

Ideas into action

We were all invited to a March 8 meeting, called to discuss the fact that we are not breaking even on our every-Sunday dances.

We had great participation, and many great ideas were generated (see box). The Board, especially Peter Glatz, carefully massaged the input into a concise package.

Because of all the participation and ideas, the Board decided it would be premature to reduce the dance frequency. Also, even though many participants stated that raising the price to \$7 would not be a problem for them, the Board has not voted to raise the price at this time.

The next step is to start implementing some of the ideas: for increasing attendance, for raising money, and for lowering costs.

This is where we, the dance community at large, come in. The Board did not ask us only what we think the Board should do; it asked all of us what we want to do. So help implement your ideas. A committee is forming now to look at some of the ideas, consider their viability, and yikes, even start implementing a few, perhaps



Some Some Summertime

Here's some ideas to help you have *some* summer.

June 19-21: KCBX Live Oak Music Festival near Lake Cachuma. With so much great music, all we can do is point you to the flyers on our literature table, and to <http://www.kcbx.org/liveoak>. (805) 781-3030.

June 21: Some of that great music, **Alice Gerard, Tom Sauber & Brad Leftwich**, plays for our Sunday night dance as part of their West Coast tour.

SB's **Ethnic Festivals** are at Oak Park with food, music, dancing, crafts and more, 11 a.m.-7 p.m., each on both Saturday and Sunday. Two or three have al-

Some of the ideas collected before, at, and after the March 8 meeting

Raise money

- Memberships
- Raffles
- Grants
- Sell treats and refreshments
- Benefit-the-SBCDS dances every so often (talent donated)
- Combined suggestion/donation container
- A different price for students/seniors
- Charge more than \$1 more for special dances

Increase attendance

- Check correlation of caller/band to attendance and adjust accordingly
- Talk to new dancers to get feedback
- Collect phone numbers and email addresses in addition to the street addresses now collected
- Promote dance at appropriate events, church groups, singles groups, youth groups, Public Access TV, Farmers Market
- Demo dances to different groups
- Organize car pools to & from SLO

Advertise

- What have other groups done to increase attendance: what worked and what didn't?
- Group sales
- Reciprocal plugs at other kinds of dance
- Free dance passes as a promotion
- New dancer night/Bring a friend night, with a one-hour lesson
- Promote that the 6:30 lesson is free

Reduce costs

- People pick up the Dance Star
- Reduce the cost of the Dance Star
- Limit bands to four members
- A volunteer for bookkeeping
- Hire professional sound only for some bands
- Raise money for a sound system and to train volunteers
- Run the door with volunteers only

Other ideas

- Put SBCDS financial records on display to increase awareness

recruiting and forming additional groups of individuals to do so.

Several people have already come on board, including Board member Elliott Karpeles, who will serve as Board liaison to the committee. Contact Elliott at (805) 682-1877 to get involved, and help preserve the weekly \$6 dance.

ready passed us by, but coming up this summer are the **Irish Festival**, May 30-31; **French**, July 11-12; **Greek**, Aug. 1-2; and **Italian**, Aug. 22-23.

May 30: On its first day the Irish Festival continues into the night with an **Irish Traditional Music Jam Session**, 7-10:30 p.m. Musicians, dancers and listeners are welcome. Dargan's Pub, 18 E. Ortega St. (in the walkway just below the city parking garage). For more info call Linelle at (805) 682-1593 or Dargan's, 568-0702.

June 27-July 4: Family Week at Alta Sierra camp. (707) 765-6559, emjer@netdex.com.

July 5: Fourth of July Weekend dance features **Kristina & Her Right-Hand Stars & Stripes** (forever?) and caller **Chuck Galt**. We need not tell you what colors to wear.

July 5-12: Sierra Swing American Week see **STAR GAZER**, next page

. . . news & announcements . . .

Drink up and help out

Volunteers are now selling soft drinks at our dances as a fund-raiser for the SBCDS, and as a service to thirsty dancers for whom water just ain't enough, on an experimental basis.

This is a separate operation from the refreshment tables where the purified drinking water, snacks and supplies are funded by donations.

Change in pass program

The New Dancer Pass program is ending as of June 1. Passes issued before then will still be honored until their normal expiration date. The "Bring Two New Dancers and Get In Free" program, on the other hand, continues. (See box on page 2.)

