

# CDSS NEWS

WINTER 2011



COUNTRY DANCE AND SONG SOCIETY

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

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and Song Society. Views expressed in letters and articles  
represent those of the authors and not necessarily of CDSS. All  
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NOTE: The *CDSS News* will become an online periodical in  
the spring, available to members and nonmembers alike; we  
expect this to be our last paper issue.

**COUNTRY DANCE AND SONG SOCIETY**  
*Continuing the traditions. Linking those who love them.*

Founded in 1915, CDSS continues to celebrate and preserve  
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 the online members list,  
ten percent discount from the store/mail order, and first crack  
at registering for our summer programs. CDSS is a 501(c)3  
nonprofit organization; membership dues and donations are  
tax deductible.

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Cover: Toronto Women's Sword, Half Moon Sword Ale, NYC, February 2010;  
photo by Janet Zopfi; see article on page 11.

**ADS & SUBMISSIONS—news@cdss.org**

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. We may  
edit for length and clarity.

UPCOMING EVENTS (balls, workshops, weekends, etc.)  
are published on our website, www.cdss.org/upcoming-  
events.html. There is no charge for a simple listing (date,  
name of event, town/state, sponsoring group, website or  
phone/email).

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

DISPLAY AD SIZES & RATES  
Sizes and rates may change with the online issue; that  
info will be on our website in January 2011.

DEADLINES  
Winter—November 1st (published early January)  
Spring—February 1st (published early April)  
Summer—May 1st (published early July)  
Fall—August 1st (published early October)

EMAIL from us to you—Now that we have monthly  
sales and quarterly news eblasts going out to friends  
and members, we want to be sure they're getting to you.  
Please "white list" us (news@cdss.org, office@cdss.org,  
store@cdss.org). If you've not received an eblast yet, let  
us know—we may have an old address.

EMAIL from you to us—We get a lot of email. Despite  
our precautions, your very legitimate message may go  
astray or be grabbed by our spam filters. If you've sent  
an address change and mail continues to go to your old  
address, or if you've sent a note needing a reply and  
haven't heard back from us within two weeks, please  
call—413-268-7426, Mondays-Fridays, 9:30 am-5 pm.



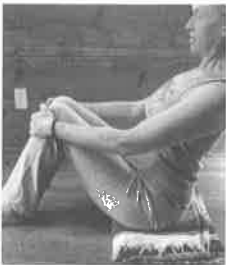
visit our website  
[www.cdss.org](http://www.cdss.org)



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## Letters and Announcements

### Hands Four and Dust

In early June 2010, our local dance organization volunteered to do a thorough cleaning of our rented dance hall, the American Legion Hall in Wethersfield, Connecticut. We rent the hall, but we care both about the hall and maintaining our fine relationship with the veterans who are responsible for it. At the end of a five-hour cleanup, the hall sparkled. We dusted ceiling vents, washed walls and light fixtures, cleaned photographs of veterans, shined trophies, scrubbed all three bathrooms, and removed decades of dust and grime from just about everywhere.

We did some things right. It was wise to ask for ninety minute shifts during our five hours (10 am–3 pm); even so, most workers stayed about three hours. Of course, it was BYOB, Bring Your Own Bucket. We had tape and a marker to label buckets and other supplies that volunteers brought to the hall. We used nametags, which proved very helpful. Rubber gloves and dust masks were also available. Sponges, rags, and paper towels all proved useful. “Before” and “After” photos helped to show the results of our efforts. All our ladders proved useful. As advertised on our flyer, we started and ended on time.

We could have done some things better. We should have used an attendance sheet, so we could have been sure to thank every volunteer after the event. We only had one vacuum, and could have used two. Earlier attention to the entrance area would have insured we completed cleaning every part of the entryway. We could have used one-edged razor blades; weighed against the risks, I decided against it.

The cleaning supplies cost about \$150, and we bought pizza for lunch. We used the huge kitchen table for supplies, and we were able to return all unopened supplies, which allowed us to overbuy our cleaning supplies instead of guessing exactly right.

My co-leader, Nancy Dunn, and I inspected the hall months before the event to determine what areas needed special attention and to identify the necessary supplies. We later walked through the hall with the American Legion president to discuss our plans and identify things that could be discarded from storage areas (most of the ancient, unused stuff). Our simple flyer and email appeals for help got us about twenty-five volunteers. We estimate almost a hundred man-hours went into cleaning our dance hall that Sunday. It showed. We hope that others will consider a “dance hall clean-up” and that sharing our experiences will make yours even better.

*Robert Reichert, Hartford Community Dance  
www.HCDance.org*

### Word to Callers

Sometimes the old expression, “The squeaky wheel gets the grease,” has a lot going for it. I have been a ballroom, square/barn, and contra dancer for a long, long time (I am now eighty-two), so I think there is a “bit of experience” to back up my comments. I also taught contra for several years.

I would like to direct my comments to contra dance callers. Please keep a close eye tuned to your flock, your dancers on the floor in lines. Recently I was at a dance where there were two lines. The caller’s attention was in one direction most of the time, focused on only that line. In the meantime, the other line was breaking up quite severely due to two beginner couples. The caller had actually stopped calling much too soon. Had he been watching both lines and started calling again as the line started to break up, he may have been able to save the dance for those people.

All of this has a progressive effect on the whole dance, or can have. Now, put yourself in the position of an experienced dancer. We try to save the situation, but are so distracted by it all, and cannot hear a caller who has stopped, then we have to figure out the dance in addition to helping out the beginners, so that we too get out of step, and lose it.

So, please, please, please, all you callers, keep your eyes on all the dancers and lines, watch for the breakups, and keep on calling until some experienced dancers can “fix it.” Thank you.

*Ev Cassagneres, Cheshire, CT*

### Canadian News Sought

We’re spearheading a new section in the *CDSS News*, featuring news about an event or a group in Canada, describing what we all know and love—dance and song. These stories will bring you Canadian perspectives that continue the traditions, linking all of us together. We plan to approach the Canadian members and affiliate groups to find out what’s going on and what interests you. Submit your articles to Rosemary, [rosemarylach@yahoo.com](mailto:rosemarylach@yahoo.com), or to Bev, [wturnip@sympatico.ca](mailto:wturnip@sympatico.ca), marked CDSS Canadian content. Or contact us with your questions or ideas. We’d love to hear from you!

*Bev Bernbaum, Toronto, ON  
Rosemary Lach, Prince George, BC*

### BACDS American Week: The Tradition Continues

Long ago and far away, in the summer of 1981 was born the Mendocino American Dance and Music Camp. Started by Brad and Jenny Foster and many others, it was modeled on CDSS’s Pinewoods Camp, but quite dramatically adapted to its California environment in the redwood forest. Adaptation to changing conditions is necessary for all living things, and Mendocino American Week, living thing that it is, must change.

Change is hard, but it’s also a grand opportunity. And so it is for American Dance and Music Week as we depart our beloved Mendocino Woodlands for a new location, closer to Palo Alto and San Francisco (just forty-five minutes drive from SFO and SJC airports!), yet still in the coastal redwoods. Last year the camp organizers took a leap of faith and opened doors for young dance organizers from around the country to come and share in the quality dance and music that has always marked Mendocino American Week. The results were superb. We had an energized and very, very fun week with a great mix of old and young, traditional and neo-traditional dance and events. This year we’re going to do it all again, taking into careful consideration that as some of us (yes, me!) are gracefully aging, we need to nourish and provide opportunities for younger dancers, and also be sensitive to those who might be struggling with the adverse economic conditions we are currently experiencing nationwide.

We have a wonderful staff; see our ad in this issue for some of their names and check out our website (noted below) for more details. In addition to exciting music and excellent callers, there will be traditional old time arts and crafts, picnics, camper band night, feasts, late night stories and campfires and jams, and all of the other traditions we have always enjoyed at Mendocino Camp. Plus we’ll invent a few more—how about a square dance in a round yurt?

With our change of venue come reduced costs and more opportunities for scholarships for those who need it. The camp begins on Sunday and ends on Friday, a slightly shorter camp, but even that has good news attached. The revised schedule will help campers from out-of-town make more convenient travel plans. “Camp” will begin with our featured bands playing around the Bay Area on the preceding weekend, with some workshops offered, and will continue with an all camp plus community dance in Palo Alto on Friday night, followed by workshops, concert and the Palo Alto Saturday night dance. We hope you will join us for some or all of it! It is not to be missed! For more information see [www.bacds.org/amweek](http://www.bacds.org/amweek).

*Laura Light, Bay Area CDS*

### Thanks, CDSS!

Both the Ashokan Foundation and the Ashokan Center have received their own letters of determination from the IRS and are now tax exempt under 501(c)3 in their own right. Our CDSS group exemptions were an enormous help while we were forming the organizations, obtaining the physical property and beginning to run the operation. I don’t know how we could have acted as quickly and been as successful without your support.

[As of mid-September] our construction project is slowly gearing up with the completion of our new parking lots this coming week and moving of an old building to make room for the new ones. We plan to be in our new facility by the summer of 2012. You’re all invited to visit then or any time along the way. Many, many thanks from all of us to all of you!

*Jay Ungar and Molly Mason*

*Ashokan Center, [www.ashokancenter.org](http://www.ashokancenter.org)*

*Ashokan Foundation, [www.ashokanfoundation.org](http://www.ashokanfoundation.org)*

### Girl Scouts Continue the Traditions

Our event was “International Night” at Our Chalet, a World Center of the Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts in Adelboden, Switzerland, held on June 21, 2010. The participants were approximately a hundred girls and women, mostly from across the United States, but also from Denmark, England, Scotland, Argentina, Australia and Swaziland. International Night was the opening event for a ten-day Girl Scout/Girl Guide program. Each troop was to present something that represented their home. Our troop (being from eastern Massachusetts) wanted to showcase Helen Storrow’s influence in our lives because of her work in both Girl Scouting and country dance.

At the event, we first talked about Helen Storrow and how she was very active in the early Girl Scout movement and donated land in Plymouth for what became one of the premier Girl Scout camps in the northeast (and which we have used extensively). Then we talked about her role in bringing English country dance to America and how we had had a lot of fun learning country dance. Next we brought everyone outside and had them make a big (BIG!) circle and demonstrated a dance, the Black Nag. One of us played the music on a recorder and the rest of us danced. Then we demonstrated a two-person morris jig, Shepherd’s Hey. Finally we taught everyone Sellenger’s Round. They caught on after awhile and seemed to have a lot of fun with it. We also showed materials from CDSS and were able to place them in the tearoom where they will be available to everyone who passes through Our Chalet. ►

Our whole presentation seemed to go very well; we had practiced the dances, so they went smoothly. This was a very different presentation than the other troops had made and it was the grand finale of the program, so it was great to have something active and participatory. Furthermore, Helen Storrow is already very well-appreciated at Our Chalet because she donated the land and funds for building the Chalet, and the organization was very excited to have us do this program. By the time of our presentation, the girls had heard a lot about Helen Storrow, but they did not know about her activities outside of Girl Scouting.

The financial outcome for our troop was very successful. We had worked for several years earning money towards this trip and the CDSS grant was a big help and also a morale boost as we were struggling to finish our fundraising. In the end, each troop member only had to pay around \$300 out of personal funds for the trip, including the ten-day program. We greatly appreciate the financial help from CDSS in sponsoring what was probably a somewhat unusual project. We also are very grateful to Jan Elliot for her enthusiasm, for teaching us the dances and taking us to Pinewoods Camp where we were able to see firsthand more of Helen Storrow's legacy. We also thank Pinewoods Camp for welcoming us there.

Anne Richards, Girl Scout Troop 81251  
Falmouth, MA

*The name Helen Storrow (Mrs. James J. Storrow), 1864-1844, may be familiar to some of our readers. A philanthropist and early leader of the Girl Scout movement in the United States, she owned the Pinewoods Camp property, then a Girl Scout camp, and a scout camp remains to this day in the Long Pond area. Mrs. Storrow also played an important role in the founding of CDS Boston in 1915, and hosted the English musician and folklorist, Cecil J. Sharp, who stayed at her house in Lincoln, Massachusetts, while recovering from ill health.*

#### ► Lifetime Contribution Award--Save the Date! ◀

On Saturday, April 2, 2011, CDSS will present the Lifetime Contribution Award to Tom Kruskal, in honor of his longtime involvement with dance and music, and especially his work with younger dancers and musicians. The presentation ceremony and party will be held at Nevins Halls in Framingham, MA, beginning at 4:30 pm; potluck tapas, the award presentation, and an English country and contra dance are being planned. More information will be posted on the CDSS website closer to the time; for information now, contact Karen Axelrod, at karenaxelrod@yahoo.com, or Deborah Kruskal at dkruskal@verizon.net. If you're a Facebook member go to the "Celebrate Tom!" site.

