Similarly, there was a song or two over the course of the proceedings. However, I have to say that the thing that most impressed me was how much we managed to get done in the time we were together.

So, I walk into the meeting room this year to see that things are still being set up for today’s session, which is to be about the upcoming centennial year of CDSS in 2015. The actual Annual Meeting begins tomorrow and lasts two days. I am pleased to find out that most board members are able to make this Wednesday’s session.

The workshop begins with the recognition of David Millstone as the new president, and David’s welcome to Rima Hael, the new executive director. We spend a couple of hours under the guidance of planning consultant Lissa Sieverts, exploring, discussing and creating ideas about ways to mark, celebrate, publicize, conceptualize and capitalize on the centennial year of CDSS. We end up with pieces of colored paper stuck to the walls and many suggestions, images and ideas which will be taken to a design consultant to turn into images and campaign material to use over the next few years of publicity and fundraising. I’m delighted to find myself on the Centennial Publications Committee.

After the workshop, we dispense for the evening, some of us grabbing a bite together, and many seizing the opportunity to go to the contra in Amherst. It’s my first time at one of those legendary New England local dances, and I have a great time dancing to the calling of Tavi Merrill and the playing of Rodney Miller, Peter Siegel and Garrett Sawyer.

Thursday morning we begin the Annual Meeting, joined by those who hadn’t been able to make the Centennial Session, with a song from Lorraine Lee Hammond, one of our two new board members along with Bob Harper. The morning is spent looking at the overview of the organization, reminding us all of the procedures and responsibilities of the board and the staff. We get to find out more about Rima and her passions and strengths, and I am just so happy to be in a room full of people so interested and committed to the participatory dance and music we all love.

There are updates with a presentation of the Society’s budget by Bob Blondin, the business manager. I can say I’ve never seen financial figures so clearly explained. Bob’s color-cooding of the different entries according to level of oversight required by the board was brilliant, and something I will recommend to others.

After lunch we inaugurate a dance written by Joseph Pimentel in honor of David Millstone’s new presidency (see pp. 20-21), and then get down to more business. We have a whole afternoon facilitated by transition consultant Nancy Jackson, looking at the question of where we want CDSS to be in three to five years. We end up with another set of exciting ideas, all colored, grouped, columned and labeled, ready to be muscled into plans and actions by the staff and the various task groups.

Marie Dalton-Meyer, the recent Interim ED joins us to be thanked and fed with cakes. The Society owes her much for the way she shepherded us through an interesting and challenging transition between directors, and it’s great to be able to express our appreciation.

Then we all gather Thursday evening, with our various billeting hosts, at the home of CDSS member K.C. Conlan for a lovely and relax social supper where we get to touch up old friendships and nurture new ones.

Friday morning starts with a blast of enthusiasm, as we all realize that we have only one short day to get through the ambitious agenda. David hands the meeting over to Vice President Jenny Beer, who charges us to examine all the ways we can work better as individuals, as board members and as an organization. We work specifically on Decisions, Oversight, Resources, Deliberation and Linking/ Informing. Again we end up with charts of ideas and suggestions, ranked, ordered and ready to be implemented. Bob Blondin takes us carefully through the board’s responsibilities with regard to various legal requirements. We have another excellent lunch, and then Bob Harper calls a new mixer dance he’s written, which is very successful.

After lunch, the clock ticking, Jenny wraps up the five categories of board functioning, and we are put in the hands of Paul Paulson, who finishes off our time together with an inspiring workshop on self-confidence, public speaking, and social interaction, all designed to help board members in their role as ambassadors and advocates for the work (and play!) that makes this wonderful organization something we can all support and promote.

After hurried goodbyes, many of us take off for NEFFA that evening. I, however, jump in my little car and speed west to Gilbertsville, New York, where the Binghamton Morris Men, Toronto Morris Men and others are about to start an excellent weekend of dance and song. That, however, is another story.
Magical Evening of English Dance

by Mary Devin

How old do you have to be to enjoy the subtle beauty of English country dance? A mature thirty or forty? How about five years old? That was the age of the youngest dancers in a recent display of English dance at the weekly Friday night dance in Portland, Oregon. The oldest dancer? All of twelve.