English Country Dancing

English Country Dancing is not contra dancing as we know it, but it can be at least as enjoyable, usually in a different way. ECDers also often make better contra dancers, as timing, flow and transition are emphasized.

It's happening every week and it's free. The schedule is in flux, so please contact Gary Shapiro, (805) 682-5523, garyes@iname.com, for the latest schedule.

Star Gazer from first page

at Alta Sierra camp has openings, with more for men than women. (510) 215-2785, smolian@aol.com.

July 11-18: Mendocino English Week is full.

Aug. 9: A dance to attend just For Old Times' Sake.

Aug. 30: Callers' Jubilee and Open Band at our fifth Sunday dance.

Sep. 4-7: Alta Sierra Labor Day Weekend American Dance Camp with Wild Asparagus. Dance Crazy, tronvig@pobox.com or (310) 459-7179.

Sep. 18-20: Santa Barbara Harvest Moon Dance Festival with Wild Asparagus. Pick up a flyer/application at our dance or contact George Cannon at (805) 563-0932 or cannon@alumni.caltech.edu, or visit the SBCDS web site. All applications postmarked by July 18 will have equal priority and be selected by lottery.

Sep. 18-20: Echo Summit Dance Weekend near Lake Tahoe. From Seattle, KGB and caller Mike Richardson. From not Seattle, For Old Times' Sake and caller Erik Hoffman. (916) 444-2712, bobrien@ccoa.ca.gov.

Oct. 16-18: BACDS Monte Toyon Fall Dance Weekend near Santa Cruz. Contra, English, square and ritual dance, this year featuring Bob Dalsemer. (650) 365-2913, meier@srl.slac.stanford.edu.

Oct. 31-Nov. 2: Dance in the Desert Dance Camp in Oracle, AZ, an hour from Tucson. Bruce Molsky & Big Hoedown and callers Brad Foster and Beth Molaro. (520) 327-1779, bnankivell@igc.apc.org or <http://www.nbhc.com/tftm/>.

And there's more. Ask around.

..... comments & opinion

Contra Dancing from a Band Member's Perspective



I read with interest the opinions of dancer Steve Davis and caller Warren Blier in the spring 1998 Dance Star. Here's one band member's two cents' worth. I also grew up contra and folk dancing so have some perspective from a dancer's point of view.

1. I've found that callers are generally (and should be) prepared with a list of dances but sometimes must switch gears if they are (for example) presented with more beginning dancers than anticipated. The band must also be prepared to switch tunes and tempos to accommodate the caller's wishes. It's not always possible to plan the exact program in advance—even musically. This may result in a caller having to quickly look over a dance he/she wasn't planning on teaching. This isn't lack of preparedness.

2. In my opinion, the caller is in charge of the dance and the band is there to support the caller's efforts and to provide good music—and correct dance tempos—for the dancers. Some callers prefer matching dances to exact sets of tunes and will take the time to meet with the director of the band to match dances/tunes. Warren's suggestion of a tape for the caller with each set recorded is a good idea. However, sets are rearranged and new ones are added constantly by most bands. Some callers are more "hang loose" and do not want to pick sets in advance. Some bands are also "hang loose" and don't want to be pinned down to a set list of tunes even if the caller requests this. In other words, it isn't an exact science and varies from caller-to-caller and band-to-band.

3. Some bands, such as Kitchen Junket, will always ask the caller for his/her requests and will play anything requested—from singing calls, to English Country Dances, specialty tunes, etc. Some bands prefer not to do this so the caller might not have as much flexibility. Some bands don't like certain kinds of tunes (for example, jigs) and are uncomfortable playing them. The caller might have to work within some restrictions if the band plays one style of music.

4. I do agree with Warren Blier that a

band should be prepared with a list of sets that are planned for a dance and should share that list with the caller in advance. (As he mentioned, only about 50% of the bands he works with do.) Coming from the folk dance world where exact dances match exact tunes, it does enhance a particular contra dance if the music fits the character of the dance. I like having a list of tunes in advance that the band will select from; with a set list I can practice just the sets we will play on a given date. We all have a lot of other demands in our lives.

5. Callers who are knowledgeable should instruct on some of the finer points. Having learned contra dancing (as a child) from the dean of contra dancing, Ralph Page of New Hampshire, there is a definite style and grace to contra dancing—just as there is to any form of dance. I find dancing dizzying at times because dancers are often out-of-position. This disrupts the flow of the dance and makes dancing harder for beginners.

