

## Santa Barbara Country Dance Society

### Hands Four

Greetings. Summer is now full upon us, with its long warm evenings teasing us outside with the fragrant smell of jasmine, bar-b-ques and the opportunity to dance outside under the stars on the Oak Park dance floor. There will be one dance per month right through until Harvest Moon so don't miss this chance to stomp it up in the warm Santa Barbara summer night air.

With the passing of spring we also say good-bye to the first annual 'Sprung Floor Dance Festival'. What a weekend it was, 16 hours of great music and wonderful dances, and those dancers WOW, with well over 150 people from as far away as San



Francisco & Nevada, it was like one big Harvest Moon reunion. Everyone seemed to know everyone and no one didn't have a great time. I still can't get my feet back into my work shoes, even the rain gods were pleased and gave us 1.5" of much needed water.

Coming this summer, in the spirit of true cultural exchange, we will be having a minor L.A. callers invasion giving us a sample of the callings from Down Under (Ventura that is) and a

*Hands Four, continues Page 2*

### Dance Camp Time

It's summer again, and summer is dance camp time. Although it's a little late for many, there still may be room in some, so I thought I'd tell you a little of dance camp.

Dance and music camps are magic. It's both a time to drop old pretenses and create new ones, to play and enjoy the spirit of music and dance and forget the worries of the world.

The first week long dance camp I went to was the Bay Area's American Week in Mendocino woodlands dance camp, July, 1986. There were all sorts of country dance luminaries, Larry Edelman, Ted Sannella, Armin Barnette, Cathie Whitesides, Evo and Jemmy Bluestein, and more. I knew almost no one, but I was ready to dance!

And the dancing was great. Contra figures flowed from one to another with an elegance and zestiness that I had never experienced. People knew what was happening.

At midnight the generator went off. Instead of turning into pumpkins, lanterns were lit, musicians brought out their fiddles and guitars, the piano bounced with music, people started calling dances, and we went dancing on into the wee hours of the morning.

The next day were workshops in square dancing, contras, calling, music, and whatever aspect of the dance you wanted to learn about. Most of these workshops were just an excuse to dance more. Little did I know that the few words about history and tradition were expanding my knowledge of the dance. Mostly it was just dancing. There were figures and fun and attention to detail that

could not be carried out at a three or four hour community dance. Learning was fun and painless.

Between, during, and around the schedule people would go to the creek and swim. One afternoon Armin Barnette brought his fiddle and we invented swimming contradances. A whole new world of moves generated by over and under as well as around. Swinging took on a whole new meaning.

And the waltzing. I never knew how great waltzing could be. But the music, the partners, the waltzing. Talk about floating! I must have been ten feet off the ground, and it wasn't from doing anything fancy, just learning to stand still while the universe turned around me and my partner.

There were other things too. Talent show night, a parade to the field where we did skits and play, formal and not so formal dress for the big finale candlelit dinner, the scholarship fund auction, Fred and Susan being served breakfast in bed in the dining room and more. All great fun!

So, consider dance camps. There may still be room in this years Bay Area Summer Week. They call it Mendocino though this year it's on the middle fork of the Gualala (wa-la-la) river in Sonoma County. This years Mendocino runs from July 21 - 28. Look for applications at our local dances or call Steve Nicola (916) 989-3439 for registration information.

There might also be room in Lark in the Mornings summer music and dance camp. This is a week long festival of some of the most amazing music ever. People come from all over

*Dance Camp, continues Page 3*

### *Hands Four, from cover*

chance for the south to enjoy the pleasure of our Santa Barbara summer. First off Leda Shapiro will be returning with her husband's band 'Unsafe At Any Speed' to set Oak Park ablaze, next Chris Miller takes center stage for the first time in S.B. with her husband's band 'The Sidewinders' snaking their way into the Carrillo ballroom. Also in August get ready for Susan Micheal & James Hutson who have presently started calling in the expanding L.A. dance scene. James Hutson has been referred to as a dancing encyclopedia on the subject of contra dances so if you have any special questions he's your man. As an added bonus in the middle of July we have the return of Bernard Chalk who was such a treat last November.

The publication of this issue marks our one year anniversary and we would like to ask you how we're doing. Does the "Dance Star" meet your needs in the Santa Barbara dance community? Is there anything you'd like to see more or less of? Also feel free to comment on the dances themselves because we'd really like to know how you feel in order to make the S.B.C.D.S. a pleasure for everyone! Send comments to SBCDS (see back cover for address.)

—Shane Butler

## Call to all Writers

Have you had a special dance experience? How about a particular view of the dance. We all dance for different reasons. Some of us do it for flirtation and fun, some for the spiritual quality and the mystical meaning found in the figures of the dance. If you have a particular or peculiar vision you would like to share, consider sending it to the Dance Star. We would like articles and spots. Call the dance Hotline, (805) 969-1511, or talking to Shane Butler or Erik Hoffman about possible submissions and ideas.

# WHO'S IN CHARGE HERE?

**T**he problem keeps coming up. Who's in charge of swinging and twirling? Some smart swingers have only two speeds, fast and faster. Then there are dancers that think it is creative to twirl every women as many times as possible in a courtesy turn. As new or tired dancers find themselves swinging and twirling at dizzying, or even upchucking paces by these dancers, the question keeps coming up: who is in charge?

Why, whoever takes charge, of course. So, how can you, a dancer who does not care for tempestuous tempos, slow down a hot shot swing, or discourage twirls? There's not too much to it, really. The basic ingredient is asserting your desire.

