

# CDSS NEWS

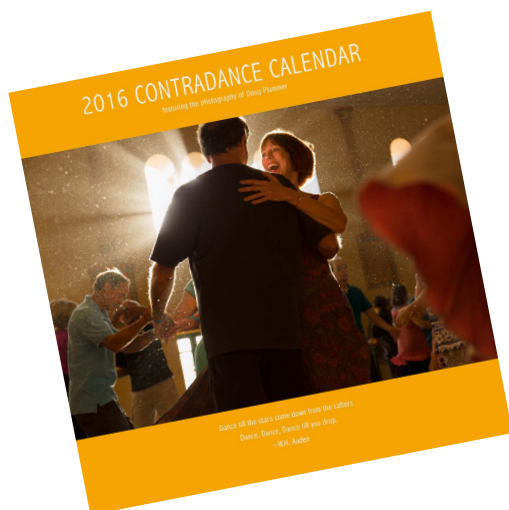
WINTER 2015-2016



COUNTRY DANCE AND SONG SOCIETY  
CELEBRATING OUR CENTENNIAL IN 2015  
SPREAD THE JOY!



# Balance and Sing Store Update ~ Winter 2015



## *Doug Plummer's 2016 Contradance Calendar*

Doug Plummer's 2016 Contra Calendar is here! Filled with Doug's amazing images that capture music and dance like only he can. Shot all over North America! Who do you know in it this year? Are you? Get your copy today! \$20

✦ Here are *TWO FINE GIFTS!* Buy them for yourself, your friends, your granny and danny, your kids, your parents, your siblings and their significant others, your S.O., your exes, your cousins, your aunts and uncles, your teachers, your mail carrier, your neighbors and their relatives.

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The long awaited sequel to *Rise Up Singing*—Peter Blood and Annie Patterson deliver easy access to 1200 important songs in a compact, affordable collection. Including extensive liner notes and well-organized indices. This is an important resource for anyone who loves music. Great for musicians, camps, teachers, or for singing with family and friends! Available in both regular and large print leaders edition; spiral bound. Regular size \$25, Extra Large size \$27.50



✦ And with that other holiday season coming right up, be thinking about giving someone the *GIFT OF CAMP*, a whole week at one of our exhilarating programs at Cavell, Ogontz, Pinewoods, or Timber Ridge. See the list of dates and programs on page 35 of this newsletter. Or see our camp website in December, <http://www.cdss.org/camp>.



✦ Read about the recent bell shortage on page 5.

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# CDSS NEWS

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

front cover: Alexandra Deis-Lauby and Gus Cantieni (photo by Ryan Carollo); see Alexandra's article on page 15. See more of Ryan's work at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/soldrinerio/albums>.

# Letters and Announcements

## SUBMITTING ADS AND ARTICLES

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

Go to <http://www.cdss100.org/events> to see UPCOMING EVENTS. To include an event, send date, name of event, town/state, sponsoring group, website or phone/email to [events@cdss.org](mailto:events@cdss.org).

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

## DISPLAY AD SIZES & RATES

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

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

## SENDING ADS

Ads must be black and white or grayscale. Please send electronically to [news@cdss.org](mailto:news@cdss.org) (PDF, JPG or TIF, with 300-600 dpi, fonts and images embedded), with check or Visa/Mastercard info sent same day.

## DEADLINES

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

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## SUPPORT

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

## PLANNED GIVING

Does your will include the Country Dance and Song Society? If not, please consider ensuring that the programs, publications and services that matter to you continue in the future with a bequest. It's practical and tax deductible. For information, go to <http://www.cdss.org/join-renew#planned-giving>.

## Rethink Your Accessories

I recently returned from a lovely dance weekend. It was perfect in every respect, with one exception: I was attacked and injured by a bracelet. It happened like this. I was dancing the first night in a contra line when a fellow dancer wearing a bracelet ran her hand up the outside of my forearm, inflicting a five-inch, Z-shaped cut, tearing the skin and pulling it away from the flesh. It bled profusely. I was taken to a clinic where the cut was cleansed, treated with iodine and antibiotic ointment, taped together and bandaged. I did not dance much the rest of the weekend, fearing grabs or hits on the wound. The moral of this story is this: DANCERS: PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE remove your wrist jewelry, watches and bulky rings before attending a dance. It is no fun for dancers to fear that they may receive injuries such as mine.

*Lois F. White, Danville, VT*

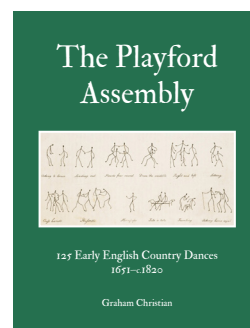
## The Playford Assembly: Botkin Folklife Lecture

Early in 2016, our colleague Graham Christian will talk about his book, *The Playford Assembly*, at the Library of Congress. (The book will be published by CDSS at the end of this year.) We're very proud that Graham and our book will be part of this distinguished series of lectures, which honors Benjamin A. Botkin, a pioneering folklorist who headed the LOC's Archive of American Folksong from 1942-1945.

*The Playford Assembly* is a collection of English country dances that have their origins in the seventeenth through early nineteenth century and is a successor volume to *The Playford Ball* (1990, CDSS). Like that collection, the new book reflects the pioneering work of Cecil Sharp and the generations of dance leaders and interpreters who have worked in his tradition since the 1910s. In the twenty-five years since *The Playford Ball* was published, interest in older dances has blossomed, resulting in a steady stream of new interpretations, rediscoveries, lucky finds, and revivals, and this is the basis for the new collection.

The lecture will be enhanced and illustrated by dancers. We'll announce the date as soon as we know it so you can mark your calendars and join us that day.

*Pat MacPherson, CDSS Education Dept. Director*



## Are You a Bilingual Caller?

CDSS is developing a list of bilingual callers (Spanish/English and French/English). Let us know if you call contras, squares or English country dance, teach morris and sword dances, or lead songs in these languages. Send replies to Rima Dael, CDSS Executive Director, [rima@cdss.org](mailto:rима@cdss.org).

### Thanks, Local Heroes!

The Local Heroes Map is up, <http://tinyurl.com/gtdxsxf>. We think that an appropriate way to celebrate the holidays in CDSS-land is to herald our Local Heroes! These are people who quietly *make things happen* for everyone else—who put out the song books, sweep the floor, create a potluck, and accomplish a million other tasks which make dancing, singing, and music-making so easy for the rest of us. See the community THANK YOUs to Local Heroes all over the continent at <http://www.cdss100.org/community100/local-heroes>. Be inspired to recognize someone in your own community; share a story about your own local hero at <http://www.cdss100.org/community100/submit-a-local-hero>!

### Wanted: Share Your Stories in Our New “Hive Mind” Column

Every group is eager for fresh ideas for particular challenges. What approaches and experiments have you tried? What has worked well...or not-so-well? Any surprises? What did you learn? Our collective Hive Mind includes many inventive and thoughtful people—let's share the best insights. Please keep it short (200 word limit); visit <http://www.cdss.org/hive>. Our first topic is “Attracting New Participants.” We know there are lots of creative minds working on this challenge and hope to see lots of stories. Thanks for sharing.

*Scott Higgs, CDSS Hive Mind Coordinator*

### CDSS Online Member Directory is Back...

...and a rare print copy will come out early in 2016. By now, the CDSS membership department has reached out to you via email or mail asking for your listing preferences in the online and print member directory. If you didn't hear from us or if you haven't replied yet, it's not too late! You can go online at fill out the form at <http://store.cdss.org/member-directory-home> and log in, or call Christine at 413-203-5467 x 104. Tell your friends to make sure their memberships are current too!

### Outreach Grant Deadlines

Application deadlines for 2016 are February 1, June 1 and October 1. Questions about grants? Contact Linda Henry, [outreach@cdss.org](mailto:outreach@cdss.org), 413-203-5467 x 105. A list of recent CDSS outreach grants is posted at <http://www.cdss.org/support-services/outreach/our-funds-at-work>. For more information about funding, visit <http://www.cdss.org/support-services/outreach/outreach-funds>.