#### Wanted: A Few Excellent Board Members

Several CDSS Governing Board positions will need to be filled next year, including that of president and some at large positions. The Nominating Committee would like your help finding people with the skills, experience, energy, time and teamwork style that will continue to make ours a strong and active board.

Board members must be members of CDSS and familiar with our goals. We seek people with professional experience in management, finance, human resources, volunteerism, fundraising and publicity, particularly with small nonprofit organizations. Of course, we want to know about active, creative people of all types, and we are especially interested in increasing the number of young Board members.

If you have candidates to suggest (and this includes self nominations), send a short paragraph or two with the following information:

- why you think they are a good board candidate
- what work/activities they do that might be useful and relevant
- what they do in the dance and song world and where they do it
- how to contact them by email, phone and snailmail

Please send names for consideration before June 30, 2011 to the CDSS Nominating Committee chairman, David Millstone, via email at millstone@valley.net, or by mail at 176 Farnum Hill Road, Lebanon, NH 03766.

#### Personal Ad

Sixty-two year old physician looking for a fulltime partner in a busy private out-patient practice of adult medicine. Competitive compensation package, excellent support services, and minimal call. Care for loyal quality patients in a beautiful area of rural Western North Carolina. Contra and English country dancing every other Saturday night as well as frequent dance weeks and dance weekends at the nearby John C Campbell Folk School. Call Dr. Brian Mitchell at 828-837-2696 if interested.

## Notes from the Office

#### Sharing the Vision: Themes and Practical Ideas for Vibrant Dance Communities (Part 2)

by Max Newman, Youth Projects Intern



Traveling and talking with folks, I've learned more about what makes vibrant music and dance communities. I'm sharing a few insights and ideas in this column, directed primarily at organizers of dances but useful, I suspect, to many roles in many communities.

The Vision: It's the least technical, most overlooked, and perhaps most important aspect of any dance. A vision is the frame through which organizers, performers, and dancers make their decisions, the ideal for which they strive, the source from which they draw inspiration. But for that to work, people have to know what it is.

You must have a vision to share a vision. Organizers, performers, and dancers all have (at least) one, whether or not they have articulated it. Having a vision that is articulated gives organizers and the community as a whole valuable guidance and inspiration. \*

Avoid the Vision Void. While not without merit, an unsubstantive vision--sometimes expressed as the "so long as it's fun for the dancers" attitude--is often a dodge. After all, what is "fun," who are "the dancers," and how do you determine what "they" want? Organizer Larry Jennings noted, "If there is no objective, you cannot achieve it." An organizer's vision should be engaged with the community, but this doesn't mean shying away from presenting a vision that will inspire ideas and attitudes dancers may not have even know they shared.

You must communicate the vision for people to know the vision. Make sure people know what your vision is by sharing it in both passive ways, e.g., in writing, and active ways, e.g., person-to-person.

Write it out. How else do you know what it is? It might be a few sentences or a few pages, but it should define what you care about.

Make it accessible. Put a public version of your vision prominently on your website. Email newcomers a link to it. Have it on fliers at the door. Put up posters with your values, e.g., "Anyone can ask anyone to dance!"

Each individual in the community is an asset for communicating a vision, both through their words and through their actions. Most central are:

- *The organizers.* If you are to help communicate the vision, you benefit from being visible. Some ideas to consider: make announcements, wear name badges, and have posters with your pictures.
- *The performers.* Share the vision with performers. Maybe this means explaining how to treat sit-ins to the band or suggesting to the caller how much time for socializing between dances is appropriate. Callers have authority and visibility and they can assist sharing (and crafting) a dance's vision so be sure they know what it is.
- *The leaders on the floor.* Share the vision with those charismatic and wonderful people on the floor, especially leaders of peer groups, e.g., a homeschool group. You may find this to be an informative two-way street.

State your vision in positive terms. Presumably you like your vision because there is something fun and wonderful about it. Although there's a place for "no" and "don't", presenting the joy behind your vision is the most compelling way.

Crafting and sharing a vision has many rewards and I hope organizers and others continue to share techniques to make this happen.

\* For an excellent articulated vision, see "10 Things About BIDA" which will be posted on our website in early January as an addendum to this column.

#### Group Corner

by Jeff Martell, Group Services Manager



We can't tell you enough how grateful we are for the remarkable work you do at the local level to support and promote English and American dance and song. You are the ones out there making your dance and song events happen: you are the leaders, the musicians, the dancers, the sound system

haulers, hall-renters, web site maintainers, mailing list compilers, and brownie-bakers. Your events are happening in hundreds of large and small venues all across the continent.

Those of you directly involved in organizing dance and song activities are probably aware of at least part of what CDSS is doing to support you, but there may be some things you are unaware of.

Some of your local dance leaders may have

attended our summer programs or camps, where they learned new dances, shared insights and ideas with other dance leaders, became better dancers, strengthened their commitment to the dance community, made important connections, and learned from some of the finest leaders and musicians in the world. Your leaders and musicians may even have taken one of our many leadership training courses or received scholarship assistance from us in order to attend any of the above. Your local leaders have the opportunity to use your Group Priority form to gain some advantage in the camp lottery.

Your group may get tax exempt status or liability insurance through CDSS. This is the kind of nuts and bolts support that allows the music and dance to happen, but that folks in front of the house never see. Your group might have received a grant from New Leaders for leadership training, youth activities or mentorship programs. You may have purchased hard to find dance and song materials from the CDSS Store! You may have received outreach grants for dance organizer training, or to produce an event, book or CD. (What? You have not applied for one? Go check it out at [www.cdss.org/outreach.html](http://www.cdss.org/outreach.html)). You may have gotten business advice or made connections with other groups through the CDSS staff or board, or had our Youth Intern host a discussion at one of your events.

CDSS has a lot to offer groups, and we are just getting started! Wait until you see what is coming down the pike for the CDSS Centennial in 2015! This will be the last print version of the newsletter, but rest assured, the Group Corner will continue on in the new online version and on the website. Our Group Affiliates are what keeps the music going!

#### More About the Online News by Caroline Batson, Editor



Thanks to those who sent their congratulations or concerns about the plan, announced in the last issue, for an online-only newsletter. Two concerns in particular cropped up: receiving large attachments in people's email and a dislike of reading long articles on a computer screen.

For the first, as soon as each issue is ready, we'll send you an email announcing the posting, with a link to the issue (i.e., no inbox-busting attachments); for the second, posting the newsletter online only, while not the ideal solution, is the most affordable option to us these days. A four-

page highlights version of each issue will be mailed to those members without Internet access or for whom we don't have email addresses.

We expect to keep the quarterly publication schedule although some deadlines may change. If you haven't given us your email address yet to get our quarterly eblasts and, beginning in the spring, the online newsletter, go to the Site Login section on our website, [www.cdss.org](http://www.cdss.org).

#### Support CDSS

by Robin Hayden, Development



Our annual fund appeal is underway! As you know, we count on your support for everything we do. Your gift will enable us to continue providing outreach, scholarships, advice, group services, camp programs, print, media, and online resources, and so much more, to the traditional dance, music, and song community.

If you've already contributed, thanks so much. If you haven't gotten around to it yet—no time like the present! You can mail your credit card info or check, made out to CDSS, to PO Box 338, Haydenville, MA, 01039 (be sure to specify "fund appeal") or make your gift online at [www.cdss.org/general-donation.html](http://www.cdss.org/general-donation.html). It's easy, tax deductible, and so important. As Max Newman writes in this year's appeal, "Your support changes lives." So true!

#### Publications Desk

by Pat MacPherson, Education



As part of our e-library, we are excited to announce that the dances and reconstructions of Charles Bolton are now available on our website. Sincere thanks to Charles for granting CDSS permission to publish his life's work in such as way as to make it available to the widest possible audience, and to Trevor Monson, who was the instigator of the project and who tirelessly scanned every page of every book. As you explore this vast collection, you will find both well-known dances and hidden gems.

*Retreads* is a collection of interpretations of ninety-two English country dances from seventeenth and eighteenth century sources, the majority from volumes of Playford's *Dancing Master*, plus selections from Johnson, Thompson, Walsh, Burbank, Griffiths,

and Kynaston. The collection is in Volumes 1-9, and includes two previously unpublished dances. Each dance appears with music, the original dance instructions, Charles's interpretations, and notes on interpretative decisions. You may search by dance title, volume and page number.

Charles is also a prolific composer and choreographer for English country dancing. His nine booklets of original dances, with original or traditional music, plus more reconstructions, are also online and are searchable by dance title, volume title, volume and page number. Booklet titles include: *The Optimist*, *More Optimistic Dances*, *Not All My Own Work*, *More of the Same*, *Courtesy Turns*, *Occasions*, *People and Places*, *What's New*, and *Round Robin*.

#### Camp Notes

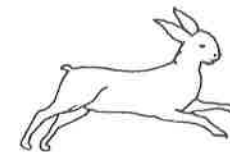
by Steve Howe, Programs



We've added some special mini-courses to our 2011 summer programs. At OGONTZ, *Teachers Training Course*, taught by Jane Miller, will run concurrently with Family Week, July 30-August 6. At PINEWOODS, *Singing Squares Callers Course*, taught by Ralph Sweet and Nils Fredland, will be held during American Week, July 30-August 6; *English Dance Musicians Course*, taught by Jacqueline Schwab, and a *Viol Intensive*, taught by Mary Springfels, will be held during Early Music Week, August 13-20; and *American Dance Musicians Course*, taught by Eden MacAdam-Somer and Larry Unger, will be held during English & American Dance Week, August 27-September 3.

CAMP JOBS—Each year we need help running our summer dance and music camps. If one of the following appeals to you, write to me c/o CDSS, PO Box 338, Haydenville, MA 01039, or [camp@cdss.org](mailto:camp@cdss.org). Sound system operators are needed at all weeks, with compensation ranging from full scholarship to paid staff, depending on the session. Office positions are available at Pinewoods, from July 16-September 3, at Timber Ridge from August 13-21, and at Ogontz from July 30-August 6. In exchange for full scholarships, we need lifeguards with CPR/First Aid certificates for all sessions, dining hall managers for all sessions, and a doctor or nurse for Family and Campers' weeks. Some full scholarships are also available at Ogontz for kitchen and/or grounds work and some evening monitoring of sleeping children. In exchange for partial scholarships, we need assistant lifeguards and evening monitors for all Family and Campers' weeks.

SCHOLARSHIPS—One of the finest things about dance and music camps is the monetary assistance given by current and former campers through scholarship donations. Many of us have been lucky recipients of these gifts so we know firsthand its benefits. When registering for camp this year—even if you can't attend—we urge you to help someone else attend. We are happy to accept large or small donations to the general scholarship fund or to our many special funds. There's a list on our website identifying them—[www.cdss.org/special-funds.html](http://www.cdss.org/special-funds.html).



#### Catch Up On Your Reading

You may have seen Larry Edelman's review of our book, *On the Beat with Ralph Sweet*, in the last issue of the newsletter. Bill Litchman, longtime archivist and librarian for Lloyd Shaw Foundation thinks well of the book too; see his review at [www.cdss.org/tl\\_files/cdss/documents/reviews/on\\_the\\_beat\\_litchman.pdf](http://www.cdss.org/tl_files/cdss/documents/reviews/on_the_beat_litchman.pdf). (Or go to [www.cdss.org](http://www.cdss.org), then click on Newsletter, then E-blast, then scroll down to Publications.)

From Brad Foster: "Here's an interesting short history of the song Kumbaya and its political meaning today: [www.nytimes.com/2010/11/20/us/20religion.html?scp=1&sq=kumbaya&st=cse](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/20/us/20religion.html?scp=1&sq=kumbaya&st=cse)."

From Bruce Hamilton: "Our Scottish country dance group's newsletter is at [www.rscds-sf.org/newsletters/pdf/2010.01.pdf](http://www.rscds-sf.org/newsletters/pdf/2010.01.pdf). The lead article is about an incident at our weekend where a dancer had a heart attack, and what the group did in response."