The dancers were students from the Renaissance School of Arts and Sciences. Headmaster Susan Dunn began teaching her students elements of English country dancing and then called on me, a local caller, to add some finishing touches. They were being prepared to dance with the "grown-ups" at a regular evening dance.

On Friday, April 20, the Water Tower Hall in Portland was electric with twenty-two children, their parents and an uncounted number of video cameras. The children danced "Take A Dance" (www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZS-xxS62c0) and "Mendocino Redwood" with the adults. They perfectly demonstrated "Smithy Hill" for the adults present for whom the dance was new, and then danced it proudly and confidently.

After a brief timeout for a wardrobe change—all costumes self-designed and constructed of materials from Goodwill—the children returned as the exhibition dance troupe Raven's Magic and performed "Old Wife Behind the Fire" (www.youtube.com/watch?v=kAxX.0A-JuUw). Then everyone, reluctant parents included, joined in a rousing "Yellow Stockings."

Perhaps there were some skeptical adults at the beginning of the evening, but it only took once through the first dance to see that the children were accomplished dancers. They not only danced the patterns well but also included eye contact, subtle nods of acknowledgement to their partners, and smiles. And they helped keep the lines straight! They had practiced that too.

A week later the buzz at the school continued to be all about English country dance. Parents are talking about Friday dancing date nights. The children are excited about having more dance lessons. And they prepared to join Portland display dancers to welcome the sun on May Day with English country dancing.

Please note that the YouTube videos are unlisted and can only be accessed with the links. For more information about Renaissance School of Arts and Sciences see www.renaissancechoolportland.org/.
Yoga for Dancers ~ On Balance
by Anna Rain

Balance and swing. Balance your checkbook. Keep your balance. Balancing act. What do we do when we balance and how do we do it? Why do we want balance? The moments when we have only one foot on the ground are rare these days. Keep your balance! Having good balance means you recover more quickly from a misstep, from an impromptu spin, from a partner’s momentary slip, from a grounding physical body that maintains good balance means that more possibilities of movement are available to you, which makes you a more flexible dancer, both corporeally and cerebrally.

The study and practice of yoga has eight components, of which asana—control of the physical body—is only one. Mastery of the physical sphere leads to skills that assist in deeper spiritual fulfillment. Much the same way as practicing scales opens possibilities to play more complex musical pieces. The deeper knowledge of how one's body moves in space, of knowing one's center of gravity and how it shifts, contributes to the ability to maintain and sustain balance over your lives. When we attend to balance, we learn how small physical actions have profound effects, and that attention leads to greater care in our movements. Being more focused and attentive in our physical body can then lead to a more grounded, calmer mental state.

Return to the musical metaphor for a moment: think of a tune whose rhythm and melody you know, the notes fall unevenly on each other, and the tune is there but it’s rushed, not measured and steady. That’s what dancing with little attention to balance is like. Now, when you slow down and play the phrase slowly, seeing that each note is in tune and has good tone, and then, gradually, you increase the speed, the resulting phrase has much more musical integrity. This is what working on balance does for your dancing. When we slow down and focus on the elements of balance, our faster dancing is much smoother and efficient.

Working begins with connection with gravity; in order to balance, you must know where the base of your body contacts the floor. As a folk dancer, that connection is through the feet. Start with bare feet about ten inches apart, and make them parallel—take the heels slightly away from each other so that the outer edges of the feet are closer to parallel than the inner edges. Lift your toes and see how the arch of each foot draws up. Keep the arches sucked up, then lengthen the toes out onto the floor. If you find that keeping your focus on your feet is disconcertingly challenging, sit on the edge of a chair and work your feet without weight-bearing.

(For a full discussion of how to align the body, look back to Chapter 1 in the CDSS newsletter Winter 2008, “Use your bones—not your joints—to support you as you stand,” and Fall 2009, “Align the spine.”)

And hey! You musicians who stand to play can apply all these concepts of balance to your bodies, too. If you sit to play, sit on the edge of your chair, draw your side ribs and chest up and away from the waist. How you hold any instrument is necessarily asymmetrical: find the balance and evenness in the center of your body, and extend that evenness to the edge of yourself. If you ground yourself and then lift away from the downward pull of gravity, your music will have a base from which to launch, and your body will support your musical expression more fully.