### Amazon Smile

Did you know that CDSS can receive donations from [amazon.com](http://amazon.com)? Go to [www.smile.amazon.com](http://www.smile.amazon.com), where you'll be prompted to select a charitable organization. (Be sure to select Country Dance and Song Society in *Easthampton, Massachusetts*.) For eligible purchases, the Amazon Smile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price to CDSS. Thanks!

### Congratulations to...

...Mary Devlin who has retired from her day job and is also stepping down as a *CDSS News* dance editor. Thanks for your work, Mary!

### Worldwide Morris Bell Shortage Threatened!

So, this may be more of interest to the morris sides, but we have been in the midst of a morris bell shortage. It started over a year ago when the manufacturer of our bells could not fulfill our order. The company was then bought out and nobody there seemed to want to make our bells. They had other sizes, and other colors, but not what we needed. There were repeated emails and phone calls but to no avail. In the meantime, our supply of bells ran dangerously low, then dried up altogether. Things were looking grim.



This past fall, a member of a morris side mentioned that they had been able to find similar bells from Native American dancers. This lead was pursued, and it led to a wholesaler in Texas (who did not want to tell us where he got them, but we are clever), and to a manufacturer in Germany.

About this time, we also sent an email to our usual supplier's parent company appealing to their pride in English cultural heritage, and reminding them that as the only English manufacturer of morris bells, the future of morris dancing, and indeed English cultural heritage throughout the world, was depending on them. If it had been late winter, we would have reminded them that if there was no morris dancing on May Day, spring would not be coming, but we don't have that kind of leverage in the fall.

In any case, I am writing this in November, and by the time the newsletter comes out we will hopefully be rolling in bells, and this crisis will have been averted. I don't know how it is going to happen, but I wanted to let you know we are doing all we can to alleviate this serious crisis.

*Jeff Martell, CDSS Store Manager*



# Brad Foster—A Calling Career

Interviewed by Tom Kruskal



*Brad Foster, CDSS's Executive and Artistic Director Emeritus, is the 2015 recipient of the CDSS Lifetime Contribution Award. He was interviewed this summer by musician, dance teacher, and longtime friend, Tom Kruskal, at his home in Shutesbury, Massachusetts. This excerpt is from the full interview posted on <http://www.cdss.org/lifetime-contribution-award-main/2015-lca-brad-foster-part-1> and <http://www.cdss.org/lifetime-contribution-award-main/2015-lca-brad-foster-part-2>. We are gathering photos and videos taken at the LCA party held in October; they'll be posted on our website later.*

## Getting Started In Dancing—The Mary Judson Years

TK: I know remarkably little about your time in Southern California with Mary Judson, before Berkeley, so I would just love to hear how you got connected with her, and with your peers who were around, like Lydee Scudder, and Mary's kids Molly and Ellen. How did that happen?

BF: When I was in middle school, just before I went into high school, I was in a high school play, and at the end of the play some of the cast invited me to go to "The Museum." I thought they were crazy because I thought they were talking about going to an art museum, and it was already after 9:00 pm when a museum would have been closed. The Museum turned out to be a folk dance café, and I fell in love with that.

The Museum also was where Mary Judson taught. Through folk dancing I met Lydee and then her sister Alice, and Mary's daughter Ellen, all of whom were in my high school. Through Ellen and The Museum, I then met Mary, who taught English country dancing there and around town. I started dancing regularly, rode my bike to all the events that I could go to. And I did a little bit of dancing in school too. I remember Ellen teaching me some morris dance figures out in the courtyard of our high school. I even got assigned the role of calling a dance for a school performance. It wasn't really calling because everybody knew the dance; calling was just part of the performance. But I think that assignment set the stage for my calling later on. So through the four years of high school I did English country and international folk dance, and a group of us always went to the Southern California Renaissance Faire and performed. Sometime during those years I met you, Tom, but I can't remember where or when. I know I was up in Berkeley once or twice, but you also came down to do a workshop at one time. Then in 1971, just before my senior year in high school, I wandered across the country and ended up at Pinewoods on visiting day!... Somebody (I assume it was Mary) had made arrangements for me to stay, and so I stayed the rest of the week...

## College Years in Santa Cruz and Berkeley

BF: Like most of my friends in Pasadena, when I finished high school I wanted to escape and go somewhere else. I looked at Prescott College in Arizona and some other places but ended up choosing U. C. Santa Cruz. I wanted to study natural history, but they also had an international dance program. I saw you in that period, too, because Santa Cruz was close enough for me to occasionally get to your dance in San Francisco.

In Santa Cruz I took dance classes and I also, rather quickly, got a job teaching folk dancing. The regular folk dance teacher, Marcel Vinokur, took a sabbatical soon after I arrived—so in his absence I stepped in and taught. My first class was in international folk dance, but it quickly got turned into an English country dance class. I would come up to San Francisco to go to your dances and record the music and bring it back. There was also a square dance caller who I knew as "John the bass player." I never learned his last name. He had learned his square dances from the

photo by Marty Stock (2004)

**Comments by Rima Dael, CDSS Executive Director, at the party for Brad on October 24, 2016**

"There is a saying that some people strengthen society just by being the kind of people they are. That is surely true of our guest of honor today. Brad Foster, by his kindness, his understanding, and his hard work, makes our community better. He has left his mark on CDSS, the folks in this room, and across the US, Canada and beyond. It takes courage and patience to be committed to the welfare and betterment of our dancers, musicians, organizers, singers and leaders. That is why we honor Brad. We honor him for his commitment, his belief and his sheer determination. We honor him for the work he has done and the work we know he will continue to do. We are here to say, "Well done, Brad," and "thank you," and "how much we appreciate [what] you have done in our name." You have put your heart and soul to build community through dance, music and song. Friends, it is with great pleasure that on behalf of the Country Dance and Song Society that we present this Lifetime Contribution Award in 2015 to Bradley Foster."

pastor of a church in Oakland, who had learned them somewhere in the Midwest. John called squares with a bluegrass band, but then he graduated and left, and so I filled his gap too. That was the beginning of my square dance calling.

TK: So did you have any contact at all with CDSS National during that time?

BF: Well, I certainly knew about CDSS. I'd been to Pinewoods already, and they were the source of dance books and records. I also remember getting big scholarships—this was later on, when I was coming as a camper in 1975—to come to camp, and I ended up spending about as much as I would have on the camp fees buying books because I had no dance library. In 1974, I wrote [to] the office, hoping to come to camp. That was the year Pat Shaw came, but my letter...got lost, and by the time I figured out what had happened, camp was full and there was no way for me to get in, so I went to Stockton Folk Dance Camp instead...

TK: Where were you at that point?

BF: Well, I started at U. C. Santa Cruz in 1972, and I lasted about a year and a half, and then started a long process of transferring to U. C. Berkeley. I stayed in Santa Cruz and taught dance and did carpentry and gardening, and then in 1975 I transferred up to Berkeley, just after you left. I finished Santa Cruz, moved to Berkeley, and took over your dance. A couple of years later Nick Harris, who had been running the Stanford contra, graduated and left, so I took over his contra dance too.

TK: Tell me something about the Bay Area Country Dance Society. It's gotten all built up now, but what

was it like then? How much of that growth were you there for?

BF: When I came on the scene, you had your dance. The story I tell is—this is one of those stories that I'm not sure is true—but what I remember hearing is that you met every week on Sunday, with a very tiny crowd, and the dance stayed like that until the crowd finally got big enough, and then you switched to once a month and moved it across the Bay to Berkeley... Then I came in and switched the dance to twice a month, and it has stayed pretty much like that ever since. Your dance, which later became my dance, was the only English dance for a while; Nick Harris started the contra dance at Stanford, and a few people did traditional style squares as well.