From David Millstone, passing on a message he received: "The British Columbia Square and Round Dance Federation commissioned a fitness expert to evaluate the health benefits of square dancing. You can find the report at [squaredance.bc.ca/articles/Fitness\\_Evaluation.pdf](http://squaredance.bc.ca/articles/Fitness_Evaluation.pdf)."

And from Nancy, a link to the recent *New York Times* article on Country Dance New York: [www.nytimes.com/2010/12/03/nyregion/03cotillion.html?\\_r=1&scp=1&sq=yuletide%20cotillion&st=cse](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/12/03/nyregion/03cotillion.html?_r=1&scp=1&sq=yuletide%20cotillion&st=cse).

#### Lifetime Contribution Award 2011

Suggestions for nominations for this year's award are being accepted through the end of January. For guidelines, see [www.cdss.org/cdss-lifetime-contribution-award-2010.html](http://www.cdss.org/cdss-lifetime-contribution-award-2010.html).

# Revitalization: How Do You Make a Dance Come Back to Life?

by Joyce Fortune

In the 1990s, the Palo Alto Contra Dance was the place to be. The dance (so I have heard) regularly pulled in over a hundred fifty dancers, with parents trading off child-watching and tons of people having a fabulous time. By the time I joined the community in 2005, it was a smallish local dance with fifty or so people. I happily danced there and at weekend camps for several years before noticing that there was any problem. I did notice that my personal motivation to get up off my butt on a Saturday night was sort of flagging about two years ago, but chalked it up to tiredness and not having transportation. If I thought about it, though, part of the problem was that the dance was getting smaller and smaller and it was less and less fun. It started to feel more like an obligation than a party.

Last summer, I started going to a series of local dances to do a survey about our spring weekend, which was also dying for lack of attendance. At that time, I started to see other local dances and, as they say, the scales fell from my eyes. These other dances were packed—more than a hundred dancers—and a lot of the dancers were the same people I saw at weekends. I also noticed that whereas our local dance sold cookies for fifty cents and bottles of water for a dollar at the break, every other dance I went to had a table of free potluck food. I also noticed that there were often several people making things happen, putting away chairs, putting out food and so forth. I went back to Palo Alto and decided something had to be done. I wanted people to come to my dance and dance with me!

Many new dances were now competing with our local Saturday night dance and we had gotten a reputation for being boring and slow. The dance suffered from the “used to be” syndrome—people regularly said how great it used to be, focusing on what was lost and that it no longer was great. The dance was on a downward spiral. I have a theory: the dancers go where the dancers are. If you start to decline, it is almost a surety that you will continue to decline. Dances are really just parties. No one wants to go to a party where people aren’t having fun. Walking into a dance hall and seeing that there aren’t really many people there is sad. People don’t feel jazzed and excited to be there.

In a conversation with Alan Winston and Jim Saxe, two longtime dancers and organizer types, after

a dance, we started to formulate a plan. I felt strongly that the dance needed to go from being run by one couple to being a community event. Eric Black and Diane Zingale, who had been running it for literally decades were burnt out and frustrated by the lack of help from others. So, with the assistance of Alan and Jim, I scheduled a meeting to get people together to make a plan. We gave out invitations to scores of people and had about twenty over to my house for a potluck and meeting in September 2009. We had a good, honest discussion about what the dance needed and some consensus came out of the meeting. More importantly, six committees with eighteen people on them were created and a plan was set in motion.

First and foremost, we changed the food situation. We now have a potluck table at each dance, where people bring snacks or donate a few dollars. Another dancer stepped up to be “food diva” and keeps track of our supplies and supplements the potluck offerings by shopping for chips, fruit and other snacks.

The next really important change was to mix up the faces at the front desk. We did away with the old practice of having people sit out two dances for half price entry. Since we have a “pay as you can” policy, this really made no sense and it was hard to get people to sit at the door. Therefore, the manager didn’t really get to dance and no one wanted to manage. By asking for multiple people to sit out only one dance, we get a variety of people helping out and managing is not so odious. We now have seven managers and each manage once every three months, which is not that big a burden for anyone to carry. Further, door-sitting is an easy volunteer job that people can do and feel like they are contributing to the dance community, which they are.

We started aggressively working on programming, limiting the “local” caller to once a quarter to bring in more variety and actively pursuing special talent for special events. Multiple people working on this process (a committee of six) has really brought in fresh talent and energy. I also started working on getting a variety of sound people in to share the load and have a variety of faces on the dance floor.

We always had fairly good external publicity,  
*continued on page 12*

# Toronto Women’s Sword

by Reed Thomas and Toronto Women’s Sword

CDSS’s “New Leaders, Good Leaders” fund helped send Toronto Women’s Sword to New York City for the Half Moon Sword Ale in February 2010. Following a period of renewal, yet drawing on its solid twenty-one year history, our team enjoyed the opportunity to showcase and enrich our dancing. We benefitted from the sword-specific focus of the Half Moon Sword Ale because it facilitated learning, sharing, and community-building. A number of our dancers watched sword dancing for the first time.

## Weekend Events

The Ale took place in New York and Brooklyn on February 13 and 14. On Saturday morning, we met the twelve other sword teams (and one Molly team) for show dancing at the Staten Island Ferry Terminal. The varied dances incorporated tradition and innovation, and teams integrated dancers of varied ages. Inspiring! Orion’s ten-sword locks and Candy Rapper’s flips wowed audience and dancers alike. Our contribution to this showcase, a focused and precise rendition of Papa Stour, was well received.

During the Saturday tours, we performed our “double-rapper” set (ten dancers) in the tightest space we had ever tried, and we enjoyed touring with the Half Moon and Green River teams. In the evening, the feast found us renewing past friendships and striking up new ones through dance and song. Half Moon’s hospitality, including homemade food and billeting for accommodation made us feel welcome in the sword dancing community. Contra dances for varied abilities and interests promoted everyone’s participation. Our announcement at the feast of CDSS’s support was met with hearty applause.

On Sunday, with New Moon and Orion, we shared our dancing in Brooklyn. Notably, in an educational component of these family-friendly performances, dancers helped audience members to create a lock. Such audience participation can contribute to increasing awareness and interest in traditional dance—one of the commitments of Toronto Women’s Sword. To conclude the weekend’s performances, the teams took turns on stage at the Brooklyn Museum. However, the dancing continued informally at the “after-party” where teams continued to share rapper, contra, and singing.

## Benefits and Recommendations

Stronger dancing, contact with other sword dancers, and inspiration for the future of our team comprise the primary benefits of our attendance at this event. Although our inclusion in numerous English-

and morris-focused events has been very positive, our participation at the Sword Ale represented a unique opportunity. For instance, through watching a wide variety of rapper and longsword dances, our members noted ideas for new dances. Since our return, we have started the choreography of a new dance to perform at upcoming events. We are also able to reference specific dance steps or techniques in discussing our own work. At the Half Moon Sword Ale, some of us also enjoyed exchanging ideas and techniques for steps (e.g., rapper figures) or a dance (i.e., Papa Stour) that we share in common with other teams. In the future, we could explore the opportunity to workshop some of these figures with other teams to enrich such exchange of techniques. ►



Photos by Jeff Bary

*(Revitalization, continued from page 10)*

but we decided to focus a little on the material we were handing out. My husband found club cards in local cafes—small (two inch by three inch) cards that are laminated and full color and he started making a club card for our local dance that is appealing and concise, can fit in a pocket and is easy to pass out to dancers. These are a great visual cue and calendar of our dances. A Facebook invite also goes out for each dance and gets quickly disseminated to a great number of people. For the younger generation, Facebook is a central way of keeping their calendar.

One of the big turning points was when I started creating an email for the dance itself. Each week I ask people directly if they want to be on our local email list and I put together an email detailing the next dance and send it out on the Monday or Tuesday before the next Saturday dance. We are competing with lots of other events in people's lives and need to be in the front of their minds. I also have made a point of talking to newcomers and getting their email address to send a follow-up email to them as well as adding them to our regular list. I also hand them each a club card and a sheet with our Facebook page, email address, website and my phone number. This contact seems to help keep them coming back.

I have made a very conscious effort lately to really work with newcomers too. We always did have lots of newcomers, thanks to Diane's publicity work, but although they would come once, they wouldn't come back. Now I make sure that they all get partners, that the regulars are aware of who's sitting down, that we really notice the gender balance so that if we are short of men, the experienced women dance together or ask the newcomers to dance with us. We actively help them to learn how to ask people to dance and make sure they are only sitting out voluntarily.

Now, one year later, the dance is on a serious upward spiral. We have raised our "normal" attendance from thirty-five to forty-five a year ago to fifty to sixty now. We can pull in a hundred people at a special dance. The load is being shared around and the dance feels a lot more exciting. Newcomers are coming back and bringing their friends. We have some families attending and I hear lots of positive things from all over. We have more to do, but it feels like we are definitely on track.

I think one key is to have one or more people who are jazzed and willing to commit to organizing people, then a core group who are willing to do the footwork. It is important to be able to direct and manage people. Teachers seem really suited to telling others what to do. I now call myself "Chief Cat-

herder." Teachers also are really good at "borrowing" ideas from other people. I would like to note that many of these ideas were not mine. I thank Karen Fontana in Hayward for her input and have stolen lots of things I have seen at other dances. Another really important key to success came from a talk with Jim Saxe about what happened when his squares series was dying. Jim said something really important—don't ask people to come to the dance out of a sense of commitment or obligation. People will come if it is fun. So I try at all times to have a "no guilt" philosophy. We are all here to have fun. Do what you can for the dance, but don't worry if you can't do much. No guilt. Just make it fun and they'll come back.

*(Toronto, continued from page 11)*

Members of Toronto Women's Sword have returned to our practice schedule with inspiration, creativity, and commitment. We welcomed the opportunity to showcase our dancing, learn through watching and interacting with other dancers, and develop ideas for future development.

*Formed in 1988, Toronto Women's Sword performs traditional English hilt-and-point dances such as longsword and rapper sword. TWS is the first Canadian group dedicated to the preservation and promotion of English traditional sword dance. The team is committed to increasing awareness through regular performances and encourages accessibility by making it open to interested members of the Toronto area. Over the last two decades, TWS has had the privilege of performing their dances throughout Canada, the eastern United States, and England.*



#### A Final Gift

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

## Youth Dance Weekend 2010

by Dave Eisenstadter and Lauren Breunig

**DAVE SAYS:** I was skeptical.

A Youth Dance Weekend seemed counter to what a contra dance should be about. I started dancing in Nelson, New Hampshire, where people of all ages dance together, and the most popular dance is Chorus Jig, an old chestnut from more than two hundred years ago. But the late September festival surprised me when I attended. I assumed the point was to exclude older dancers, but what it did was invite the younger ones more fully into the tradition.

The stereotype of the young, modern dancer is, to my understanding, as follows: they dance wildly, they don't finish moves on time, they only like dances with partner AND neighbor swings, they will reluctantly join squares, and will die before dancing English. Whether consciously or unconsciously, Youth Dance Weekend works to teach young dancers to break these stereotypes. There were several sessions of English dance during the weekend, and a Master Class aimed at keeping dancers aware of timing, safety and other aspects of dancing, but in a fun way.

One of the most memorable examples for me was on Sunday morning when organizers announced that the next dance would be Money Musk. I assume most reading this newsletter are familiar with Money Musk, but for those who aren't, it is a three hundred year old dance with an unusual formation (groups of six rather than groups of four) and absolutely no swings. Among dancers of earlier generations, this was the pinnacle of contra dance. "Bring Back Money Musk" is a t-shirt I have seen across the country.

Chestnuts like Money Musk simply are not danced often, likely because callers are afraid of inciting the wrath of young dancers who did not grow up with them. But when Rebecca Lay said "hands six from the top" and Nor'easter got ready to play the accompanying tune, there was a notable buzz among the young dancers around me. Rebecca walked it through a couple times, explaining some of the finer points about the old dance before we began. Many had never done it before. When the music started, three hundred years of dance tradition met our contemporary contra culture head-on. Stomps sounded and sweat flew off foreheads as Rebecca sang the calls in the old style. At the end of it, a dancer turned to me and said, "Wow, this is like the new Chorus Jig." I just smiled to myself. Money Musk was the original Chorus Jig.

While the weekend exposed young dancers to the finer points of the old tradition, it also allowed

them to shape it and make it their own. Late Saturday night was a techno contra dance. Combining aspects of contra, rave and club dancing, techno contras are not for everyone. I'll leave a full explanation for a future time, but suffice it to say they require greater endurance and fewer qualms about personal space. Most importantly, though, techno contras give the youth generation ownership of the tradition—it is something they have contributed.