6. I agree with Steve Davis that some challenging dances should be done periodically during the second half of the dance with a bit less walk-through on recurring patterns. However, not all the dances should be "hard," as that would leave out newer dancers.

Ideally the caller and musicians will work compatibly to provide a good evening of dancing for all. It isn't as easy as it must look sometimes as there's a lot going on and a lot to watch (tempos, tune changes, caller signals, etc.). We certainly don't play for monetary gain but for the love of music and dance.

Linelle Glass
Director of Kitchen Junket
and the Celtic Fiddlers of Santa Barbara

A FAVOR for two friends, yourself, and the dance community: bring two new dancers to a dance (or one each to two dances) and receive a free dance pass.

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Opinions expressed are those of the individual authors. Express yours in the next issue!



Summer 1998

Santa Barbara Contra Dance Calendar

plus Ojai and San Luis Obispo listings

Calendar produced by Santa Barbara Country Dance Society • P.O. Box 21904 • Santa Barbara, CA 93121-1904 • (805) 969-1511

Come enjoy a dance to the irresistible rhythms of a live old-time string band. We'll dance flowing contras of New England, a thriving North American tradition, plus other delights. All dances are taught and prompted: no experience or partner neces-

sary. Wear comfortable clothes and shoes.

SANTA BARBARA DANCES

Sponsor: SB Country Dance Society

Dance from 7–10 p.m. every Sunday, mostly at the Carrillo Ballroom, one of the best dance floors anywhere, co-sponsored by SB Parks and Recreation Department.

This summer, dance last Sundays under the stars at Oak Park.

SBCDS 24-hour Dance Hotline: (805) 969-1511.

SAN LUIS OBISPO DANCES

Sponsor: Central Coast

Country Dance Society

Dance in SLO on the second Satur-

day of each month (with occasional exceptions) from 8–11 p.m. International folk dancing precedes at 5:30.

SLO 24-hour Danceline: (805) 541-0201.

OJAI DANCES

Sponsor: Ojai Contra Dances

Dance 7:30–10:30 p.m. For more information call Ginny at (805) 646-0832.

INTRODUCTORY WORKSHOP

All three groups hold workshops 30 minutes before each dance evening. Also, the simpler dances are generally earlier in the evening.

ADMISSION

\$6 for all dances unless otherwise noted; subject to change.

KEY TO DANCE LOCATIONS

Santa Barbara Carrillo Recreation Center
Carrillo Ballroom 100 E. Carrillo St.

Oak Park Junipero at Calle Real, SB

San Luis Obispo 801 Grand Ave.
Veteran's Hall East of 101, Cal Poly exit

Ojai Art Center 113 S. Montgomery

DATE LOC CALLER • BAND • Etc.

June 7	Sun		Gary Shapiro • Kitchen Junket Wish the band a great summer vacation; we'll see 'em again in the fall.
June 14	Sun		Martha Wild • Jump Fingers SB debut for this talented troupe from San Diego.
June 20	Sat		Greg McKenzie • Over the Edge • Note date (third Saturday).
June 21	Sun		Drew Tronvig • Alice Gerrard, Brad Leftwich & Tom Sauber (\$7) Dance to some of the finest Southern old-time music anywhere, as Alice Gerrard & Co. visit us and the Live Oak Music Festival as part of their West Coast tour.
June 28	Sun		Gary Shapiro • Growling Old Geezers
July 5	Sun		Chuck Galt • Kristina & Her Right-Hand Stars & Stripes Pick three colors to wear for this Fourth of July Weekend dance.
July 11	Sat		Graham Hempel • Growling Old Geezers
July 12	Sun		Jonathan Southard • Sliding Scale
July 19	Sun		Erik Hoffman • Chameleons (\$7)
July 26	Sun		Susan Michaels • Michael's Mixed Nuts Coincidence...or psychic phenomenon?
Aug 2	Sun		Jeff Spero • Kristina & Her Right-Hand Stars
Aug 8	Sat		Gary Shapiro • Growling Old Geezers
Aug 9	Sun		James Hutson • For Old Times' Sake • 50% Arroyo Grande (two Geezers), 25% San Diego and 25% Tucson...a great combination.
Aug 16	Sun		Gary Shapiro • Michael Gutin & Friends • Great musician friends, that is.
Aug 22	Sat		Gary Shapiro • TBA • If you attend only one Ojai dance this summer...
Aug 23	Sun		Carl Magagnosc • Hot Flashes • Ice will be available.
Aug 30	Sun		Caller's Jubilee • Open Band • To arrange to call, contact Gary Shapiro at (805) 682-5523, garyes@iname.com . Open band coordinator TBA.