So, in 1975 I took over your English dance, and started a short-lived contra in Berkeley; I later started another contra in Berkeley and an English dance at Ashkenaz that didn't last very long. I started something in an art center on a pier in San Francisco. Meanwhile, Bruce Hamilton moved to Palo Alto and started an English dance in San Jose. Bob Fraley moved to the Bay Area and started the first English dance in Palo Alto. So, things started cropping up. Kirston Koths moved in and started a Berkeley contra that kept going, unlike mine. When my contra in San Francisco failed to keep going, Charlie Fenton started another one in California Hall—that dance moved out to St. Paul's on the West End and has been going for a long time. It just felt as if a couple years after you left everything exploded, and suddenly there were all sorts of new people. The same thing happened when I left—as soon as the vacuum was there, all these people filled it, and lots more stuff happened.

*Read about the founding of Bay Area CDS, Brad's appointment as CDSS's director, the organization's relocation to Massachusetts, his accomplishments there, and more at <http://www.cdss.org/lifetime-contribution-award-main/2015-lca-brad-foster-part-1> and at <http://www.cdss.org/lifetime-contribution-award-main/2015-lca-brad-foster-part-2>.*





## News from Canada—Chehalis Contra Dance Weekend

by Sally Sheedy and Jane Srivastava

### The Preamble (JS)

Vancouver Country Dance was founded in the late 1980s by Cameron and Susie Stewart; in time they also organized a residential contra dance weekend named Chehalis for its original site, Chehalis, British Columbia. In the '90s, June Harman and Michael Dyck founded Vancouver English Country Dance. As with many dance communities, ours waxes and wanes in numbers and financial stability but never lacks in joyful participation. We'd love to have you join us anytime—you can find out more about us, and when and where we dance, at <http://www.vcn.bc.ca/vcountry>, or just google Vancouver Contra Dance.

We were asked to write an article for the *CDSS News* just before this year's Chehalis Contra Dance weekend and we've decided to make the weekend the focus of this article. During the weekend I asked for volunteers to help write the article: first to volunteer was Sally Sheedy, from Bellingham, Washington. Uh oh, not a Vancouver dancer, and this article is meant

for the Canadian dance section of the *CDSS News*! But wait a minute, one of the unique things about the Vancouver dance community is the international flavor: dancers from Bellingham and Vancouver regularly travel back and forth to each other's dances, and on a larger scale travel up and down the coast for dances, balls, and dance camps. We relish being part of the Cascadia dance community. What more appropriate than that this article be written by a Bellingham dancer?

### The Weekend (SS)

This September, I attended the annual Chehalis Dance Weekend for the third time. I'm fairly sure there were more people at camp this year, and I am certain that there was more energy!\*

The drive to camp is very pretty, a harbinger of the site, set on the banks of the Chehalis River which was flowing fast and near to overflowing by the end of the very rainy weekend. Dorm rooms,



eating, dancing, and workshop space are all in one building; some attendees stay in tents or RVs on site. The parquet dance floor has doors on two sides leading to a deep, wrap-around porch. As well as providing for cross ventilation, the porch provided a gathering place for dancers to visit or play with hula hoops brought by a dancer. Many dancers ventured off the porch, despite the pouring rain, to explore beautiful paths along the Chehalis River; one dancer spent part of Saturday afternoon in a chair near the river bank, reading under a golf umbrella.

This year Chehalis hired young talent and encouraged young attendees, offering \$100 scholarships to attendees 30 years of age and under. The combined age of the two-member band Uncle Farmer was less than my age. I am more of a contemporary of the second band that played the weekend, Seattle's KGB, who, despite being a little older than UF, played their music with youthful enthusiasm and verve.\*\*

I don't know enough about music to explain how this is true: their music was very different, but both bands' music was eminently danceable. On Saturday night, each played a half-hour concert, giving us a chance to really listen to the music. Dancer Charlotte Gurney provided a palate-cleansing concert intermission with a Celtic song of unpronounceable title, and a rendition of Shenandoah, both of which brought tears to many dancers' eyes.

The callers were young, too. Maggie Jo Saylor, from Chicago, was in constant motion as she called, danced in place, or jumped into a line during a walkthrough. Her voice and her instruction were both crystal clear. Chehalis was Seattle's Michael Karcher's first weekend-long calling gig. In the five years he has been calling he has amassed a sizable inventory of interesting dances. His analytical mind draws him to consider the geometry of the dances and moves him to attend to all aspects of what makes a great evening of dance.

I attended several workshops. First I listened to Uncle Farmer in their Variations, Accompaniment, Improvisation workshop. They played the same tune several times in different ways, demonstrating a variety of rhythms and phrasing. Later, KGB, in their Putting Together a Good Set List for Dances workshop shared some of their tune lists, organized by type (reels and jigs), or by feel (bouncy or smooth). I also took part in Michael Karcher's I'm a Contra Dance Caller, Ask Me Anything session. He talked about the flow of energy through the course of an evening, when you want the highest energy sets, and what to do before and after the break.

With some trepidation, I attended Maggie Jo's Improv, Comedy, and Theatre Games workshop. It turned out to be a very safe space—and we all enjoyed

ice-breaking and trust-building games together. We started in a circle throwing an imaginary ball around and across to each other, complete with sound effects. In similar fashion, we said our names in what started as a random sequence. It was in effect a memory test. We then created a different sequence with a different set of words, and then tried to keep the two different sequences going at the same time. Tricky, and fun!

The campers took an active part in making camp special. I took part in the clothing exchange, taking home a glitzy top and a chenille jacket. In turn, having recently done a seasonal shift in my closet, I contributed a lot of shirts to the exchange, and enjoyed seeing some of them on their new owners. They looked good!

At the break on Friday night, two "bullyboys" (JD Erskine and Brian Robertson) led us in singing sea shanties, with great gusto! The clear booming voices, telling tales of life on the sea, made me feel as though we were rolling on the briny deep; I could almost hear the waves serving as percussion. (Though maybe that was just the rain on the roof!)

Merilee Jones, who must have a pitch-pipe in her head, led a rounds workshop. We learned multiple parts for about ten different rounds. Most were new to me, and they all were beautiful. Sometimes, in order to hear one another better, we moved around the room in circles as we sang the separate parts—it had an amazing effect on the sound.

Lastly, I'd like to tell you about some of the conversations I had during the weekend. I overheard the sound technician, for whom contra was somewhat new, ask about the difference between square dancing and contra dancing. One of the dancers suggested that square dancing is more about the choreography, the caller, and the square. Contra is more about the music and the flow and the entire room of dancers. Obviously, these distinctions could be the beginning of a long conversation!

One of the younger dancers said that the youth scholarship had made it possible for him to attend, and the music was fantastic, though he mostly listened; he appreciated the fact that there was no pressure to dance—he could lounge near the dance floor on comfy cushions, read, and still enjoy the music. Though he was disappointed there were not more young folks, he admitted that dancing with older folks, too, was part of what made contra dancing special.

Another camper noted that contra dance is an activity that single people can do, as partners change from dance to dance, and the culture is very inclusive. Yet another commented that live music is a big part of what makes contra dance special. And a dancer who has been dancing for many years

*continued on page 19*

# Proactive Management of “Problem Dancers”—Creating a Dance Environment Safe for All

by Will Loving



Why do we love community dance? The reasons are as varied as the individuals who attend, but most would probably say something about community, a safe place to meet and interact with other people who like to dance, and the pure joy of moving and dancing to live music. Community dance provides an opportunity for complete strangers to come together and interact in structured ways that are far closer in terms of physical contact, and more personal and intimate, than almost anywhere else in most people's lives. We hold hands, walk arm in arm, look into each other's eyes, and for three to eight seconds (many times across a night), hold each other in the open embrace of a swing.

It is this “structured intimacy” that provides much of the appeal of contra dance and community dance in general. The structure, boundaries, and expectations of the dance form and dance events allow this closer-than-normal physical contact between strangers to be experienced as friendly and safe for dancers of all ages. And overall, it is.