With that ownership comes responsibility. Because of its price and its distance from any urban center, Youth Dance Weekend attracts committed contra dancers. These are the people who will likely be leading whatever contra dancing turns into in a few decades. Giving such people both a feel for where contra dance has been as well as some control over where it's going will preserve what is great in the dance form for the next generation. So while I felt set-in-my-ways enough to grumble about these young upstarts and their exclusionary weekend, I was still green enough to be proven completely wrong.

Who knew that at the ripe old age of twenty-seven, one could still learn something new?

**LAUREN SAYS:** "Take hands four," the caller instructed. "And raise one arm. Choose carefully, because it's the only arm you'll get to use for this next dance."

So began a dance during the Master Class at Youth Dance Weekend 2010. The Master Class gave YDW participants a chance to hone their playing, calling, and dancing skills in a supportive and playful environment. Callers and musicians rotated throughout the session, and dancers were given a different focus or challenge for each dance, whether it was dancing one's less comfortable role, practicing whole-set awareness, or using just one arm. As each dance ended, we took a moment to reflect on the experience with our partners and set, then a few people shared their observations with the whole group. The comments revealed that while YDW attracts an experienced dance crowd, we all still have much to learn.

As we danced using a single arm, the problem-solving part of my brain switched on, quickly calculating how to do a left hand star with my right hand—do I reach across my body and offer my right hand, or just lean my left shoulder in? Hardly a life-or-death decision, but by giving my brain a new challenge (that was not "How many twirls can we fit

in at the end of this ladies' chain?"), I found myself engaging more with other dancers as we all tried to navigate the awkwardness of our temporary three-limbed existence.

For me, the most important part of the Master Class wasn't learning a new figure or complicated dance. It was the expanded awareness that came with meeting a challenge, seeing the dance through different eyes and sharing that experience with the whole hall. I don't think I am being unfair to say that at times young dancers (myself included) operate inside a bubble. This can leave other dancers feeling a bit shrugged off. The challenges presented in the Master Class, however, forced us all to step outside of that bubble, relax into the dance, and open ourselves to the possibility of the unexpected.

Making a mistake was a very real possibility as we bumbled our way through unfamiliar roles, but when everyone faced the same hurdles, we laughed off mistakes and confusion instead of letting them cause consternation. There is no better example of this than the final dance of the Master Class, which featured the aptly named Chaos Set. In this dance, we were allowed—encouraged, even—to switch roles, partners, and sets as often as we liked, which was generally multiple times during any given figure. It was a dance based on confusion, and although we may not have completed every ladies chain and right hand star, I have rarely seen so many talented dancers engaging with the whole room with such joy and abandon. It reminded me of the dances I attended in my childhood, which were not quite so chaotic, but boasted a similar relaxed yet energetic atmosphere. There were always a number of new dancers, so mistakes were not uncommon, but the focus was on the shared experience and creating a welcoming community.

YDW provides a venue for young dancers to more fully understand the roots of the tradition, which they can then carry with them as they return to their home dances and communities. Sometimes, I think my fellow young dancers and I get caught up in our desire to do the most impressive flourishes. The Master Class at YDW 2010 was a wonderful reminder for all of us that there are many ways to enjoy a dance, and that ultimately, dancing is about sharing an experience with those around you.

*A dancer, caller and writer, Dave Eisenstadter wrote a blog in 2007 called "All the Way Around: Contra Dance Across America," about a four-month road trip he took (excerpted in the CDSS News, July-August 2007); he now lives and works in Keene, New Hampshire, where he is a reporter for the Keene Sentinel. Lauren Breunig currently lives in Brattleboro, Vermont, where she is attending circus school and singing with the Windborne Trio.*

*(Finding My Way, continued from page 16)*

over to me. With David's gracious help, accompanying me on guitar with absolutely no notice whatsoever, I taught the chorus and sang Greg Brown's beautiful "Iowa Waltz." At the end of it, I leaned over to David and very quietly said, "I really needed to take your performance class this week, because this kind of thing really scares the crap outta me!" Then I sang "Summertime." I wasn't sure it would fit but it turned into this really wonderful thing—everyone knew the words so sang along. Shane took a solo, then Norah and Brian, and then Peggy on the concertina. It was a huge success and it felt so *incredible* to be part of it. I will never forget that hour.

There were other terrific moments that week: getting to know people chatting over meals, just listening to the talent of all the campers, singing harmony with incredible singers at the campfire, teaching Steve the earworm of a banjo tune that I learned from Cathy Barton at Augusta, singing "Hang Me Oh Hang Me" for an hour and a half on the porch, diving into the lake at the end of a dance, chatting with Kate into the wee hours of the morning in a room that she decorated with Christmas lights and fancy scarves....

The last day was bittersweet: more great moments seeing the presentations at the Camper's Concert. I started thinking through the events of the week as I wrote up my staff evaluation at lunch. It was quite overwhelming and it brought me to tears. Saying goodbye to everyone at the closing event was also tough. I received such wonderful feedback from so many people. I just had never expected the week to be so incredible. And it occurred to me that, unlike all of the wonderful dance and music camp weeks I've gone to in the United States over the last twelve years, where I might see some of those great people a couple of times a year if I'm lucky, this was local. Almost all of these people live in the Toronto area, or relatively close by. I might run into them on Queen Street West or at Hugh's Room or at a song circle. I felt like I'd finally come home.

I packed up the car and headed home. My condo seemed so quiet when I arrived. But I put the five CDs that I'd bought at camp into the player on random and had my very own private Woods staff concert. I'm sure it was mostly exhaustion but I began to sob. Not at all about being sad, rather about being so *very thankful* that I'd been lucky enough to find The Woods. Finding my way out and back into "unreal" life was unbelievably hard. I think I'm still trying to catch up on sleep. But I know that I'll carry that week with me forever. And I look forward to seeing as many of those people as I can again, really soon.

## Finding My Way Out of the Woods

by Bev Bernbaum

I remember the day that my friend and contra dance musician Kate Murphy emailed me to ask if I'd consider being "the staff caller and dance teacher" at The Woods Music and Dance Camp up in Muskoka, Ontario. It was October 9, 2008. I was flattered, excited, very nervous and unsure. I'd never been to this camp before.

In that first email, she warned me that only a third of the campers would really be interested in dancing. The primary interest was in singing and playing music. She said it would be a challenge to find dances that wouldn't bore the experienced or lose the novices. I would be responsible for calling the evening dances, only an hour or so long, but would also have to come up with a non-contra based dance class for the morning too. It was that morning class that was making me nervous. I'd never taught other dance forms.

I decided to go with an idea I'd been thinking about for a while, Singing Waltzes for Dancers. I would teach basic waltz to dancers who wanted to learn. And the music would be song waltzes played and sung by campers. I figured that would be all inclusive. Singers could sing. Dancers could sing and dance. Musicians could sing and play. And the supremely talented could sing, play *and* dance! I envisioned the musicians and singers sitting in a circle in the middle of the floor and the dancers waltzing around them. My only request was that they not put the class in the first period of the morning.

When I received the performer letter in February I got panicky. Kate had mentioned that she and Shane Cook, a Canadian Grand Master and US Grand National fiddle champion, would anchor the dance band. I knew Shane so I had no worries there. What Kate hadn't told me in the fall, and she may not have known then, was that Peggy Seeger and David Roth were the headliners on the staff list—the incomparable Peggy Seeger, and I'd been blown away by David Roth the first year I went to the Summerfolk Festival (Owen Sound, Ontario) in 1988. These were HUGE names in my folk music world. I didn't know anything about Norah Rendell, Brian Miller and Steve Baughman. But the more I googled, the more panicky I got! The campers were going to come with expectations. Could I deliver at the same level as the rest of the staff?

The camp is held at Lake Rosseau College in the village of Rosseau, halfway between Parry Sound and Huntsville. It's a gorgeous location, two and a half hours north of Toronto, right on Lake Rosseau.

But because I'd never been there before, it all felt very foreign. As Kate and I were unpacking, she warned me yet again that I'd have a hard time satisfying everyone with dances. Some would say they were too easy, others would say they were too hard. She warned me again that no one would be happy. My anxiety was mounting.

The camp runs from Wednesday at about 6:30 pm to the following Monday at 4 pm. Staff members were expected at a meeting at 5 pm on the Wednesday. Although I knew all about him, it was my first time actually meeting Grit Laskin. This national craft award winning luthier and Friend of Fiddler's Green member, his wife Judith, Eve Goldberg, another well-known local folk musician, along with Kate, were most of the committee that ran the camp. The talent in that staff meeting was rather mind blowing.

Later that evening, at an orientation session for the campers, I made my pitch to describe my classes. I was scheduled to speak last so that my "demo" would be that evening's contra dance. I told everyone that I brought my budding collection but was hoping people would come to the class and share a waltz or two with me. And then I talked about contra dancing, how I felt that they all had the necessary skills required. They'd all walked into the room, were tapping their toes to the beat of the music in the other staff demos, and were quick to laugh. They were all naturals in my book and we started the dance.

That first dance was a challenge for me. First, I called a very easy circle dance that didn't progress. Then an easy Sicilian circle dance so no one had to deal with ends of sets. Then a contra formation dance that I hadn't called before. It turned out to be more of a challenge for the dancers than anticipated. But we all managed through it. Thankfully, the music was blissful.

The next morning I headed to "Big Brown," the room for my class. It has a great wood floor and was big enough to have a circle of chairs in the middle of the room for musicians and singers, and leave space for dancers around them. I waited for campers to come. And waited.

My class was up against Peggy teaching traditional songs and ballads, David teaching performance skills, Steve teaching guitar, Shane teaching fiddle, and Norah teaching tin whistle and flute! Way too many great things going on in one period. Two lovely women came to my class on that first day. We sang some of the waltzes in my collection. Both of them danced while I played banjo and we all

sang. They both shared waltz songs with me that they'd written. Even though it was a very small and intimate group, my objectives had already been met! In the end, only one of the two women stuck with me for the duration.

Just before the staff concert and dance that night, I had a chance to say some of the things about contra dancing that, in my nervousness, I'd forgotten to say in the orientation. I encouraged people who were thinking about dancing, to start that night instead of watching a few dances. I mentioned my intent was to build skills through the week and that they might find it more challenging if they waited. And then I pulled out my ace in the hole. Glow bracelets! These cool things that glowed in the dark. You got a present for being a dancer. Nothing like a little bribery. Best move I ever made!

That second contra dance went really well. The band, made up of some staff musicians and some campers, was terrific. Everyone was having a blast, including me. I had decided to re-engineer my morning class by singing waltzes at the end of the contra dances. That actually worked very well as I had a captive audience of dancers and singers, and a band to help play the tunes. We sang "The Log Driver's Waltz" that night. The glow bracelets were a big hit. (I found out the next day that they worked really well for synchronized skinny dipping in the lake after the dance!)

After the dance that night, I met up with the two people working on sound at The Woods. We headed to the dining room to find a quiet place to play some tunes. She'd written the most gorgeous singing waltz and has a fabulous voice; he's an incredible Dobro player, not to mention the fact that he also sings harmony with her. That singing waltz made me cry. I asked them to play it after a dance, which they agreed to do, if I'd dance to it. They played it at the party on the last night of camp. Over the course of the week, many campers brought me incredible singing waltzes they'd written or found.

My third day at The Woods got even better. I'd finally settled in. That one woman who'd stuck with my singing waltz class was also a banjo player. We used some of the time to practice what we learned in Steve's banjo class in first period. That was wonderful. We got to talking about what the waltz should be at the end of the dance that night. I had no idea when I suggested it, that "Didn't I Dance" had such significance at The Woods.

I'd heard "Didn't I Dance" for the first time at Augusta and really liked it. When I suggested it, I was told to talk to one woman in particular about it. She told me about the camp founder that had loved to sing that song, but had passed away due to cancer some years before. This woman had taken over the

torch to continue singing this song, and was delighted that I'd chosen it, really quite by accident. She and her husband joined me on the stage that night to sing it. Everyone knew the words and sang along.