After you’ve established your connection to gravity via the floor, your next task is to resist gravity. Press your feet down and lift yourself away from the floor. Either sitting or standing, the principles are the same: ground your feet; keep your abdomen back; lift the side ribs and chest; lengthen through the back of the neck. Make yourself as thin and tall as you can. “Thin” refers to drawing all your muscles into the bones and toward your center axis.

The more gathered your outer circumference is, the less gravity can get its hooks into you and pull you down. When we give in to gravity, our balance suffers. Any mass of weight that pulls away from the center draws us out of perfect balance. Certainly we can keep from falling by adjusting: we can be “balanced” with one hip off to the side and our torso compensating in the opposite direction. A cantilevered balance, however, is not our optimal starting point. With such an offset, we dance unevenly, like a washing machine spin cycle with all the heavy stuff on one side.

Be tall! Be long! Taller! Lift away from the floor and present yourself in its most vertical manifestation. This is balance on two feet, and it’s no small accomplishment. To be grounded and gathered and lifted and long is a wonder. Now see how this balance on the road and go to one foot. This is not a yoga pose per se, but how you will practice it involves yoga principles. The description is short and descriptively simple; the dedication to devoted practice to hone your skill at balancing is a lifelong pursuit.

Stand tall and balanced on two feet. Shift your weight to your left foot, and extend the right foot forward about six inches. As you do this, keep your outer left hip tucked in toward the midline of the body. Don’t let the hip cantilever to the left—draw it in and up, just as you did to both sides of the body when you were on two feet. Take the abdomen toward the back body, tuck the side ribs, and lift the waist away from the hips and chest away from the waist. Can you keep your balance without wavering? Practice several times a day on alternating feet. One dancer I know does this anywhere she’s waiting: in the grocery line, for an elevator, while brushing teeth or doing dishes or dancing.

Once you have good balance on one foot, take it to the next level. Keep your body long and lifted—the taller and more drawn in and up you are, the less your balance will waver. Then lift your standing heel slightly. Notice all the changes that happen with this one small shift! Keep the standing hip drawn in and your standing leg firm. Stay even and balanced, and lift the center. For our dancing purposes there’s no need to go very high onto the ball of the foot. Can you lift a bit more and remain steady? Small about, big reward. This simple regimen has made a significant difference in my dancing: I’ve regularly attended to my balance thus for three or four years, in addition to the balances I do in my daily yoga practice. I’ve noticed that my ability to shift my weight smoothly and imperceptibly while dancing has steadily improved.

Earlier, I mentioned that focus on balance brings fluidity, smoothness, and efficiency to our faster dancing. Attention to balance also enables us to dance more slowly. One of the reasons dancing slowly is difficult is that we lose our resistance to gravity between one step and the next. When the next foot comes way sooner than you want, it’s not necessarily because the music’s too slow! Think of each step as an abbreviated balancing challenge: engage the standing leg and anchor the standing hip, draw yourself up, see if you can resist the pull of gravity and hover before the next beat draws your foot down. When we have better balance, an expanded range of dancing styles is available to us. We can take responsibility for our own choices of movements and carriage in a tango. We can hold our place steady and give support to dancers on either side of us in a Balkan line dance. Certain lovely, measured Swedish dances are now within my grasp because my work on balance has increased my ability to dance more slowly. And, as some dancers in my home community have found, we can bring heightened awareness to a contra dance by lowering the tempo and dancing more slowly, with very satisfying results.

My yoga practice has taught me consistently that attention paid to minute actions focuses my mind. Paradoxically, the work of cultivating this increased focus brings greater freedom from all the things my mind can get tangled in. The practice of balancing the body, I find, quite literally helps balance everything else that I consider important in my life. While indeed the mind can influence the body, my experience shows me that the discipline of working the body brings increased awareness, sensitivity and flexibility to my mind and soul, too.

Anna Rain is a certified Iyengar yoga instructor, and she wholly believes Mr. Iyengar’s words, that “...balancing poses keep us from taking ourselves too seriously.” She dances, calls and makes music in the Washington, DC area, and can be reached at annarain-figmall.com.