What then, as dancers and organizers, do we do when someone does not respect the boundaries and expectations that allow this kind of close personal contact to occur? How do we respond when someone reports that they were uncomfortable or felt that their body or their personal space was disrespected? How do we even find out about such events when they are often subtle and transitory, leaving the recipient confused about what (if anything) just happened?

Here are some examples of actual experiences, some paraphrased, as reported to me and others. As you read these, think about how often you might have experienced this or heard someone describe something like it, and think about what (if anything) was done about it:

- He always pulls me in too close on the swing. I've said it's not OK, but he does it anyway. I now switch lines to avoid him.
- Did he touch my breast intentionally or was it accidental? [endemic]
- During a swing, his arm is always too close to or pressed into my chest.
- He just put his hand low on my hip instead of on my waist or in my hand during the courtesy turn...it felt inappropriate, but was that an accident or intentional?
- She keeps pulling me in close and pressing her body against mine.
- I am a (large person, older person, in a wheelchair, transgendered, deaf person). People look past me, turn me down, or otherwise won't dance with me.
- She swore at me loudly...when asked politely not to make critical comments about other dancers.
- He just lifted me into the air, again, after I told him not to. [younger experienced dancer]
- They were high or had alcohol on their breath.
- He kept holding my hand and talking to me after the dance ended, and that felt uncomfortable. I didn't know how to leave. Then when he let go, he bent down and kissed me on top of my head. I don't know what to do...
- He keeps following me alongside the set and watching me as I dance. When I reported it to the organizer, she said, “Well, let's give him another chance.” [13-year old]
- When we were swinging, I could feel that he had an erection. How do I deal with that?!
- He kept staring at my cleavage.
- He pushed his hips into mine.

photo by Noah Loving



Because of behaviors like this, dancers, both new and experienced, have walked away from their local dances and not returned. And they will continue to do so unless we act. Someone suggested in an online thread recently that the apparent rise of this kind of “bad behavior” was caused by trends such as techno contra and the influence of other dance styles. But the sad truth is that these kinds of experiences have always happened at community dance events.

In the past, violations of boundaries have frequently been not reported at all, but even when they were reported, the organizer(s) has ignored, dismissed, excused, or downplayed the incident and has taken little or no action on it. There are many reasons for this lack of response:

- The organizer has no experience dealing with such issues and doesn’t know where to start.
- The organizer feels uncomfortable with confrontation or embarrassed about the subject
- The offender is a friend of the organizer.
- The dance depends on the offender for providing a key service such as doing sound.
- The organizer does not have much time, is generally overwhelmed, etc.

What is changing in the last five to seven years, however, is that because of changes in the broader culture, the culture of silence is being replaced by a “culture of consent,” in which mutual consent is expected at all times. This change is especially noticeable amongst dancers and dance organizers under 35 who are far less willing to tolerate any inappropriate behavior and have a far greater willingness to speak up to the person involved and to bring issues to the organizers’ attention.

Women over 35—as reported to me by the women themselves—are often much less likely to report problems directly to dance event leaders, though younger woman may be reluctant too. The reasons given for not reporting incidents, regardless of age, are usually:

- I didn’t want to make a scene.
- I would be too embarrassed to talk about it or say what happened.
- I didn’t want to make him feel bad.
- I feel as if it’s my fault [the legacy of internalized sexism].
- Nothing will be done anyway (or my concerns will be dismissed).

Newer, beginning dancers are also far *more* likely to not say anything but rather just leave and never come back. The practice of “booking ahead,” which is more prevalent at larger urban dances, tends to leave the newer and less experienced dancers looking for partners and makes them easier targets for inappropriate behavior.

Most of the above involves male dancers interacting with female dancers, often significantly younger female dancers, but sometimes the offender is female, and sometimes the gender identity or gender expression of the person on the receiving end is significant in the context of the interaction. So, in addition to sexism and the more common dynamics, we also need to be aware of homophobic and transphobic behavior as possible concerns.

## What you can do

Whether you are an organizer or dancer, the single most important thing you can do to start is to *consciously decide to make the subject of inappropriate behavior and dancer safety a priority* for your dance. This is true even if you are not currently aware of any existing issues. Behavior issues can and will occur at every dance, and the only way to protect and grow your dance community is to be proactive about making sure that existing issues are corrected and that new issues are handled promptly and fully. In addition:

- **Talk about it.** Include Behavior Issues as a *standing* agenda item for organizer meetings.
- **Assess current conditions** at your dance. If you haven’t discussed behavior before or in a while, stop and think about what problems might exist.
- **Have a vision for your dance.** What do you want the culture and feeling of the dance to be: friendly, welcoming, safe? What can you do to encourage that?
- **Don’t do it alone.** Make your organizing group larger. Involve community members who you trust, and who may have relevant background such as in counseling or social services, to think well and thoughtfully about this.

- **Solicit feedback and reports.** Let dancers regularly know—*directly, through personal conversations rather than announcements*—that you want to hear about any problem behavior that they 1) experience, 2) observe, or 3) hear about, anonymously if necessary. You need to know what’s happening out there, even if it’s not immediately actionable.
- **Communicate at your dance.** Occasionally, make a more general announcement like “If you have a problem or suggestion at the dance, just talk to anyone wearing a Dance Committee button, or come to the door person.” Have dance etiquette posters along with more specific notices in the bathrooms communicating every dancer’s right to be safe, to be respected, and to say no, as loudly as necessary.
- **Communicate regionally.** Communicate and coordinate with other dance organizers in your region to keep an eye on potential problems. However, keep confidentiality and the potential for rumors in mind; keep names under discussion on a need-to-know basis.
- **Include younger community members.** Make sure that you have younger members of the dance community in your organizing group and in positions of responsibility. The Downtown Amherst organizing committee has ten members, eight of whom are 35 and under.
- **Encourage a culture of consent**, e.g., “May I dip you?” “Do you want to twirl?” See the 2014 Dance Flurry notice on Consent, <http://amherstcontra.org/Flurry2015ConsentNotice.pdf>. Let dancers know that if they feel uncomfortable and cannot manage the situation verbally, they have the right to walk away from the line, even including letting the line fall apart.

## Taking action when something happens

Every observed or reported behavior issue is unique and requires a unique, thoughtful, and appropriate response. In most cases, the most important things you’re going to be doing are listening and gathering information. However, if there is an immediate safety issue, do not hesitate to act as required—up to and including calling 911. Keep these recommendations in mind when something happens:

- Designate one person to be in charge—usually the Dance Manager—but pull other organizers or committee members in to witness and listen. Leading is important. The dance manager should think with others, but don’t turn it into a committee process if you’re dealing with something that requires action in the moment at a dance. Trust your thinking and act on behalf of the safety of your dancers.
- Focus on and listen to the victim/recipient first and the offender second. Accused offenders will often feel bad or scared, but your focus needs to be with the victim, making sure that they feel safe and heard.
- Not every issue requires a direct response. Sometimes all it takes is for a person to be heard.
- It is critically important to acknowledge the experience of the recipient/victim. Your response should include:
  - “Thank you for telling me.”
  - “It wasn’t your fault, and you didn’t do anything wrong.”
  - “We take this seriously.”
  - “We will investigate this and follow up with you.”
- Important: Be aware that while every recipient/victim needs to be listened to, respected, and helped to feel safe, their degree of upset *is not a valid gauge for your response*. Unless there is an immediate safety issue, you need to listen first, gather information from everyone involved, and decide (based on what actually occurred) what the next steps are. Even if you have heard secondhand stories about this person, your actions need to be based on firsthand information, primarily what happened at your dance.

When talking with the alleged offender keep this in mind:

- If you are dealing with both the recipient/victim and the accused/offender in the moment at a dance, *don’t* leave the recipient/victim on their own while you go talk to the offender unless you are clear that they are OK and feeling safe. Have another organizer stay with them.
- The behavior in question might have been completely unintentional, but the impact on the recipient needs to be validated and taken seriously.
- Assuming that you’re willing to work with the offender, they need to accept responsibility for their actions regardless of intention.