Interestingly, that third dance was a milestone for me, and also the camp, I think. I had trouble teaching the first dance of the night. I'd walked it through twice. But I couldn't seem to teach it without confusing the dancers. I was ready to bail on it. In fact, I told them that and threw the card down into my box of dances. They all shouted "NO!!!" That took me aback! They were determined to get it. And, gawd love 'em, I walked it again, and they did it! I had four squares on the dance floor that night, which was just about half the camp. People kept telling me over and over again how they'd never seen so many people dancing at The Woods before. I think that's when it finally began to sink in that I was, in fact, delivering at the same level as the other staff. Two campers helped me sing "Waltz Across Texas" at the end of the dance that night.

On the fourth day, the community time theme was "If Music be the Food of Life, Sing On!" A great friend and caller buddy from Vermont had sent me "The Hot Dog Song," a singing waltz tune by the very funny Arrogant Worms. For whatever reason, we started singing the Oscar Meyer song. And it seemed like there was a natural fit between bologna and hot dogs. I jumped up, taught the chorus and sang the song! Whew! I think they liked it. I don't really remember...

Some of my most favourite moments of the week happened on the fifth day, Sunday. The theme for community time that day was the staff ceilidh. I had no idea what that meant and it hadn't even occurred to me to ask. I just assumed that it was specifically for the musical staff so I sat down with the campers. Next thing I know, Grit is asking where I am. I said, "I'm sitting right here." He said, "No, you need to be sitting right there!" pointing to the empty chair. I then realized that I was supposed to be sitting in front of all of the campers. Between Peggy and David no less! It was a showcase for the staff. I was completely and totally unprepared and verging, yet again, on panic!

They started at the end of the line to my left. Shane played a terrific, swingy fiddle tune and I got up and danced around with another camper. I figured I'd done my duty. I was the dance caller after all. What could I do?? David sang yet another incredible song. Then it was my turn. I said I'd already danced. Not enough! I was literally completely blank. So I passed to Peggy in order to have time to think. Thankfully, someone had a *Rise Up Singing* book with them, the large print edition!

Peggy finished up her song and it was back  
*continued on page 14*

## Yoga for Dancers: More Hamstrings, More Abdomen

by Anna Rain

Do you really need a reason to stretch your hamstrings? When your hamstrings receive regular lengthening, your pelvis has a better chance of correct alignment, which helps optimal abdominal action, which protects your low back. When you practice poses that allow you to feel where your abdomen is *supposed* to be (toward the back body!), you can more easily access that optimal action. Convinced? If you practiced the poses in the last issue, you have an idea of your hamstring capability. Can you lie down with one leg straight on the floor and one leg straight up at ninety degrees? (NB: Straight legs! Quadriceps engaged!\*) If not, continue to practice "leg up the wall" from the previous issue, and skip to the next section on abdominal action.

**Reclining hamstring stretch** teaches correct abdominal action (NB: not to be practiced when menstruating.) For this pose, you'll need a strap at least four feet long. Lie on the floor with your quadriceps engaged\* and your feet pressed against a wall.

If you have a yoga mat, lie on it; the traction will help you keep your feet pressing into the wall. Roll your inner thighs to the floor and take your big toes slightly toward each other. This helps spread and release the low back. Keep the right foot actively pressed into the wall and catch the widest part of your left foot with the strap. Both legs are fully straight and engaged. Don't let the left knee bend! Draw the kneecap toward the hip, open the back of the thigh, stretch through the inner heel, and press the ball of the big toe into the strap. Hold the strap with both hands, elbows bent and wide. (See photo for correct position of



hands.) Keep the front tips of the shoulders rolling toward the floor. Let the back of the neck be long and the chin soften toward the throat. If you see that your chin points toward the ceiling, put a blanket under your head to make the back of the neck soft and long.

All actions: Press the right foot—especially the inner edge—into the wall and the whole right leg into the floor. Fully engage the left quadriceps, press the big toe ball point of the left foot into the strap, and open the back of the thigh. With the elbows bent and wide, pull on the strap. For optimal action, press the base of the left thigh away from the left waist as you pull on the strap. See if you can get the back of the leg to open more without pulling your leg closer to your face. You're working correctly when your leg is straight,



engaged, and fully stretched; *not* when your leg is close to your face.

With a grand assist from gravity, this pose teaches

correct abdominal action: no gripping, no forcing, no clenching! When the pose is done precisely, the abdominal muscles are aligned, active, and drawn toward the back body. As you engage your legs fully and open the back of the raised thigh completely, notice your abdomen. This is how you want your abdomen to feel all the time: long, gently engaged, hugging the back body.

See that your breath is smooth and even, and be in the pose for a minute or two. Bring the left leg down, rest with both legs on the floor, then do the other side. (This is fun: when you're done with the first side, the leg that was up feels a couple of inches longer than the leg that was on the floor.)

### Abs Back, Chest Up!

(NB: not to be practiced when menstruating.) This pose correctly practiced engages the abdominal muscles toward the back body. It helps if you've experienced that feeling in the reclining hamstring stretch, but you can work the abdominals even if your hamstrings are longitudinally challenged. ►

Sit in the middle of a folded blanket with your knees bent, holding onto your top shins, and find the back of the buttock bones. (The identification goes like this: lean back onto your tailbone and say, “nope, that’s too far back on my tailbone.” Sit waaay forward and say, “nope, that’s the front of my buttock bones.” Find the place that’s in-between these two, and like Goldilocks, know that it’s just right.) When you’re on the back of the buttock bones, find the action that brings your abdominal muscles toward the lumbar spine, toward the low back. It’s a subtle action: don’t pull your stomach in; rather, lift your side torso long—side ribs up and away from the waist—and encourage your abdomen back and slightly up. Many low back problems stem from the abdomen falling forward, which tips the lumbar spine forward and compresses discs. (NB: This misalignment is NOT correctly adjusted by tilting the hips and the pelvis forward; see *CDSS News*, Fall 2009, “Align the Spine”.) When the torso is long and lifted and the abdomen is drawn back, the lumbar spine is well-supported and less likely to be vulnerable.



With your abdomen back and your sides lifted, draw your

sternum (the breastbone, in the middle of the front chest) up and away from your navel. Roll your shoulders back and move the thoracic spine (the part of your spine in between your shoulder blades) toward your front body. Abdomen back; chest up! If this feels easy, here’s the next step: stretch your arms, palms facing each other, and lean back slightly. Keep the abdomen back and the sternum lifted! Ideal action: the abdomen is working but not gripping, and there’s no part of you that’s shaking or unsteady. Can you maintain all these actions and relax any body part that’s not necessarily engaged?

Some people get a cramp in the outer hips, and if that happens, it’s likely that your hips are trying to hold the pose by gripping instead of your abdomen anchoring you. If the outer hips cramp, stop and rub it briskly with your hand (I also suggest saying, “Hip, let go!”) until it softens, and then set yourself up again.

Ideally, you’ll feel some sensation in the abdominal area, but you won’t feel like you’re holding your stomach in. The length in your front body matches the length of your back body: see that the thoracic spine moves in toward the front chest and that the chest lifts away from the navel.

Now take it on the road! When you stand, roll your shoulders back and lift your side ribs so strongly that the abdomen is gathered and spread toward the back body. Can you keep all these actions fluid and engaged and then walk? There’s the payoff: a long, tall spine that draws the abdomen back correctly.

\*For proper engagement of the quadriceps—essential for hamstring release—do this: sit on the floor with your legs relaxed and straight in front of you. Feel your front thigh muscles—pliable. You also may be able to move your knee caps slightly from side to side. Now lift one leg one inch off the floor and see how the front thigh becomes tight and the knee cap stabilizes. These are the quadriceps doing their work. Practice this action while standing: lift the knee caps and observe the front thighs engaging. Note: this is *not* the same as “locking” the knees.

*Anna Rain teaches yoga, calls dances, steps to jigs, and makes music—all while bringing her thoracic spine in and up. She’ll be on staff this year at English Dance Week at Pinewoods.*

#### New Year’s Resolutions

Dance more. Sing more. Practice more. Take up an instrument.  
Learn a new dance. Learn a new song.  
Compose a song. Or a dance tune. Or a dance. Volunteer at an event.  
Dance even more. And sing even more.  
And keep on practicing.

## Interview: Rodney Miller, Violin Maker and Fiddler (Part 1)

by Ethan Hazzard-Watkins

*Rodney Miller was born in Syracuse, New York in 1951 and has for many years lived, worked and played music in Antrim, New Hampshire. Musician and former CDSS Youth Intern Ethan Hazzard-Watkins spoke with Rodney there last year.*

### How did you get started playing the fiddle?

It was a family thing. Weinheritedmygrandfather’s violin (in 1908 he bought a Knopf fiddle made in NYC for \$25 bucks), and my father played violin and played for square dances in New York State. My mother was a professional pianist, so in the process of growing up in this family kids were sort of expected to play instruments. When I started playing I was probably seven or eight years old, and I began on my grandfather’s violin.

### What kind of music was being played?

I took lessons in elementary school for a few years, enough to get the notes under my fingers. The thing was that I was playing a full size violin at age eight (*laughs*) not knowing, at that time, that there were probably half sizes and three-quarter sizes. It wasn’t like I was a tall kid. I mean, I’m tall now, but... Of course, I *am* left-handed and there wasn’t any consideration as to handedness. So, I was playing right-handed, just because that was what you were supposed to do. There were tune books, like *Allen’s Irish Collection*, on the piano, when I was growing up and I ended up, because I was able to sightread from taking lessons, just pouring through the fiddle tune books with my mom playing piano.

### And, at that point, you didn’t necessarily connect that fiddle music as being for dancing? Or were there dances going on?

No, it was a pure fiddle tradition of playing.



photo by Andy Kane

### When did you first encounter contra or square dancing?

I started playing for dances when I was in my teens and found a passion—“whoa, this is my thing”—then with all the family history fiddling, it just sort of took over. The freedom of playing music without being judged and the community that was around the fiddling resonated with me, whether it was the fiddlers’ picnics where there were a lot of fiddlers that would show up and play tunes and sort of a festivity around it, or a family outing that had such a good feeling behind it. It was pretty powerful stuff.

But I didn’t play anything per se for square dances; I was learning the standard fiddle tune repertoire from the 1950s and ’60s, which would be pretty basic stuff—Ragtime Annie, Paddywhack, what we might even consider trite tunes at this

point, but basic repertoire stuff.

### Do you remember your first paying gig or the first time you got hired?

It was probably playing fiddle in a bar around the age of sixteen or so, with some money under the table. It was a gig for playing background music for people drinking, even though I was underage.

### Did you start making a living from fiddling right away?

Initially it was a hobby but the opportunity was there, so I did actually make some money when I was a teenager playing fiddle. My first dance experience, that I remember, was probably in 1969, when I was a student at Oberlin College in Ohio. There was a student named Jane Wilke, who had grown up going

to Pinewoods Camp and she was organizing some dances for the student body. She knew that I played fiddle because I was in fact recruited by Oberlin to play fiddle specifically. When I visited Oberlin as a prospective senior in high school, there was an old-time band there that knew I played fiddle and they said "You have to come here. We need fiddlers." I played for a mix of contra and square dances in the freshman hall the whole time I was at Oberlin.

#### Where did you end up after college?

Actually, I was hired to teach fiddle at Folk Music Week at Pinewoods in '72. I attended Pinewoods at the request of Jane, my Oberlin classmate. She said, "You just have to go to Pinewoods—YOU!" So I was at Folk Music Week and one of the dance weeks in '71 and while I was there I think I met Dudley (Laufman), and Dudley and other callers, like Jack Perron, hired me for gigs from there.



#### What was the scene like at that time?

It was pretty energetic and vital. There was a lot of interest in it and a lot of folks from the back to the land movement were dancing. I mean, of course, the whole contra dance scene had been kept alive by Ralph Page and so I played for Ralph up in Keene, on Washington Street and did a whole lot of gigs with him and Bob McQuillen.

I was a member of the Canterbury Country Dance Orchestra, doing contra dances in Durham and Nelson, New Hampshire, and Nadaline McClure hired us on a regular basis for the Nelson dance every month for a few years.