Dance Correction for Malcolm’s X, by Erik Hoffman (in the last issue)

Formation: Improper
A1 Right hand to current neighbor, balance, hop the gat, pull by, allemande left neighbor and return to new neighbor
A2 Star right three-quarters, gent turns to swing partner
B1 Circle clockwise three-quarters, swing neighbor (now all crossed over)
B2 Long lines forward and back; half-boy (women start)

Thanks to everyone who cleared up the confusion, including the author—the balance in the A1 went missing in the last issue.

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It's springtime in Calgary and that can only mean one thing: unsettled weather! The forecast is calling for rain, or snow or both, but the hail is warm and the band is hot, and regulars and newcomers alike are filing in for our monthly dance.

I overhear a snippet of conversation: “I read about the dance on the internet...” and I smile to myself. It certainly is a good deal easier to connect with our dancing passion in this decade! When we arrived in Calgary sixteen years ago my wife had to do a bit of digging to find the contra dance community here, and I recall the nervousness we felt that very first night we arrived, much like these newcomers, wondering what sort of a welcome we'd encounter.

We needn't worry; we found a warm and inviting group of people who were and remain avid dancers.

In some respects our Calgary community has been like the good citizens of Whoville in the Dr. Seuss story of dust specks and irreducibly. "We are here!" has been our refrain, and the internet has allowed us to break through and connect to the wider world. Yes, there are indeed dancers in Calgary.

The Calgary contra dance community has existed for over twenty-five years now, founded by a couple of displaced Eastern Canadians, Michael and Karen Pollock, who had been exposed to New-England-style contra dancing in Ontario. Michael recounts how his first attempts at creating a dance series were along the lines of the approach taken in Field of Dreams. "If you build it they will come!" and how even with a hall that charged $15 dollars for a rental and an entry fee of $3 they couldn't cover the cost of the hall. While they may have been prepared to give up, some very enthusiastic musical friends weren't, and the community was born as a house dance in the front room of a friend's home. Michael became the caller for the community and those first eager attendees helped organize what became our dance series. The community grew by word of mouth and through connections within folk music circles here in southern Alberta.

Although Alberta's folk music history isn't as long or as storied as that of our eastern cousins, it is rich and varied. We have a strong tradition of fiddle music and "barn" dancing that is there to be tapped, and that native tradition is mingling with musical influences from around the world. Call it "Cowboy Celtic" if you will, but folkroots music definitely has a strong presence here in Alberta, and we see our growing dance community as a part of an emerging desire to connect with our varied roots and weave new traditions.

I never imagined that I would ever be a caller, but at one particular dance a decade ago Michael lost his voice and, armed with a dance card and some hoarsely whispered words of encouragement, I entered the breach. For the last two years I have been principal caller with Michael's generous assistance and that of several members of our community. Our guest callers include Annette Le Fivre, our west coast dance gypsy; James Prescott, who has extensive Playford experience; and Parker Mann who is our peripatetic New England-Texan-Californian.

Dances from the Ralph Page and Ted Sennella repertoires were once our mainstay, and dances like "Scout House Reel" and "Petronella" are still community favourites. Our love for the traditional doesn't mean we are removed from the evolution of our dance form however, and our community of callers are also writers as well (see next page), so we have a regular mix of both the new and the old to offer our community.

In some respects our group grew in isolation from the broader contra dance community, and hence we have developed a dance culture of our own here in Calgary. We have never suffered from some of what might be termed the pesky pet peeves of the broader North American dance community, things like the "center set syndrome," "the claps" (Petronella clapping), or the "hooked dance card," but we do have cultural quirks of our own. For example, we teach and dance an old-style kick balance on occasion, because it works well with some of the older dances. We Calgarians can be a shy lot and encouraging eye contact has taken some effort, but we are making progress—we've improved from looking at our own shoes to looking at those of our partners. Because of our small beginnings and monthly schedule our community never embraced the habit of switching partners with each new dance. This may be attributable to an adherence to the Prairie dictum that one must "Dance with them what brung ya." Single dancers and newcomers need not be afraid of having to go it alone—we are very welcoming and will ensure that people have partners, particularly newcomers.

Yes, we ARE here, and we're growing! This past fall we hosted our first contra dance workshop to great reviews and are looking to expand it this fall into a regional offering. We also are assisting in the birth of a dance series in the rural community of Three Hills which has a small college and a thriving arts community and some very enthusiastic dancers. Our callers are available to assist any regional dance community with their dance series or workshops.