## Consequences and Taking Action

Often, cases/issues that I have dealt with have been resolved through a conversation with the offending dancer, often at the break or after the dance. However, some individuals repeat their behaviors over and over, despite discussion



and warning from organizers. When that happens, the organizers must decide if a more serious consequence is required—in particular, banning the offender from the dance, permanently or for a specific length of time. Because of the uniqueness of each situation, there are no hard and fast rules, but here are some suggestions based on my own experience dealing with several such cases and talking with other organizers.

1. Stick to what actually happened and was observed or reported, the specific ways that boundaries were crossed, the objections ignored, and the behavior that was inappropriate.
2. Document and compile the above specifics. If this is a longtime problem, there are probably lots of stories out there. Talk to experienced dancers and ask them to write specific accounts of what happened to them, when, and what they did about it. They can submit the incidents anonymously if they wish but in my experience, most have wanted to be identified to the offender.
3. Keep confidentiality in mind. The above compiled information and plans should not be gossiped about or passed around. The victim/recipient has a right to know what you are doing, but you don't need to share everything with them, and you can also ask them to respect confidentiality.
4. Have a group of committee members (or trustworthy community members, if your organizing group is small) meet with the offender to talk about what has been happening and specifically to go over the above documented list of offenses and prior actions. Give them the opportunity to respond. This is a critical step in my opinion and should only be skipped in cases of extreme behavior.
5. Think before meeting with the offender about at least a couple of strategies, depending on how the offender responds. Some will be defensive or in denial, but some will honestly express a desire to reform their behavior. Have clear, specific guidelines as to how they are to behave and be in physical contact with other dancers. As an example, one dancer was offered the following specifics if he were to return to the dance at a future date:
  - You should strive to have your behavior always be “above reproach.”
  - Always stand upright and keep a respectful distance between you and your partner.
  - Do not lean or bend over and put your face anywhere near the partner's body.
  - In a courtesy turn, put your hand on your partner's hand and nowhere else.
  - During a swing, keep your right arm curved well away from your partner and keep good distance between you.
  - Never hug a partner unless they are a member of your family.
  - Outside of the walkthrough and the dance, do not hold hands with other dancers or touch them in any other way.
  - Avoid dancing with new dancers. Dance with people you know.

Taking on the challenge of dealing with “bad behavior” at our community dances is not what most volunteer organizers “signed up for.” However, these problems and problem individuals exist, and if they are not dealt with, they will cause dancers—especially new dancers—to walk away and not return. The future of every individual dance series depends on our taking this seriously and being proactive in dealing with it. What that means will differ for each series or event, but deciding now to make it part of your organizing and your awareness will get you started making your dance the friendly, welcoming, and safe place that you want it to be.

*This article was derived in part from a Workshop session presented by Will at the “Puttin’ On the Dance” dance organizers workshop in Ottawa, Ontario, in March 2015. (CDSS was a cosponsor of the event.)*

*Will Loving has been participating in, teaching, and organizing contra and swing dance for over thirty-five years. He is the founder of the Downtown Amherst (MA) weekly contra dance and the fourth Friday Greenfield Challenging Contra series. His passion is drawing people together, engendering and supporting connection and community, and creating a space for people to experience the “reliable joy” of community dance.*

#### **NOTE: CDSS Task Group Forming**

CDSS is forming a task group to look at best practices for communities to use in handling difficult and inappropriate behavior that happens at their dances. Our goal is not to offer legal advice, but to develop resources for groups to use in handling the different situations their communities face. If you're interested in participating in the task group, please contact Rima Dael, CDSS Executive Director, [rima@cdss.org](mailto:rima@cdss.org).

# What's Your Pronoun?

by Miriam Newman (she/her)

The question is showing up on more and more camp and event registration forms: “What’s your preferred personal pronoun?” Some folks are very happy to see it and some don’t notice it as anything unusual. Some folks aren’t quite sure what’s being asked; for you, I’ll endeavor to briefly explain.

In English, many pronouns—the words we use to refer to people when we’re not calling them by name—are linked to a person’s **gender**, the personal sense of being male, female, both male and female, neither male nor female, somewhere between male and female, other. Every baby is given a gender assignment of *female* or *male* at birth, based on the baby’s physical characteristics. People whose gender identity aligns with cultural expectations for the gender assigned at birth are often referred to as *cisgender*; people whose gender identity does not align with cultural expectation for the gender assigned at birth are often referred to as *transgender*. People who identify other than male or female often use terms such as third gender, genderqueer, agender, genderskeptical. An umbrella term is *nonbinary*, which refers to not being easily defined as part of a male/female either/or. People—cisgender and transgender—experience their gender in a variety of ways, and people express their gender identities in a variety of ways. For instance, for some people, wearing a skirt is part of expressing femininity or girliness, while for others wearing a skirt is just part of dressing for airflow and comfort.

People also talk about gender in a variety of ways, but one of the ways the English language makes us talk about gender is with **pronouns**. When we’re referring to a specific individual not by name, we usually use a pronoun—she, he, they, ze, etc.—to represent that person. The most common English personal pronouns are *she*—primarily for

people who identify as female—and *he*—primarily for people who identify as male. Many nonbinary people prefer to avoid he and she and instead prefer gender-neutral pronouns like the singular *they* or the recently-created pronoun *ze*.

If you’re not used to using *they* for one person, remember that it works just the same way as using *you* for one person. For example, I might say “You are an excellent dancer!” and you’d see nothing wrong with the plural *you are* combined with the singular *a dancer*. In the same way, if someone uses *they* as their personal pronoun, you would say, “They are an excellent dancer!”

Pronouns are linked to **gender identity**, not **anatomy** or **sexuality**. When people ask for your pronouns, they’re not asking what’s in your pants or who you want to date. They just want to know the correct way to refer to you when talking with another person or making introductions.

Being called the wrong pronoun can be disorienting and uncomfortable. To help themselves avoid mistakes, CDS Boston Centre’s Swing into Summer co-chairs decided to take a direct approach this year, and ask: how would you like us to refer to you?

I’m Miriam. My pronouns are she/her. Let’s go dance!

*Miriam Newman started dancing English, Scottish, contra, and longsword in 2003 at Swarthmore College near Philadelphia, learned to call there and in New York City with CDNY, and now dances and calls English in Boston with CDS Boston Centre. When not dancing, she edits children’s books. This article is reprinted, with minor edits by the author, from the CDS Boston News, Summer 2015.*

*Editor’s note: While learning the new pronouns, a basic primer may be helpful to some folks. Cisgender has its origin in the Latin-derived prefix cis-, meaning “on this side of,” which is an antonym for the prefix “trans-” meaning “across from” or “on the other side of.” Easy for dancers to remember! Binary is something made of or based on two things or parts (such as male and female). Nonbinary is not restricted to two things: grammatically-speaking, in reference to pronouns, it can refer to either male or female or both or neither. A good background article, I’ve found, is from the New York Times earlier this year, [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/08/education/edlife/a-university-recognizes-a-third-gender-neutral.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/08/education/edlife/a-university-recognizes-a-third-gender-neutral.html?_r=0).)*

*Our thanks to Miriam for sharing her article with us. Let us know how the conversation is going in your community.*



# What I Did Last Summer: A 24-Year Old's First Time at Sleep-Away Camp!

by Alexandra Deis-Lauby

This summer I went to my first summer camp EVER! It happened to be a CDSS family and adult week at Timber Ridge Camp. My experience was wonderful.

I have been contra dancing (on and off) for five years. Then, a year-and-a-half-ago, I jumped in headfirst and started going to dances all the time, including dance weekends in the Midwest. I was living in Chicago then and Dennis Wise, also a Chicagoan, would say "I'm driving to Indy, Cincy, or Kentucky next month. Want to come?" At those weekends I learned to lead waltz from Gaye Fifer and to lead flourishes and dips from Lauren Peckman. Dennis taught dance communication through contact improv, and Bob Greene and Martha Edwards of St. Louis introduced me to spritely English. Lisa Greenleaf called an amazing quintuple progression dance called "Penguin Pam" to the rollicking music of the Latter Day Lizards in Lexington, Kentucky. Seth Tepfer hash-called\* at 9 am at Summer Soirée, and Janine Smith wrote (and called) a singing square to "All About that Bass."