#### Were you playing your own instruments at that time?

The first one that I played was in 1981. Every instrument that I would finish I would take on my fiddling trips because I was able to sell instruments on the road. I was breaking them in. At that time I was doing a lot of work with Boston caller Tod Whittemore. Tod was very much into organizing dances and was running the Peterborough contra dance, which we

played for on a regular basis. I was hired at Pinewoods every summer from '72 on in some capacity of playing fiddle and teaching fiddle and remember getting hired at the Centrum Fiddle International Dance Week around 1980, in Port Townsend, Washington. Tod went, I think Ralph Page was hired as well, and we represented New England contra stuff during the international dance week. Tod wanted to do a crosscountry tour in the summer of '82 so it started off at Jay Ungar and Molly Mason's camp, Ashokan. Tod set up contra dances all across the country with Andy Davis and I playing. We got a very enthusiastic reception. There was a whole lot of interest in what

was happening in New England, so we did a lot of music workshops, teaching the basic repertoire—popular stuff from the 1970s—the chestnuts: Chorus Jig, Opera Reel, Moneymusk, all those tunes.

**I'm curious what other influences you had early on in your fiddling career.**

I never took lessons. It was purely developmental. I knew how to fiddle and playing for dances is sort of a special adaptation of fiddling. So I was reflecting the experience of playing for hours for moving dancers, the sounds they created, the rhythmical aspect of them, which is so important for contra dancing. The first album we (with brother Randy) did was *Castles in the Air*, and that was really a reflection of the music we were playing for the dance in 1976. And when I have listened to it now, I was doing just about everything that I do now, back then. So, how did that happen? I developed a style just based on the whole dance experience, coming from where I was coming from.

#### Were you listening to other fiddle styles?

I still do. I listen to a lot of different kinds of fiddle music. But a few other things influenced me as well. I remember playing for the Nelson dance time after time and wanting to be able to make it more interesting for myself. So you're playing fifteen minutes per dance and I'm only playing one or two tunes, perhaps a standard tune of the time, like

President's Garfield's Hornpipe, one of the American-based tunes that were popular in the 1800s that remained as repertoire in New England in the 1960s and '70s; people still knew these tunes. If you listen to Cape Breton music, they play medleys where you play twice through the tune and then you're on to the next tune. But that was not the protocol for contra dance playing. You'd play one, maybe two tunes in a medley at that point, so you're stuck playing seven or eight times through the same tune. My sense was "Well, I need to do something with this music" and change it a little bit just to make it more interesting for myself, and hopefully for the dancers as well. So, my goal back then was to try to improvise on the basic traditional fiddle stuff. I have to admit that I was influenced by the Boston scene because I was doing Boston dances at the time. And there's quite a difference between playing in the city and playing in the country. So we would play happily in Nelson and then go to Boston and the dancers were saying, "You're playing much too slowly," as a criticism. And we were "Really? Do you know how to contra dance?" So there was an expectation; we were supposed to bump the speed up when playing in the city.

#### What else about that Boston scene influenced you?

There was bluegrass happening, there was jazz, and I got to mix with some of those musicians because Russ Barenberg, who lived in Jamaica Plain at the time, really was bitten by the *New England Chestnuts* and *Castles in the Air* albums, which was a little surprising, but he expressed interest in playing guitar for the contras that we were playing for. He was playing with Matt Glaser and Evan Stover, and those guys, Jay Ungar, Fiddle Fever kind of stuff. And I was a little jealous of the freedom that I heard in their music versus the traditional seven to eight times through. I was definitely influenced by them and their roots, whatever they were listening to. Like Matt was into Stephane Grappelli and Andy Davis definitely had a personal interest in jazz. So I'd get together with Andy and we'd try to play some of the early jazz pieces for fun.

**One of the things that I noticed listening to *Castles in the Air* and then some of your later recordings, is that there's a point at which you definitely went from playing variations on tunes to really improvising like a jazz player. What brought you over the edge, so to speak, to feel like you could do that with New England tunes?**

The hours that I put in playing for dances. Grinding it out. Being able to take leaps of faith, so to speak, in the tunes during a dance. It's not like

a concert situation so there's a certain amount of freedom you experience as a dance musician. I just made it a personal focus. I had the hours of playing consistently all the time, and it just sort of evolved. It's not like I studied it; I tried learning note for note some of the Grappelli tunes off recordings and that gave me a frame of mind of things never repeating themselves. Plus there was the whole influence from Ralph Page and Bob McQuillen. I remember meeting Ralph at his house in Keene and driving to the dance with him and he was so into the French-Canadian fiddler Jean Carignan, who was so good, rhythmically and he would say, "You know I was with Jean-ee C. last summer at my Maine Fiddle Camp and he played Moneymusk seven times through for our dance and he never played it the same." He was boasting about this—can you do the same thing? Come on! And egging me on, in a way. And I was like, "Yeah! Sure!" And then of course, Bob McQuillen was writing tunes early on within the traditional framework, which was awe-inspiring. He'd write something like "Ralph Page's Hornpipe" and we'd play it at the dance with Ralph calling and Bob would call out "Heh, Ralph, how do you like that tune?"

**One of the things I think about when I'm playing and improvising: is it better dance music? When you improvise are you thinking of it as propelling the dance or as more for your own interest, or both?**

A couple of things come to mind. First, I think there's a danger in improvising with the tunes if you're not rooted in the dance tradition. You have to totally understand where you're coming from and what the dancers are expecting from you as a dance musician before you can successfully improvise and keep the whole feeling of the beat and the phrasing, and sometimes the dancers will lose track of when A1 or B1, B2 is. It has to be really obvious to be successful dance music. But as long as you understand it fully and know what the tradition is, then you can keep your roots and still do it. On the pro side, when you get into improvisation as a musician, everything takes on a fresh attitude. You might be saying "Oh my aching body, my fingers are killing me, I've been playing for three hours" to a place of "Wow, this is really interesting and I'm excited." And I think that excitement and freshness carries through to the dancers.

At the same time, let's say you're playing traditionally and you're not improvising. Then I think there's a certain respect for the music that the dancers will respond to and it can be very successful.

#### Did you ever make a study of music theory?

No. This is all from a fiddler's point of view. It's

very unsophisticated. It's dabbling. And the dabbling comes from trying to create a style of playing that is true to yourself and that's what I've always done. Maybe the benefit of having grown up in a musical family is that the influence of different kinds of music has always been there. And so to be true to myself, to be one hundred percent who I am, is to assimilate different parts of different kinds of music and try to filter it into the style that I play.

**What else have you dabbled in, in search of that?**

Some of the traditional American music from the South, the old-time stuff, or bluegrass, and early jazz which is very connected to dance fiddling. It's not modern jazz which is more listening or club music, but early Grappelli and Stuff Smith, which people used to jitterbug and swing to, really gutsy down-to-earth fiddling. And I think what I gleaned off that is the tightness and pressure on the bow to create this swingy feel to it. That's one of things that I've hopefully incorporated.

**One of the things that I've heard you do in concerts and on recordings, and to a certain extent at dances, is play almost like a contest fiddler. The really impressive hard sounding tunes. Did you ever play in fiddle contests?**

I did two. I won one and the other one I didn't. I really don't enjoy competition fiddling but I do enjoy tackling pieces that are musically interesting to my ear and challenging technique-wise. I remember trying to dissect the playing of Jean Carignan on some of his recordings and back then there weren't the tools we have know—you know, the amazing "slow downer." It was just off LPs. I actually met Carignan, up in Hanover, New Hampshire at the Northeast Festival that used to run. I shook his hand; I totally admired the guy and his technique. So I tried to imitate his technique and some of the bouncing bow stuff and the attack. It's just a pure imitation thing.

**Are there other musicians whose playing you've dissected in that way?**

Lots. A lot of the Irish and Scottish and Cape Breton fiddlers. I was listening to a particular cut on a recording yesterday of this French-Canadian fiddler, Yvon Mimeault, and I noticed that he was, to my ear, doing an imitation of Joseph Bouchard, a fiddler in the 1930s and '40s who did a shake, like an extreme vibrato on the end of a short musical phrase within a fiddle tune. So, I'm hearing this again with Mimont, who's eighty now.

**Are there ways that you've noticed the dance scene changing over the years and do you think**

**that your music has changed to reflect that?**

Yes, the dance scene has changed a lot. When I came into it, there were a whole lot of the chestnuts danced on a regular basis, plus an occasional New England square mixed in and a lot of the dances were first couple active, doing a lot of moves and everybody else waiting. And that obviously has changed in the present day where all the couples are active doing multiple moves, interacting all the time. I think there's a certain vitality to it that is based on the ability of local musicians to feed into repertoire and compose their own tunes and drive the music that way. People who aren't brought up in the tradition can attend a dance, be excited by that experience, and then get into it themselves. It mushrooms. So as opposed to thinking, "Well, isn't it a shame that the traditional repertoire isn't played more," I think that it has to be this way, to have an everchanging and vital scene.

**Do you think the change in choreography, where a lot of the newer dances are much more active for everyone, affects how you play for dancing or how the music works compared to the older style dances?**

Definitely. Because now you find yourself in a position of going to play, being hired; you're not always playing with the same callers or musicians, really. Every circumstance is a new circumstance. And a lot of the callers come in with a sort of a dance layout for the evening, sort of like the dance card from 1860, Emily Dickinson would have attended, where you sign up partners, and what not. Well, they do the same thing only their dances are written by fellow dancers or themselves so the dance callers are experiencing the whole improvisational freshness, writing their own stuff, and they also have expectations of the kind of music they want for a particular dance. That's way different from forty years ago, where you just would have played President Garfield's or all those hornpipe reels that are pretty much 1, 4, 5, chord progression. Now they're asking for "Could you play something maybe a little sexy or smooth or bluesy?" or whatever the category is. They're also playing to the dancers and the dancers seem to want a little more physical expressiveness where they can dance on the floor and do their thing, whatever their thing is. I think it's great. I love it.

**You've talked a little bit about the way your fiddle style has changed with improvisation. I think there's been an equally important change in accompaniment style and the rhythmic ideas that get used—how did that happen in your experience; where did those nontraditional rhythmic styles come from?**

You're asking a fiddler to talk about rhythm

players? Well, it's a very personal thing; you can choose your musical direction by the people you play with. I consider myself open to most all forms—I like to experience different things. I don't mind being in the position of playing with rhythm players who come from a jazz background, that are playing contra dance stuff. I like it. I like the flexibility. Like one dance can be very traditional with a single guitar playing maybe, and that puts you in a whole different situation of playing more of a basic repertoire, straight ahead, with less improv, which I enjoy as much I do the improvisational, maybe more jazzy feel.

**Are there innovations that you've seen or heard or experienced over the years that you don't like?**

Not offhand. I've been in an experience, in my travels, when I've been down south, playing the New England style in North Carolina or Georgia, and then having the other band of the evening or the weekend be an old-time band, and they're playing for contras and they're playing old-time southern stuff which has a very different feel to it. Wow, this so works for the contra dance but it is so different phrasing-wise and everything. This can be handled in different ways successfully. It's an education.

**You mentioned being around folks like Bob McQuillen who are composing a lot of tunes. When did you start composing tunes yourself?**

I think one of the first tunes I wrote came out directly from a session with Andy Davis, when we were playing some early jazz things, just for fun. I remember coming home and this tune, "Contrazz," popped out as a direct result of that session. The A part was kind of like contra dance, straight ahead, traditional sounding and the B part is bluesy, jazzy, whatever the influence was. And it was a mix of the two immediately.

**Sometimes when I'm composing I feel like there are so many traditional tunes what's the point of writing new ones?**

Ah yes, but there's an art to it. That's the challenge isn't it? Sitting down and writing a tune in the key of D or A (*laughter*).

**And try not to make it sound like...**

The traditional mode is like—hasn't it all just been covered before? But, no, it hasn't. Because you always encounter tunes somebody else has written that are in D or A and they are totally fun to play. Wow, nobody thought of that before?

**What's the process for you of composing a tune? Do you decide to compose a tune or does it just**

**happen or come to you?**

All different manners. I find in a perfect world you would get up at 5 a.m....

**Not in my world! (*laughter*)**

...and tunes would just spill out of you.

**Maybe I should try that! (*laughter*)**

So, that's happened. It's only happened a few times, but it's happened. Other times it will be just the middle of day, it doesn't matter the time, and all of a sudden there's an interesting fingering, melodic progression, or phrase that becomes the nugget for a bigger tune. So you take that phrase and try to form something around it and oftentimes that will work. Some tunes begin one day and will end up being a tune four days later after it's morphed through all these different weird things. Other tunes I've sat down and written the whole tune, within half an hour and it's just right there. Some tunes I've composed without an instrument, just driving somewhere, like the napkin tune I wrote was purely a head thing. In the last few years, I've been playing mandolin some. It's set up the same way as a fiddle and sometimes just playing on a different instrument will inspire a different thought process. So I've written tunes on the mandolin. The nice thing about the mandolin is that it has the frets so you have an idea of chords; so that's different and inspiring. And somehow it just makes more sense to play up the neck of a mandolin and it's not the big deal it is on the fiddle so that sometimes you get different finger intervals.