Calgary has a lot to offer visitors at all times of the year. In addition to urban pleasures there are these rather large hills to the west of us, and it is only a short drive to four National Parks (Banff, Jasper, Kootenay and Yoho) and the best kept Rocky Mountain secret of the Provincial Parks...
From One Generation to the Next

The Kids Take Over by Jessica Emery

Here in Philadelphia we have a local community dance. People of all ages can attend and have fun learning easy dances and singing silly songs. Most of the time the music is just a few adults hired to play like any other dance, but for the last two Feburarys, something different has happened—the kids have taken over! That’s right, we let the adults enjoy the dancing and a few of us kids learn a bunch of tunes and play them for the dancers. And not to worry, playing in the band does not take away any of the fun of the event. It is just as fun watching people dance to your tune as it is when you are the one doing the dancing.

Though some of the group has been dancing since we were around eight years old, we have only recently started playing for dances. Music is an important part of all of our lives and being able to share it with other people makes it that much more rewarding. I remember after our first dance tune was finished and everyone was cheered. Even though I didn’t play it perfectly it didn’t matter—it was just happiness at being appreciated for doing something you love, and I couldn’t keep the big smile off my face.

Our group is something that not many people get to be a part of and it is agreed that we would all play more if we could. Fellow member Drew said “Maybe I haven’t searched enough but groups like this one are hard to come by and we should play as much as we can.” We all love playing for the dances and are so grateful to Chloe Maher for organizing this group. Eleanor said, “Thank you so much, Chloe! I know that I speak for everyone when I say that we had a wonderful time playing in the group, and I hope I’ll be able to do it next year.”

This entire experience has been extremely enjoyable, instructive and just an overall great time. Though a few of us are seniors this year and will not be able to continue with us, the rest of us are extremely excited for next year and the rest of us will miss them greatly.

From Learning to Teaching by Chloe Maher

I was inspired to gather a group of teens together to play for a dance by my own experience playing for an English dance when I was in high school. Tanya Rotenberg organized that group of kids. It was a great experience to learn how to play for dancing and get to play for real dancers. The Community Dance in Philadelphia has had several children who have stopped coming when they reached the age of twelve or thirteen. I wanted to encourage them to stay involved and give them new ways to participate. So, I recruited a group of teens to play for the dance in February 2011 (six musicians) and February 2012 (eleven musicians). Most of the kids had never played for dancing before, though many of them were dancers. We worked closely with the callers each year to pick tunes that would go with the dances. We had four rehearsals in the weeks leading up to the dance. The caller attended the final rehearsal and ran through the tunes in the same way they would for the dance.

The musicians in 2010 were: Jessica Emery (piano, flute), Eleanor Avril (fiddle), Sarah Thomas (fiddle), Maria Thomas (clarinet), Jocelyn Kuznetz (flute, penny whistle), and Rosalie Baseman (flute). In 2011, the musicians were Jessica Emery (flute), Eleanor Avril (fiddle), Sarah Thomas (fiddle), Maria Thomas (clarinet), Rosalie Baseman (flute), Julian Baseman (clarinet), Daniel Potier (piano), Drew Kaplan (button accordion), Tom Krumm (fiddle), Emily Agofia (fiddle), and Jacob Agofia (viola). We had a great time and the teens and I are looking forward to next year!

* "Working with Young Musical Bands," by Tonya Rotenberg, CDSS News, July-August 1999

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TWO CONTRAS FROM CALGARY

Half-Century Hornpipe by Michael Pollock

Formation: Duple Proper
Level: Easy/Intermediate
A1 #3 couple half-figure eight through the #2 couple below; swing neighbor
A2 Star left hands across; star right hands across
B1 (Leads drop out, Follows keep joined right hands) Follows chain across; Follows chain back
B2 Long lines forward and back; #1 couple half-figure eight through the #2 couple above

Notes: Except at the top and bottom of the set, #1 couples do a full figure eight, half with their old #2 couples above, and half with the new #2 couples below. This dance flows very nicely but may require a bit more time to teach the half-figure eight figure. Etiquette dictates that the Follows go first into the half figure eight. This dance was written in honor of my wife Natalie Manzer’s fiftieth birthday. Etiquette dictates that I not tell you when that was.