Dancers in Chicago, Kentucky, Indiana, Ohio, North Carolina, Missouri, Virginia, and Maryland opened up their homes (and their cars) to my friends and me. The small but growing dance communities in these cities are warm, welcoming and vibrant.

The camp experience is yet another level of community. CDSS Family and Adult Week hosts families taking their annual vacations together. Over recent years, today's teenagers have grown up at camp and, now, as "crew," take care of the younger kids. Young adults love it so much they continue to return without their parents. This year, Timber Ridge had a grandmother with two grandchildren who came just to be near "folkies."

The structure of family camp is ingenious. I've been telling everyone about it (dancers and yet-to-be dancers alike). It works like this: everyone of all ages, 2 to 99, has classes for their age groups in the morning. Lunch and unstructured time in the afternoon lets families spend time together.

During the evening dance, crew members, as roving babysitters, check on the sleeping kids while the adults dance.

The camp environment, shaped greatly by the twice-daily campwide gatherings, is founded on sharing and inclusivity. At "gathering," one can share via performing, teaching, storytelling, or even proposing! This year, a marriage proposal between two integral community members was the highlight of the week. Throughout the week, the callers, folk artists, and musicians bestow their knowledge and lend their talent to campers.

At Timber Ridge, I contra danced with a man whose wife and children have been contra dancers for many years, but for him, this was his first time. I got to English dance with 10-year olds who loved it and danced both roles. I learned singing rounds about Thai food, and neat fingerplays for kids. Andy Davis told stories from all over the world and the campers and staff assembled two nights of musical performances.

It is amazing to be a part of a community that constantly surprises and reveals new pockets of the folk tradition. I'm so happy that I dove into the contra dance world headfirst.

*Alexandra Deis-Lauby is a New York native who discovered the joys of contra dancing while at school in Chicago. She currently teaches pre-school where her favorite part of the day is singing folk songs with the kids.*

*\* For those unfamiliar with the term, hash calling is a spontaneously-called, unchoreographed dance, a hash (or mix) of moves thrown together on the spot by the caller. (The editor's thanks to Seth Tepfer for verifying this). We hope to have an article about hash calling in an upcoming issue.*

*Thanks too to Alexandra who shared with us the wonderful photo by Ryan Carollo which is this issue's cover.*



REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN FOR OUR 2016 SUMMER CAMPS!  
Preliminary details are on our website; full info will be posted by January 1st.  
[www.cdss.org/camp](http://www.cdss.org/camp), [camp@cdss.org](mailto:camp@cdss.org), 413-203-5467 x 2  
Don't wait another year—join us in 2016!

# Yoga for Dancers—Yes, Virginia, More Hip Openers...

by Anna Rain

When we have limited flexibility to begin with, we are often unmotivated to address our tight muscles and joints because we are intimidated by what seem to be impossible poses and by those more flexible around us. If we find one or two poses that appear to be within our capability and we begin with those, if we use support to assist the correct actions of the poses, and if we work gently yet diligently, we can build on small successes that add up to a more comfortable body.

Tight hips lead to knee problems and back problems, but many poses that can ease tight hips seem out of reach. In supine poses, we use gravity and a wall to make the actions that will work the hips in a way that is accessible, gentle, and effective (if you keep at it!). Two previous columns which address similar concepts are Fall 2010 (legs up the wall), and Spring 2015 (hip openers).

What we consider “open hips” constitutes several kinds of release. I’ll show two here: one where the hips externally rotate (roll away from the midline of the body) and one where the legs are apart from each other but neither internally nor externally rotated.

## Supine Bound-Angle Pose Up the Wall

Lie on your right side with your buttock bones on—or close to—a wall and your spine perpendicular to the wall (see left). Roll on your back and stretch your legs up the wall; for more detail on using this pose for hamstring lengthening, you can review “legs/leg up the wall” in the Fall 2010 issue. If your sacrum (the triangular bone at the base of your spine) is not completely on the floor, move away from the wall until your low back is flat on the floor. In this case,

your legs will not be flush against the wall. You will have a natural space between your back waist and the floor: do not try to flatten the back waist to the floor. For the spine to have a healthy curve, you must maintain the natural curve at the waist.

See that your neck is long and relaxed and that your chin releases toward your throat. If your

chin points to the ceiling, put a folded blanket under your head until your neck and jaw soften and your chin gently tips toward your throat. To stretch out the spine and create space in the abdomen, extend the arms overhead, fingernails on the floor, and lengthen the fingers toward the wall behind you (see right). When you have a good idea of how engaged arms affect your spine, explore different arm positions to see what is most comfortable to you (see below right photo). You might think engaged arms is your favorite!

Now for the hip work! Bend your knees and bring the soles of your feet together. Let your thighs open from the inner thigh to the outer thigh: this is external rotation of the upper leg. Use your fingers to trace the action from the inner thigh to the outer thigh. The touch of your fingers gives the skin and the muscles directional information. Press your heels together and see if you can move the inner knees further away from each other.

To recap:

- Lie on the floor with your buttock bones at or near a wall and your legs up the wall
- See that the sacrum is flat against the floor
- Bend the knees and bring the soles of your feet together
- Arms stretched overhead to lengthen spine (fingernails on the floor), then explore different arm positions for greatest comfort
- Roll the flesh of the thigh from the inner thigh to the outer thigh
- Press the heels together and move the inner knees apart





Stay in this pose for several minutes if you are fairly comfortable. Every several breaths, actively press the heels, open the inner knees away from each other, and gently move the outer thighs toward the wall. The floor supports your back so you do not have to lift against gravity; with your knees bent and your feet on the wall, gravity drops the hips open.

Practice this first pose several times to get comfortable with being on the floor and using the wall. The next pose is more challenging to remain in, especially if you have tight hamstrings. If you have worked some in the previous pose, you'll likely have better results in the next one.

### Supine Wide-Legs Pose Up the Wall

Bring the knees together and extend legs up the wall. To lengthen spine, stretch the arms overhead, fingernails on the floor. Join the inner thighs, inner knees, and inner ankles (as best you can). Engage the thighs fully (tighten the quadriceps) so that the legs are straight, and press the thighs into the wall. Note that with the inner legs joined, the front of the leg (front thigh, knee cap, shin, toes) all face the center of the room. Keep the legs in that orientation as you separate them into a V, spreading them as wide apart as is possible (see right).



The opening of the hip that occurs when the legs are in this orientation is different—yet every bit as necessary—as the opening of the hip when the legs externally rotate. If your hamstrings are tight, this pose done upright can be very challenging; the spine on the floor takes that element of difficulty from the issue of alignment. This pose can, however, still be very challenging as you keep the legs facing the center of the room. The specific action of hip-opening in this pose depends on the correct orientation of the legs.

Don't let the legs roll out, and don't let the little toe be close to the wall: keep the center of the back of the heel on the wall. Engage the thigh muscles: firm the quadriceps (muscles on the front thigh), press the legs—especially the inner thighs—into the wall and extend out and up through the inner heels. Gravity assists you in some ways in this pose, but one place where you must resist gravity is to keep the inner thighs pressed to the wall. From time to time, use the thumb-side blade of your hand to press the very top of the thigh—where the thigh meets the hip—into the wall (see photo in next column).

To recap:

- Lie on the floor with your buttock bones at or near a wall and your legs up the wall
- See that the sacrum is flat against the floor
- Separate the legs as wide as possible into a V
- Keep the thigh, knee cap, shin, toes all facing the center of the room (don't turn the legs out!)
- Engage the quadriceps muscles, press the thighs to the wall, and extend through the inner heels
- Arms stretched overhead to lengthen spine (fingernails on the floor), then explore different arm positions for greatest comfort
- From time to time, use your hands to press the base of the thighs to the wall

The previous two columns have addressed Abdominal Integrity. These poses also assist that endeavor by using gravity to draw the abdomen toward the back body. As you do these poses, take time to be aware of your abdomen and where it rests.