We were talking about the composing tune process and one of the things that has influenced tune composing has been the birth of our first grandchild. That whole feeling of warmth and lovingness created a waltz for her, immediately. So that was pretty neat. Another inspiration was when I was on a fiddle trip to Boulder, Colorado and went into a music store and found this bright apple-red electric guitar; when I got home with it a tune just popped out from that, called The Harmony Rocket. Other tunes just evolve from sort of a non-important musical phrase, or you can say, I really want to write a French-Canadian tune in flavor.

**Are there other musical goals that you've set for yourself?**

Well, I still would like to play more like Willy Hunter, Jr., so I'm working on that. Like the slow airs stuff, I really want to absorb the essence of what that is. You know with the technique stuff, it's there, it is what it is and that's what I do and I'm getting older so I'm not trying to change any of my technique at this point.

*continued on page 26*

# Little Ingrid's Waltz

Duet

Traditional Swedish Vals  
arranged by Kathleen Everingham

Tune typeset by Peter Barnes

# Little Ingrid's Waltz

by Tom Anderson

Formation: Circle waltz mixer

Tune: Little Ingrid's Waltz with no repeats, or any other 32 measure waltz

- A 1-4 Couples promenade counterclockwise.  
5-8 Ladies take two steps to center, two steps back to the circle.  
9-12 Gents take two steps to center, turn over right shoulders and take two waltz steps towards partners.  
13-16 Partners dance back-to-back once and a little bit more, to form a big wavy circle with the gents facing out and the ladies facing in. Take right hands with your partner and left hands with the next person in the circle.  
B 1-4 Balance right toward your partner one step, left toward the lefthand person one step, then slide to the right in front of your partner with two waltz steps to trade places and remake the circle by taking left hands with your partner and right hands with the next person to the right in the circle, gents still facing out and ladies facing in.  
5-8 Balance left toward your partner, and right toward the righthand person, then slide to the left in front of partner to meet a new partner coming toward you.  
9-12 Dance back-to-back with this new partner.  
13-16 Swing this new partner "Jane Austen" style.

Author's notes:

- A Jane Austen-style swing is the author's name for an eighteenth-century allemande right. This figure is started by having partners stand with right shoulders together and extending their right hands toward each other. Both partners also place their left hands behind their own backs. They act as if they are going to shake hands, but miss, and instead hook right elbows and with their right hands grasp their partner's left hand behind their partner's back. From this position, they look and smile at each other while taking four waltz steps around a common center axis.
- Each waltz step is a complete one-two-three.
- This dance is adapted from the author's contra circle mixer "Rhubarb Go Round."

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(Rodney Miller, continued from page 23)

Something I noticed when I was listening to *Castles on the Air*, the piano or guitar always does two potatoes and then on Chestnuts, it's four potatoes. So what happened to the potatoes?

What happened was that *Castles in the Air* was just to record the contra dance repertoire in the mid-'70s. The *Chestnuts* album was a project sponsored in part by CDSS and it was to capture the music for a lot of the chestnuts that were being danced and there was a certain expectation that it would be dance length, so I think the four potatoes was to set it up, "on your guard, get ready, set, go!"

And at the time that you made *Castles* were people doing two potatoes at a dance?

Yeah, I think we were—bump, bump...

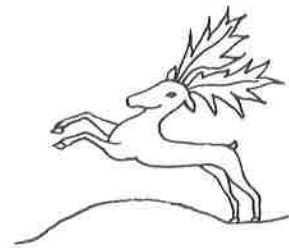
Your most recent recording is the *Waltz* CD with Elvie, which I love, and you've done a bunch of gigs with her in recent years. What's that been like, as a parent, to work with your daughter?

Incredibly rich. I know Elvie has moved on, she's developing a whole music therapy career with a master's degree in Ireland but there's always a connection with her musically. She was just telling me that someone has made a documentary in Ireland about this particular traditional singer from County Clare. She said, "Well, he's kind of like Bob McQuillen. He's made a certain song (and she said it in Irish, so I don't know what the name of it is) and his singing has brought it to the fore, so that this song is sung all over the world now." But there is a connection with Elvie's partner, Dennis Liddy, in this documentary. The filmmaker wanted things recorded live in the studio for the documentary. So Dennis on fiddle and Elvie on piano played this waltz that I wrote for my granddaughter Jadin, and they ended up closing the documentary with this waltz. So, that was kind of cool. It's very neat.



and dance series in Brattleboro and in Greenfield, Massachusetts.

Photos of Rodney in the 1980s (page 20) and the 1990s (this page) courtesy Rodney Miller.



Is there anything else that you want to add while the recorder is still running?

The only thing that I would add is that I just go back to people like Bob McQuillen and Ralph Page and Dudley Laufman as being mentors, people who were so important in my own personal development. So, total respect and big thank you to all of them, for being there, and carrying on this particular tradition, which I think has a major importance in terms of community and enjoying traditions based on real music and real interaction, as opposed to the pop culture which is corporation-driven. This is for real and it means a lot and it gives the whole sense of who we are as community and a country.

Well, thank you so much Rodney. (hug sounds)

Part 2 of the interview—about Rodney's violin making—will be posted on our website as an addendum to this article in January 2011.

Ethan Hazzard-Watkins is a fiddler based in Brattleboro, Vermont, who tours extensively, playing for contra and English country dancing with bands such as *Elixir* and *The Figments*. Ethan also helps to organize dance events around New England, including Youth Dance Weekend, the Brattleboro Dawn Dance,

## Balance and Sing

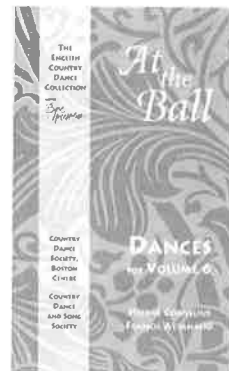
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### CDSS

#### Volume 6: At the Ball

The Ball is the highlight of the year for an English dance community—an opportunity for a granddancemarty, elegant dressing, favorite dances, and dancing to the finest music available. Volume 6 of the CDS Boston Centre English country dance series, *At the Ball*, commemorates the over 20 years which Bare Necessities has played for the Philadelphia Ball. The booklet includes 15 classic longways English country dances—nine are from different editions of Playford's *The Dancing Master*, 13 dances are duple minors (with one of them a double progression and one other improper), and the other two dances are triple minors. A number of the dances will be easily recognized by those who frequent balls, as they are popular with dance communities across the country and make it onto programs regularly. All of the dances will fit into a ball program. Included are: Amarillis, Anna Maria, Bar a Bar, Corelli's Maggot, King of Poland, Leather Lake House, Mount Hills, The Mulberry Garden, Never Love Thee More, The Northdown Waltz, Prince George's Birth-Day, The Pursuit, Red House, Sadler's Wells, and Young Widow. BOOK, \$9.00



#### Elixir Rampant

Elixir's brand new recording features 12 tracks of daring acoustic music as the band stretches out to develop its unique sound and tackle some bold repertoire. From blazing French Canadian reels to beautiful waltzes, from spicy originals to classic songs, Rampant is a wild ride of musical goodness. Elixir is Nils Fredland (calling/trombone/vocals), Ethan Hazzard-Watkins (fiddle), Jesse Hazzard-Watkins (trumpet/flugelhorn), Anna Patton (clarinet/vocals), Owen Morrison (guitar/foot percussion). The band is joined by Will Patton and Garrett Sawyer on bass. CD, \$15.00



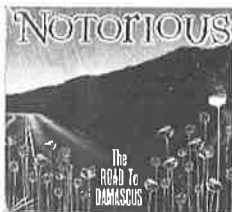
#### Nowell Sing We Clear

##### Nowell, Nowell, Nowell! A Pageant of Midwinter Carols

Nowell Sing We Clear, developed by Tony Barrand in 1975, presents the traditional music of Christmas as preserved in (mostly English) folksong and customs of the midwinter season. The performers are Tony Barrand, John Roberts, Fred Breunig and Andy Davis (who replaced original member Steve Woodruff), and they still present this show annually, mostly in and around New England. When they combined their first three LP recordings onto a CD (GHM-202 The Best of Nowell Sing We Clear, 1975-1986), some songs were not included. A few omissions (such as "Green Grow the Rushes-O") left behind disappointed fans. The current recording, released in December 2008, began as an effort to take a fresh look at some of these missing songs, so much so that its working title was "The Rest of..." It has, however, been supplemented with a lot of new material used in their stage show over the past few years. CD, \$15.00



#### Notorious Road to Damascus



The third cheerily eclectic outing from the four-piece Notorious: lots of Larry Unger originals plus tunes from Quebec, Romania, the Balkan Gypsy tradition, the southern Appalachians, Blind Willie Johnson and more. Notorious is Larry Unger and Eden MacAdam-Somer with Sam Bartlett and Mark Hellenberg. CD, \$15.00

#### Revels

##### Welcome Yule: An English Christmas Revels

This joyous new holiday CD highlights the best of Revels' most popular English-themed Christmas productions and features stunning music, songs and holiday carols from Medieval, Renaissance and Victorian periods. The Christmas Revels Chorus and Children's Chorus are joined by a host of wind, string and brass instruments in a wide array of festive music for the season. Particularly moving is the thrilling live sound of 1,000 audience members filling



Sanders Theatre in Cambridge, Massachusetts, with their voices on the peace round, Dona Nobis Pacem, one of several live cuts found on this new recording. Other live cuts include The Sussex Mummers' Carol and The Christmas Revels' iconic signature piece, The Lord of the Dance. CD, \$13

Garland Films  
The Morris Films of Lionel Bacon

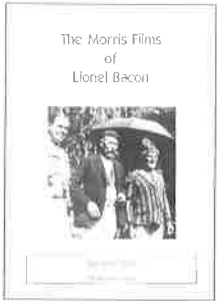
Lionel Bacon, a keen morris dancer, joined the Cambridge Morris Men in 1932. While with that club, known when touring as the Travelling Morrice, he had met, and, unusual for that period, filmed both traditional dancers and revival of the inter-war years. He later joined the London Pride Morris Men in London, and was instrumental in the formation of the Whitchurch and Winchester teams.

This DVD shows clips of the following occasions and teams: Travelling Morrice in the Welsh Marches 1932; Travelling Morrice in the Cotswolds 1933; Cambridge Morris Men at Ringstead Mill, Norfolk 1934; Thaxted Morris Weekend 1934; Travelling Morrice in Derbyshire 1934; Travelling Morrice in Suffolk 1935; Dance tour to Somerset 1935; Thaxted Ring Meeting 1936; Wargrave Ring Meeting 1936; Thaxted Ring Meeting 1937; Travelling Morrice in the Cotswolds 1937; Bampton Whit Monday 1935; Collecting at Bampton 1936; and Whitchurch Day of Dance 1950. A closely-researched commentary is provided. Originally shot on 9.5mm film and although every effort has been made to enhance the material, the quality often remains poor. (Warning: This DVD is coded for Europe. US DVD players will not play it; computer DVD drives should.) DVD, \$22.50

Brenda Godrich (ed.)  
Pat Shaw 1917-1977

Patrick Shuldham-Shaw was a man of many talents and an authority on the folk music, song and dance of many countries. He played many instruments; indeed, it was said that there were none he could not just pick up and play. He also was a fine singer and natural teacher.

Pat collected traditional tunes, most notably in Shetland where he noted down tunes that had previously been passed on orally. He edited the Greig-Duncan Folk Song Collection, which was published in eight volumes after his death. He was a "roving ambassador" for the Sing for Pleasure movement. Most of all he was an authority on and composer of English country dances. It was his prodigious output of dances in all styles and levels of complexity which has led him to be labeled the Twentieth Century Dancing Master. He took his dances to Wales, Scotland, Holland, and the USA as well as all over England. But Pat was also full of charm and enthusiasm and had a charisma which led to him being loved and well remembered by all who knew him. This book has attempted to bring together those memories and the varying strands of his life. BOOK, \$24.00

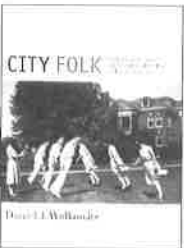


Allan M. Winkler  
To Everything There is a Season: Pete Seeger and the Power of Song



on the important role folk music played in various protest movements of the twentieth century. BOOK, \$24.00

Daniel J. Walkowitz  
City Folk: English Country Dance and the Politics of the Folk in Modern America



This is the story of English country dance, from its 18th century roots in the English cities and countryside, to its transatlantic leap to the US in the 20th century, told by a renowned historian and folk dancer who has immersed himself in the rich history of the folk tradition and rehearsed its steps. In *City Folk*, Walkowitz argues that the history of country and folk dancing in America is deeply intermeshed with that of political liberalism and the "old left."