Bass Desires
by Steven Méthot

Formation: Duple Improver
Level: Easy/Intermediate
A1 Neighbor balance and swing
A2 Star left hands across; (Follows drop out, Leads keep joined left hands) Leads allemande left once and a half
B1 Partner gypsy meltdown (gypsy and swing)
B2 Circle left three-quarters Balance the ring and partner California twirl to face new neighbor

Notes: The dance was originally entitled “Well Hello Mary Lou” as it was written in honor of the bassist of the Sunday Nite Band, Mary Lou Daucourt. Having discovered that the title was already taken for another contra dance I sought an even punnier one.

The Surgeon General has mandated that I warn you that this can be a spiney dance.

Steven Méthot is a transplanted Québécois musician (barjo, bodhran and voice), writer and runner. An avid dancer and caller, he’s currently exploring the dark side of the force and learning rapper sword dancing with five brass friends in the confines of his garage, assisted by ample lubrication and adult beverages. Steven explores his own bass desires as the bass of Diminished Fifth, an a cappella quartet with an instrument problem. He can be reached at ghizely_sm@yahoo.com.
Mr. Millstone's Inauguration

by Dave Wiesler

English country dance
Formation: longways, duple minor, proper
Tune by Dave Wiesler, 100 bpm (4 steps per bar)

A1 1-2 First corners right hand turn three-quarters ending in neighbor's place while second corners cast right into neighbor's place
3-4 Second corners (now in first corner places), set moving forward, turn single back to place

A2 1-4 Repeat A1 from new places; all end in original places

B1 1-2 Double Mad Robin figure, first corners inside to start
3-4 Ones half-figure eight down (man goes first)

B2 1-2 Twos half-figure eight up
3 Pass through across the set
4 Neighbors gate to face back in, right hand person moving forward

Teaching Notes
Astute dancers will find an opportunity to connect with their partners at the top of each A, where the momentum of the dancer moving into the right hand turn parallels their partner's cast.

Double Mad Robin figure (B1): Partners facing, one shuttle down around the twos and back up while twos shuttle up around the ones and back down, first corners going inside to start.

In the first half-figure eight (B1), the first man should precede his partner, following his momentum from the preceding figure, and allowing his partner to pause before changing her momentum. (Think of this as honor to David Millstone (see below) rather than a slight to the first woman.) For easy memory load, second man can go first in the second figure eight too (B2). If the prescribed first person is not ready, though, their partner can gently remind them of the figure by going first.

Background
For David Millstone on the occasion of his inauguration as president of CDSS in April 2012. Former board member Jane Srivastava suggested the idea for the dance, and David's wife Sheila shared some of David's favorite dance elements. Dave Wiesler wrote the gentle, stately and inspiring tune which recalls the lovely tune "Autumn in Amherst" and the figures echo "Money Musk," one of David's favorite dances.

Though test piloted earlier, the official first dancing was done during the annual board meeting at which David became president. Robin Hayden led it and Pat MacPherson and Lydia Ievins played.
Night Watch
by Karen Axelrod

English country dance
Formation: longways, duple minor, improper
Tune by Karen Axelrod

A1
1-2 Partners set;
3-4 Men cast over right shoulder to dance clockwise halfway round the set,
their partners following;
5-6 On the first diagonal, women cross by right shoulder to end in original
places facing out (first half of a chevron) while men continue clockwise
round the minor set to end outside the set facing partner;
7-8 Women back into place, their partners following (finishing the chevron).

(All are in original places, but crossed over.)

A2
1-2 Partners set;
3-4 Women cast over right shoulder to dance clockwise halfway round the
set, their partners following, into...
5-8 Neighbors gypsy right.

(All are progressed and on the correct side.)

B1
1-2 Men cross;
3-4 Women cross;
5-8 Circle left once round.

B2
1-4 Two changes of rights and lefts with hands, beginning with partner.
5-8 Partners gypsy right.

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Author's note:
My thanks to Karen Axelrod for letting me use her beautiful tune and to Joanna Reiner for trying out the dance
and helping improve the ending.