When the sacrum is flat, the abdomen is in the right place; to take that visceral information from the supine to the upright is how we

build abdominal strength in the correct way.

Dedicated time in a few poses will benefit you over the long run. Regular and frequent practice of one or two poses can open up possibilities in your body: getting a few body parts more comfortable might inspire you to address the more challenging tight spaces.

*Anna Rain is a Certified Iyengar yoga instructor. She is grateful to the organizers of the new space where she teaches, Joe's Movement Emporium, in Mount Rainier, Maryland. The photos were taken in a sunny room there. Her band, Hot Toddy, will play at the 2016 Dance Flurry in Saratoga Springs, New York and the Williamsburg Ball in Williamsburg, Virginia—come dance to them!*

**Web extra!** Companion exercises are at:

- [http://www.cdss.org/images/newsletter\\_archives/columns/CDSS\\_News\\_fall\\_2010\\_yoga.pdf](http://www.cdss.org/images/newsletter_archives/columns/CDSS_News_fall_2010_yoga.pdf)
- [http://www.cdss.org/images/newsletter\\_archives/columns/CDSS\\_News\\_spring\\_2015\\_yoga\\_hips.pdf](http://www.cdss.org/images/newsletter_archives/columns/CDSS_News_spring_2015_yoga_hips.pdf)

# The Ballet and the Country Dance

by May Gadd, from *The Country Dancer*, December 1942

That “the true preserver of tradition are those who recreate them in their own terms—never the sterile imitator and reactionaries,” (to quote Robert Sabin quoting Stravinsky in the November *Dance Observer*) has never been more clearly demonstrated than by Agnes de Mille in her new ballet *Rodeo, or the Courting at Burnt Ranch*, produced by the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo during its recent season at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York.



The program notes state that “the Saturday afternoon rodeo is a tradition on the remote ranches of the Southwest...that the afternoon’s exhibition is usually followed by a Saturday night dance at the Ranch House. The theme of the ballet is basic. It deals with the problem that has confronted every American woman, from earliest pioneer times, and which has never ceased to occupy them throughout the history of the building of our country: how to get a suitable man. The material of the ballet is redolent of our American soil.”

This basic theme is presented through the medium of the story of the cowgirl who wants to compete with the cowboys on their own term, and yet longs for romance, and goes on to show how she “gets her man.” In New York Miss de Mille herself danced the part of the cowgirl, which was admirably suited to her own particular combination of humor and reality. She also provided wonderful opportunities for all the rest of the dancers, and they take them with a will. Champion Roper, Head Wrangler, the Rancher’s lovely daughter and her “Eastern friends from Kansas City,” and the neighbors who come to the dance—all come to life in a way that one often looks for in vain in ballet performances.

As an integral part of the telling of a story Miss de Mille takes the spirit and the patterns of the traditional dance of the American people—the Country dance in its various forms—and creates a rousing entertainment that leaves the audience determined that if they cannot aspire to be ballet dancers, they will at least go out and find the nearest square dance and get into it. And what preserves tradition better than that?

In his account of the general square dancing at the recent New England Folk Festival...[Alexander] Hoyle quotes the remark made by a solid lady in the audience—“My God” she said, “I wisht I could

get me a man and get into that dancing!” This same identification of the audience with the performance is one of the achievements of *Rodeo*. It gets this result because, like the best square dancing today, it makes no attempt to be an exact reproduction of something that has gone before. Traditional country or square dancing naturally builds more closely on the patterns handed down from the past; but the fact that Callers do build on them and adapt them to their own needs, and that the dancers of each generation adapt the style to fit their own times, is the element that make these old dances eternally new—a fresh creation every time that they are danced.

*Rodeo* is true creation based on a true foundation, and the result is entertainment that has a universal appeal because, although light and amusing, it has reality. One of the most delightful episodes—and one most appreciated by the audience—is the interlude called “Retrospect,” when the story is temporarily dropped and the choreographer returns to foundations by having four couples dancing a Running Set to the sole accompaniment of their own clapping and calling. They use the patterns and dance in the general style of the Kentucky mountains, but with no attempt to be pseudo mountaineers, or indeed to be anything except vital young people dancing in a style natural to them.

In the final scene of the Saturday night dance at the Ranch everything works up in true square dance fashion. Here Miss de Mille guides the dancers from longways-to-square-to-round dances and so on to breakdowns—while at the same time the social life of the Party continues—with an expert skill that will be the envy of many a Caller. Incidentally she has evolved some variations of familiar dance figures that every Caller will want to add to his repertory; just as he will also want to add to his collection of tunes many of the melodies woven into Aaron Copland’s enchanting score.

In the past the folk dancer has found much to discourage him in composition allegedly based on traditional dances of the people, and has often been tempted to withhold his material from the death-dealing touch of these choreographers. Old-fashioned “quaintness” and a hearty or grotesque (the men) or dainty (the girls) peasantry, all wearing the same fixed smile, have been considered essential, and the emphasis has been on elaborate steps and very little pattern. But today the picture is different. Compositions such as Martha Graham’s *Letter*



to the World, Doris Humphrey's *Square Dances*, Eugene Loring's *Billy the Kid*, and Agnes de Mille's *Rodeo*, as well as her other smaller productions, such as *Hell on Wheels* and various solos, show a clear and deep understanding of the dances of the people, and themselves gain in reality because they are built on this sure foundation. The folk dancer who sees them is awakened to a new appreciation of the eternal vitality of the country dance, and an increased understanding that its qualities are in no way dependent on costume, period, or a particular style, but rather that rigid insistence on a static preservation will tend to destroy them, and that, so long as the foundations are true—and on this depends the truth of the opening statement—tradition will surely be more truly preserved by allowing each generation to recreate the dances in its own terms.

*May Gadd (1890-1979), CDSS's longtime director, was an expert on English and Anglo-American folk dance. Agnes De Mille consulted with her on Rodeo as well as on De Mille's choreography in Brigadoon and Oklahoma.*

**Web extra!** A brief clip of the Colorado Ballet performing the Hoedown section of *Rodeo*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AKChyxd9Mn>.



*(News from Canada, continued from page 9)*

said appreciatively that there were many good-looking “older” women at camp. Though this last was said tongue-in-cheek, it was true, and I’m sure that frequent dancing is responsible!

### The Postscript (JS)

VCD and VECD are both proud affiliates of CDSS, which has supported us in the past with financial backing (a promise to cover half of any loss up to a designated amount) for English and contra workshops, and for the Raincoast Ruckus contra dance weekend when it was first proposed. This year, Chehalis received financial backing and a CDSS Outreach grant of \$200 to underwrite two youth scholarships. The grant was instrumental in giving us the confidence to move ahead with our plan to offer youth scholarships to all who asked. The good news is that we actually made a profit this year, and were pleased to return the grant to the CDSS Outreach Fund to be recycled to support another dance or song endeavor.

\* Seventeen percent more came in 2015 than in 2014. About half the dancers/musicians came from the United States: Texas, the East Coast, Alaska, and all points in between. Canadian dancers came from BC (including a large contingent from Vancouver Island) and Alberta.

\*\* Uncle Farmer is Ben Schreiber, Michael Sokolovsky; KGB is Julie King, Claude Ginsberg, Dave Bartley

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

### Web extras!

- Sunday afternoon contra video by Lisa Siddons: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZDwOIWgJbhc&feature=youtu.be>
- Dance video by Doug Butler: <http://photography.doug-butler.com/chehalis/h590d314d#h5934eea3>
- Singing video by Doug Butler: <http://photography.doug-butler.com/chehalis/h5934ef17#h5934ef17>
- Sunday afternoon waltz video by Lisa Siddons: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KUSHeVnzS2g&feature=youtu.be>



Chehalis Dance Camp (Doug Butler)

# The Centennial

by Jonathan Jensen

*In celebration of the 100th anniversary of CDSS*

F Dm B♭ C7 F Gm F/C C C7

6 F Dm B♭ F C7 F

10 F C Dm C/E G/B C Dm C/G G

14 C C7 F Gm

17 F/A B♭ F C7 F

*Tune typeset by Jonathan Jensen*



# The Centennial

by Philippe Callens

*A modern English country dance on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of  
the Country Dance and Song Society*

Formation: four-couple longways, ones and threes improper. Progression 2-3-4-1.