He situates folk dancing within surprisingly diverse contexts, from progressive era reform, and playground and school movements, to the changes in consumer culture, and the project of a modernizing, cosmopolitan middle class society. Tracing the spread of folk dancing, with particular emphases on English country dance, international folk dance, and contra, Walkowitz connects the history of folk dance to social and international political influences in America. Through archival research, oral histories, and ethnography of dance communities, *City Folk* allows dancers and dancing bodies to speak. BOOK, \$35.00

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Upcoming Events

These are the bare bones—date, event name, town/state, sponsoring group, contact information. The next deadline is November 1 for events on and after January 1. Send information to [news@cdss.org](mailto:news@cdss.org) or CDSS, PO Box 338, Haydenville, MA 01039. These events and others are posted on our website ([www.cdss.org](http://www.cdss.org)). For information on regular events for the Group Affiliate, see [www.cdss.org/cdss-group-affiliates.html](http://www.cdss.org/cdss-group-affiliates.html).

Jan 1 Black & White Contra Ball. New York City area. CDNY, 212-459-4080, [www.cdn.org](http://www.cdn.org). \*

Jan 1 Winter Wheat. Grand Rapids, MI. Wheatland Music, [wheatlandmusic.org](http://wheatlandmusic.org).

Jan 1 Gala Holiday Party. Concord, MA. CDS Boston Centre, Lynn, 978-505-5970. \*

Jan 7-9 Appalachian Clogging Weekend. Brasstown, NC. Campbell FS, [www.folkschool.org](http://www.folkschool.org), 800-FOLK-SCH. \*

Jan 7-14 Chattaboogie 3. Chattanooga, TN. Chattanooga Traditional Dance Society, [chattaboogie.com](http://chattaboogie.com). \*

Jan 12 MidWinter Celebration. West Newton, MA. C'wealth Morris, [www.commonwealthmorris.com/mwc.html](http://www.commonwealthmorris.com/mwc.html).

Jan 14-16 Georgy Alabam. Anniston, AL. Birmingham FOOTMAD, [www.footmadbirmingham.org](http://www.footmadbirmingham.org). \*

Jan 14-16 Ralph Page Dance Legacy Weekend. Durham, NH. NEFFA, [www.neffa.org](http://www.neffa.org). \*

Jan 14-16 Early Music Weekend Workshop. Philadelphia, PA. Amerst Early Music, [www.amherstearlymusic.org](http://www.amherstearlymusic.org). \*

Jan 15-16 New Year's Ball. St Charles, IL area. Fermilab ECD, [www.fnal.gov/orgs/folkdance/english/](http://www.fnal.gov/orgs/folkdance/english/).

Jan 21 Gene's Favorites (Experienced ECD). New York, NY. Country Dance NY, [www.cdn.org](http://www.cdn.org). \*

Jan 21-23 Florida Snow Ball. Tampa, FL. 727-823-2725, [www.floridasnowball.com](http://www.floridasnowball.com). \*

Jan 22 Elm City Assembly. New Haven, CT. New Haven CD, [pantheon.yale.edu/~bfr4/NH.English.html](http://pantheon.yale.edu/~bfr4/NH.English.html). \*

Jan 22 ECD Workshop. Williamsburg, VA. W'burg Heritage Dancers, 757-229-1775, [www.colonialdance.org](http://www.colonialdance.org). \*

Jan 29 Frosty's Meltdown. White Plains, NY. CD, Leah, 914-693-5577, or Caroline, 914-762-3619. \*

Jan 30 Ease & Elegance. White Plains, NY. Country Dancers of Westchester, 914-762-8619 or 845-735-3365. \*

Feb 1-8 Tropical Dance Vacation: ECD Week. St Croix, VI. TDV, 413-575-6283, [www.tropicaldancevacation.com](http://www.tropicaldancevacation.com).

Feb 9-16 Tropical Dance Vacation: Contra & Square Week. St Croix, Virgin Islands. TDV, [tropicaldancevacation.com](http://tropicaldancevacation.com).

Feb 11-13 Chicago Folk Festival. Chicago, IL. Univ of Chicago Folklore Society, [www.uofcfolk](http://www.uofcfolk).

Feb 12 Something To Do With Chocolate. White Plains, NY. CD of Westchester, Leah, 914-693-5577. \*

Feb 16-20 Folk Alliance Conference. Memphis, TN. Folk Alliance, [www.folk.org](http://www.folk.org).

Feb 18-20 Bayou Bedlam. Houston, TX. Houston Area TDS, [bb11@hatds.org](mailto:bb11@hatds.org), [www.bayoubedlam.org](http://www.bayoubedlam.org). \*

Feb 18-20 Cabin Fever. Knoxville, TN. Knoxville CD, [www.knoxvillecontradance.org/mc](http://www.knoxvillecontradance.org/mc). \*

Feb 18-20 Contra Weekend. Corvallis Folklore Society, [www.cfs.peak.org](http://www.cfs.peak.org). \*

Feb 18-20 Dance Flurry. Saratoga Springs, NY. DanceFlurry, [www.danceflurry.org](http://www.danceflurry.org). \*

Feb 24-27 Stellar Days and Nights. Buena Vista, Co. Arkansas Valley M&D, [www.stellardaysandnights.org](http://www.stellardaysandnights.org). \*

Feb 25-27 Dawn Dance Weekend. Ann Arbor, MI. AACTMAD, [www.aactmad.org/ddw](http://www.aactmad.org/ddw). \*

Feb 25-27 Chance Dance. Cape Girardeau, MO. Cape Friends of Traditional M&D, [chance-dance.angelfire.com](http://chance-dance.angelfire.com).

Feb 25-27 Fiddling Frog Dance Festival. Pasadena, CA. CA Dance Co-op, [www.caldancecoop/cgi/frogdriver.cgi](http://www.caldancecoop/cgi/frogdriver.cgi). \*

Feb 26 February Fling. Trenton, NJ. Princeton CD & Lambertville CD, [www.princetoncountrydancers](http://www.princetoncountrydancers). \*

Feb 27 Early American Folk Faire & English Country Dance Ball. DeLand, FL. DeLand CD, [www.dancefl.us/ecd/DelandECD.shtml](http://www.dancefl.us/ecd/DelandECD.shtml).

Mar 5 George Washington Ball. Williamsburg, VA. Williamsburg Heritage Dancers, 757-229-1775, [www.colonialdance.org](http://www.colonialdance.org). \*

Mar 5 Playford Ball. Framingham, MA. CDS Boston Centre, [www.cds-boston.org](http://www.cds-boston.org). \*

Mar 10-13 Cascade Promenade. Seattle/Eugene/Portland. Portland CDC et al., [cascadepromenade.org](http://cascadepromenade.org). \*

Mar 12-13 Sun Assembly. Durham, NC. Sun Assembly English Ccountry Dancers, 919-428-0008, [leahjaney@gmail.com](mailto:leahjaney@gmail.com), [sunassembly.org](http://sunassembly.org). \*

Mar 12-19 Tropical Dance Vacation: Contra Dance Week. The Big Island, HI. [www.tropicaldancevacation.com](http://www.tropicaldancevacation.com).

Mar 18-20 Spring Fever Weekend. CA. Bay Area CDS, [www.bacds.org/sf](http://www.bacds.org/sf). \*

Mar 18-20 Waltz Clog Weekend. Brasstown, NC. John C Campbell FS, [www.folkschool.org](http://www.folkschool.org), 800-FOLK-SCH. \*

Mar 18-20 Gypsy Meltdown. Charlotte, NC. Charlotte Dance Gypsies, [charlottedancegypsies.org](http://charlottedancegypsies.org). \*

Mar 19 Ad Astra Ball. Lawrence, KS. [www.adastraball.org](http://www.adastraball.org).

Mar 19 Celebration of Spring. Mamaroneck, NY. CD of Westchester, 914-693-5577 or 914-762-3619. \*

Mar 25-26 DownEast Country Dance Festival. Topsham, ME. DEFFA, [deffa.org/festival](http://deffa.org/festival). \*

Mar 25-27 Playford Ball, Nashville, TN. Nashville Country Dancers, [www.nashvillecountrydancers.org](http://www.nashvillecountrydancers.org). \*

Mar 25-27 English Dance Weekend. London, ON. True North M&D, [www.iandavies.com/trueorthdance.htm](http://www.iandavies.com/trueorthdance.htm). \*

Mar 25-27 Workshop: Dances by Gary Roodman. Troisdorf, Germany. [tanzenmeister@hier-steppt-der-baer.de](mailto:tanzenmeister@hier-steppt-der-baer.de).

Mar 27 Festival Survivors Dance. North Yarmouth, ME. DEFFA, [deffa.org/festival](http://deffa.org/festival). \*

Apr 1-2 Mountain Folk Festival. Berea, KY. Berea College, [www.berea.edu/peh/dance/mff](http://www.berea.edu/peh/dance/mff). \*

Apr 2 CDSS Lifetime Contribution Award: Tom Kruskal. Framingham, MA. CDSS, Karen, [karenaxelrod@yahoo.com](mailto:karenaxelrod@yahoo.com), or Deborah, [dkruskal@verizon.net](mailto:dkruskal@verizon.net). \*\*

Apr 2-3 English Country Ball. Binghampton, NY. Binghamton CD, 607-722-9327, [Lshephe1@binghamton.edu](mailto:Lshephe1@binghamton.edu). \*

Apr 8-10 Mount Baldy Contra Dance Weekend. San Gabriels Mtns., CA. The Living Tradition, [thelivingtradition.org/MtBaldyDance.html](http://thelivingtradition.org/MtBaldyDance.html).

Apr 8-10 Palmetto Bug Stomp. Charleston, SC. Charleston Folk, [ecmm.biz/contrabugstomp.html](http://ecmm.biz/contrabugstomp.html). \*

Apr 8-10 Springforth Ball and Dance Weekend. Richmond, VA. TADAMS, [www.tadamsva.org](http://www.tadamsva.org). \*

Apr 8-10 Chesapeake Dance Weekend. Edgewater, MD. FS of Greater Washington, [www.fsgw.org](http://www.fsgw.org). \*

Apr 8-10 Appalachian Square Dance Weekend. Brasstown, NC. JCC, [www.folkschool.org](http://www.folkschool.org), 800-FOLK-SCH. \*

Apr 8-10 SpringThaw. Toronto, ON. Toronto CD, [www.tcdance.org/thaw](http://www.tcdance.org/thaw). \*

Apr 9 Playford Ball (ECD). Brooklyn, NY. Country Dance New York, [www.cdn.org](http://www.cdn.org). \*

Apr 9-16 Singing Holiday on the Isle of Skye. Candy Verney, [www.candyverney.co.uk](http://www.candyverney.co.uk).

Apr 15-17 New England Folk Festival. Mansfield, MA. NEFFA, [www.neffa.org](http://www.neffa.org). \*

Apr 16 Fiddlehead Frolic. Ithaca, NY. Hands Four Dancers, Katy Heine, 607-273-0249, [kheine@twenry.rr.com](mailto:kheine@twenry.rr.com). \*

Apr 22-24 Spring Dance Romance. Westfield, NC. Triangle CD, [www.tcdancers.org](http://www.tcdancers.org). \*

Apr 22-24 Portland Raindance. Portland, OR. Portland CDC, [www.portlandraindance.org](http://www.portlandraindance.org). \*

Apr 30 April Showers. White Plains, NY. Country Dancers of Westchester, 914-693-5577 or 914-762-3619. \*

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**CDSS NEWS**

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**Special Notes**

Lifetime Contribution Award on April 2—see page 6

The *CDSS News* will go online in 2011, replacing the paper copy—see page 8

The CDSS Members List is now online!

If you're a member, go to [www.cdss.org](http://www.cdss.org) and go to the Login section at the lower right corner.

Happy New Year! May 2011 be filled with dance, music and song!