For slowing swings it's good to have rubber heels, then you can smile, look into this persons eyes, and dig in and slow down a speedy swing. It is hard to swing fast when one person is resisting the speed; you don't have to go too fast.

Verbal communication is also a very good method. You can start with, "could we slow down?" Or, "Whoa Boy (Woman)!" If these don't work you can always try being subtle with, "Oops, here comes my dinner." The most important thing is to know that you do not have to put up with a speedy swing if you don't want to.

It's also good to know that a slow swing can be great too. Some of my favorite memories are 16 beat hugs instead of swings at 4 am at the Santa Cruz Dawn Dance. Half speed swings can be sensuous and luxurious. There needs be no lack of connection in a slow swing, just less dizziness.

The same is true of unwanted

twirls. Some men (leader roles) think it's great to insist on cranking women (follower roles) around at least five times in the course of a courtesy turn. This can be great fun, but for some unexpected victims, this can be a discouraging turn off. This is too bad, as it is the person being twirled that ultimately decides.

In order for a person to be twirled, she needs to lift her pivoting (usually left) hand over her head. If a person does not want to be twirled, she needs only keep her hand low. Sometimes this takes vigilance, as some hot shot dancers may pull a surprise twirl in such unexpected places as the pull byes of a grand right and left, but keeping a low hand works whenever it's used.

The point is, Take Charge. There are many reasons to come to the dance, but the main one is to have fun. If speedy swings and excessive twirling ruin your fun, then be assertive: let people know. The person with the slower comfort level is the one who should set these limits. Though a good dancer will pay attention and adjust to the needs of all, an assertive dancer will demand this attention and thus have his or her needs met.

It would be nice if we could all read minds and adjust to the speed of each person. Then those of us who love a speedy and hearty swing could go for it when we dance with those who feel similar and hold back with those who love to dance but find themselves dizzy too much. A good dancer grows attentive to the needs of others, but even good dancers need an occasional reminder.

— Erik Hoffman

### *Dance Camp, from cover*

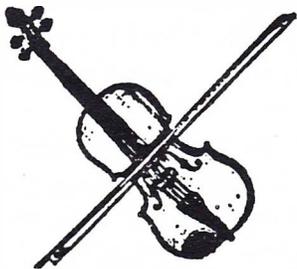
the world to hang out, play, and dance traditions from many cultures including American, French, Irish, Bulgarian, and much more. It's a great place to start learning an instrument, collect songs and tunes, or just dance and have fun. This years "Lark" goes from July 27 - August 4. Call Lark in the Morning, (707) 964-5569 for information.

Another west coast tradition is the end of the summer's Valley of the Moon Scottish Fiddling School. Don't let the name fool you: if you want to learn about Scottish fiddling, it's definitely the place to go but there's also dancing, piano, singing, rhythm and percussion, and more. The "School" runs from August 24 - September 1. For registration information call Jan Tappan, (818) 792-6323.

There are other dance camps and festivals throughout the U.S., from Alaska to Florida. So if you want to travel to some great events ask me, Erik Hoffman, or leave a message on our Hot Line, (805) 969-1511, and we will get you contacts for distant festivals.

Of course, watch for our Harvest Moon Dance Festival this year from September 21 - 23. Then watch for the Bay Area Country Dance Society's Fall Weekend in late October. California Dance Coop offers their Fiddling Frog weekend the first weekend in November, and New Years camps are found both in the north, through the San Francisco Folk Music Club (join now to insure a spot, call (415) 661-2217) and the South through the California Traditional Music Society (the same people putting on the Solstice Festival in Northridge).

Watch for them and go!



## Zoo Benefit

There will be a benefit dance for the Santa Barbara Zoo on Friday August 10 at the special time of 8:30 - 11:30, with a beginners class at 8:00. Advance tickets are \$10, available at our regular dances.

We urge you to buy these advance tickets since the Zoo has a huge membership and the event is likely to be a sell-out long before August.

Come help us fill the Rec Center Ballroom with the happy feet sparks provided by Erik Hoffman and the Growling Old Geezers.

## Contra Corner

Editor,

While dancing with a beginning dancer I often find myself coaching and giving directions. I realize how confusing an explanation can become. I can even confuse myself. I am then put in mind of a poem by Mrs. Edward Craster.

The centipede was happy quite  
until a toad in fun  
said "Pray which leg goes after which?"  
That worked her mind to such a pitch,  
She lay distracted in a ditch,  
Considering how to run.

Regards,  
Lawrence Wallin

The Santa Barbara Country Dance Society is a center of the Country Dance and Song Society of America (CDSS) which was founded in 1915 to preserve, promote, study, teach, and enjoy our English and American dance, music and song heritage. We encourage you to support CDSS by becoming a member. Members receive a bimonthly national newsletter, a yearly scholarly publication, and discounts from the CDSS Store of records, tapes, CD's, and books. Look for applications at our dances or write or call CDSS at:

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# Dance Star

The Dance Star is published quarterly by the Santa Barbara Country Dance Society. Please address all correspondence to SBCDS, P.O. Box 21904, Santa Barbara, CA 93121, (805) 969-1511. Editorial staff is Shane Butler, Erik Hoffman and Jungle Payne, with help from lots of other fine folk.

If there is an "EXP" on your address label, you will be dropped from our mailing list, unless we hear from you.

## Check this out!

We now have a new and original bumper sticker for your car, fiddle case or fridge. The background is sky blue, with yellow and red lettering, printed on 7" wide white vinyl.

For yours, send \$1.00 each and self-addressed, stamped envelope to SBCDS, and start showing your colors.

# Contradancing

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Date on label is the last date you will be included in our mailing. Signing in at a dance or notifying us will extend this date.