June 1998

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August 1998

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Celtic Music Jam — every Thursday, 5:30–7:30, Dargan's Pub, 18 E. Ortega St. (set back from the street)

Dancing in the Los Angeles area — Contra dances every weekend. L.A. Dance Hotline: (818) 951-2003

Our new scheduler on local vs. out-of-town

by Mignon Bradley

SBCDS Band and Caller Scheduler

"...But you can't please all of the people all of the time." Not quite what Abe Lincoln said, but it really describes this scheduling job. The diversity in terms of likes, dislikes, preferences for working or not working with particular people, the cooperative spirits, the flexibility, timeliness and tardiness, responsiveness and unresponsiveness has been surprising, heartening and frustrating at times.

The day after I thought I finally had it all put together, I started getting a stream of phone calls re "available dates" and even a couple of requests that I schedule Kathy Anderson and Cis Hinkle who would be at Sierra Swing in July. So I spent a good couple of days sweating to work this out only to ultimately find that neither could make it. Again, parts of this exercise were actually fun and I definitely did learn from it.

I appreciate the words of encouragement and appreciation many of you have already extended to me. Getting acquainted with all the personalities involved has been an experience I would not trade for anything. I love contra dancing as much as anyone and want to do everything I can to make sure that our dance community thrives.

Now if you're still with me, I want to demystify how the scheduling works. First, I request from potential callers and bands a list of their available dates, and I request that they reply by a certain date. As responses come in, I start penciling in possibilities for each date. I try to balance a variety of competing needs and wants. Scheduling conflicts always come up regarding preferences for dates, and for working/not working with particular callers and bands.

I've learned that the differing preferences for local vs. out-of-town callers and bands seem to be one of the greatest sources of strong feelings. On the one hand, for the health and vitality of our local dance community, we need a core of local callers and bands. To achieve this goal, we must provide these locals with opportunities to perform on a regular ba-

sis in order to develop their skills. Few other dance communities are as open as we are about bringing in outside staff, which severely limits our locals' opportunities to call outside Santa Barbara. In fact, many more outsiders request bookings from us than can be accommodated. This situation permits us to enjoy great variety in callers and bands, which brings up the other hand: pressure for variety including callers and bands from out of town. Overlay this set of complexities with the need to schedule bands and callers for a quarter, about a month and a half before it begins.

Our SBCDS Board has carefully thought about and discussed all this, and come up with a newly stated policy re-

garding who should be booked and how the scheduling should be conducted: "Local bands and callers (staff), at the discretion of the scheduler, may be booked more often than out-of-town staff. Reasonable effort will be made to schedule local staff more than out-of-town staff. All prospective staff must return their time availability by the stated deadline or risk not being considered for that quarter." I feel comfortable with the board policy and confident that this policy reflects a healthy, balancing principal: nurture our local community talent as we, at the same time, enrich ourselves with energy and freshness from outside.

I'd love to hear from you about anything I have said here. If you have some favorites you would like to see on the schedule, please encourage them to contact me.

Please contact me also if you are willing to help me with securing needed transportation and/or housing for out-of-towners. I would very much appreciate having someone I could depend on to help secure housing and transportation as those needs arise, which often do when we schedule out-of-town staff.

I can promise you that, should you choose to become involved helping in any way, you'll be glad you did. I certainly am.

••••

Mignon Bradley can be reached at tgthrlmb@sbceo.k12.ca.us, (805) 967-2894, or P.O. Box 6836, Santa Barbara, CA 93160.

Thanks, Jonathan

Our community has been most fortunate over the past five years to have benefited from the capable and selfless efforts of my predecessor in this position, Jonathan Southard. Jonathan generously and cheerfully donated countless hours in scheduling callers and bands from far and wide. He continues to support and help me in the transition. We owe him a huge THANK YOU for his years of work on our behalf. I encourage each of you to let him know, when you see him next, that you recognize and appreciate his extraordinary dedication to the dance community. —MB



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