Tune by Jonathan Jensen, triple time (MM half note = 100)

- A1     1-4     In fours, right hands across, 9/8 around, finishing in a diamond (men on the outside, ladies on the centre line), still facing around.  
         5-6     Holding on, set to the right, then letting go, set to the left, all turning a quarter right on the first beat of bar 6 to face the centre of the diamond.  
         7-8     Men cross by the right and turn right to face, as middle ladies about-turn right and gypsy right, as end ladies turn single to the right.
- A2     1-2     In same fours, left hands across halfway.  
         3-4     Ladies left-hand turn halfway and loop to the right, as men turn single to the right, all finish in a diamond, facing partner on the diagonal.  
         5-6     Two changes of rights and lefts, no hands, partners begin right shoulder.  
         7-8     Partners set.
- B1     1-4     In fours, partners draw poussette counterclockwise (ladies backup) almost once around, finishing in the side lines.  
         5-8     In each line, half a hey for four, partners start right shoulder.  
         9-10    Partners two-hand turn halfway and fall back away from each other up and down the set.
- B2     1-2     In fours, men left shoulder chevron up and down the set, as ladies cast right into the position occupied by partner at the beginning of bar 1.  
         3-4     Partners right-hand turn halfway.  
         5-8     Bottom couple (original second couple), inside hands joined, lead up the centre to the top where they turn single away from each other, as other three couples cast down one place in bars 7-8, all coming in close to partner in bar 8.  
         9-10    Taking hands in lines, all balance back and forward.

*Repeat three times.*

Author's notes: In the autumn of 2014 I decided to write a dance for the upcoming centennial celebration of the CDSS. I have been a member since 1987 and have taught with great pleasure at their annual summer dance camps (at Pinewoods and Buffalo Gap) since 1994. It is a great organisation, I think!

For my dance I asked Jonathan Jensen to write the tune. The dance itself was written over the course of some six months. The opening movement was inspired by Keith Wright's dances "Diamonds for Medway" and "Star Now," both written in October 2014. I like to refer to the A-part as "a study in diamonds."

I first taught the dance during the Yanks Meet Limeys Dance Weekend, in Dawlish Warren, Devon, May 15-17, 2015. The video on YouTube was made during the weekend by Tony Waller, with five dancers from Britain and three from America performing it:

<http://cdss100.org/community100/centennial-expressions/47-expressions/144-the-centennial-a-new-dance>.

~ P.C.

# CDSS Sings—In Accents Clear?

by Deborah Robins and Larry Hanks

Because so many of us enjoy opportunities to honor our collective ethnic heritage though traditional song, we are often faced with a dilemma: to sing or not to sing with “accent.” (Let’s, of course, give leeway to our foreign-born comrades: fine singers such as John Roberts and Tony Barrand, Heather Wood, and Allan Carr, ex-pat Brits and a Scot, respectively.)

If we place “accent” and “dialect” in song text side by side, we can see that one is NOT written into the music; while the other, in fact, is. (Example: “Auld Lang Syne,” “Comin’ Through the Rye,” and Gilbert and Sullivan’s “When a Felon’s Not Engaged in His Employment,” et al.) Above, all are fairly familiar examples of a dialect written into song, as in the text of many a Stephen Foster work: (Ex.: “Gwine to run...,” “Massa...,” “Wellumscope...,” “Long time I trabbled...”.)

For the sake of this conversation, we see that the above song examples have specifics “written in,” as opposed to song lyrics in “plain” English, with no information as to how the words should be pronounced: “The Three Ravens,” “Lord Randall,” and “Barbara Allen.” ( “There were three ravens sat on a tree...,” “In Scarlet Town, where I was born...,” etc.)

Which gives us interesting choices: to sing in one’s American own accent, using an accent from the British Isles, or even employing an American Appalachian (read: Southern) accent to “fit” the feel of the text. In American songster Larry Hanks’ experience, there is more concern with more than just subtle pronunciation of various words: “When I sing a Harry Jackson song (a song from the American “cowboy” tradition), I’ve taken in all that stuff about his singing (his accent, lyrics’ jargon, time and place the song came from...) and I give a conscious deliberation, whether or not to repeat (the accent) exactly, or to temper it.” He continues, “I try always to deliver a song in my OWN speech... ALWAYS, if coloring it with something added from my source singer can be done without being presumptuous or distracting, that’s where I have to be careful!”

We sing songs to remember and to move them forward to generations ahead. It is our responsibility, as custodians of these cultural touchstones, as to how much or how little, we insert of ourselves, therein. Although singers help to draw audiences to a song, and bring a song up through the march of time, Hanks advises, it’s often necessary to bring a dash

of urgency where there might be none inherent in the localized accent. “Any inflection to manipulate the tune or rhythm to emphasize some thing that the song is saying, may be useful in making older songs more accessible to modern audiences,” he adds.

In this conversation, we can also consider the music of Brooklyn-born Elliot Charles Adnopoz (a.k.a. Ramblin’ Jack Elliot), who has made a career from (according to Okie Woody Guthrie) of “Sounding more like me than I do!”

Theo Bikel talked to us about singing in accent/dialect thusly: “When I sing in Yiddish, or Hebrew, or Russian, then I’m a folksinger. When I sing in any other languages or dialects, then I’m a performer.”

As singers, let’s concern ourselves with the integrity of a song—it’s time, place, context, and original intent. Let’s give it air to breathe and live (even through our various “interpretations”), without giving it too much of ourSELVES. Whether this means refraining from the temptations of leaning on a cockney accent (unless, of course, you happen to be Stanley Holloway), or a rollicking Texas drawl. Uphold our responsibility to honor the song, as ourselves.

In considering whether to use a regional accent or written dialect, a judicious rule of thumb comes from our friend and colleague, folksinger Michael Cooney, “Just stay out of the way of the songs!”

*Larry Hanks and Deborah Robins sing old songs. Known as a “folksinger’s folksinger,” Larry has been performing to delighted festival and club audiences for over fifty years. Now touring together, Larry’s mellow bass-baritone voice combines with the eclectic close harmonies of Deborah’s resonant alto, bringing back to life a large repertoire of songs describing trials and traditions of American life. For snippets of or to order their recording, “The Wheel of Time,” go to <http://www.cdbaby.com/cd/larryhanksdeborahrobins>.*

**Web extras!** Listen to the authors sing:

Kisses Sweeter Than Wine (Roots Fest, San Diego, CA, 2011), [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K3Td9rxWm\\_8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K3Td9rxWm_8), and Cotton Mill Girls (Brick Wall, Fresno, CA, 2010), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hnPxRCJBFO8>.

**CDSS NEWS**  
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*Change service requested*



## **Thank You for 2015, and Happy 2016!**

Yes, we're still celebrating! As we go to press, the last of our weeklong community residencies (a.k.a., the Centennial Tour) has just wrapped up. A fully-redesigned website is nearing completion and will launch imminently, with new features such as a searchable online Group/Event Directory and a new Members Directory. Our major Centennial publication, *The Playford Assembly*, is in final editing, as is the new journal, *CD+S Online*. Both are poised to publish by the end of the year.

None of this would have been possible, financially or emotionally, without the support of friends like you—your donations and membership, notes of encouragement, Centennial Expressions, Local Heroes and Camp stories, and your

gifts of events already held and in the works, all raising the visibility of dance, music, and song in our lives. We are enriched as a community by your presence. We wish you a dance, music and song-filled—and peaceful—new year.

*CDSS Centennial Tour, Family Dance, November 19, 2015, Lawrence, KS; photo by Byron Wiley*