

Santa Barbara Country Dance Society

dance star

Volume 11 Number 4

Spring 2001

Center and Back

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Local Highlights

March 18 finds us at the annual **St. Patrick's Day Contra Dance**. We always enjoy some sort of surprises from St. Patty at this dance, and Kitchen Junket plays Irish tunes. Barbara Stewart is the caller.

April 1: We're quite serious about our April Fools' Dance, featuring the Privvy Tippers (Dave Firestone, Craig Tinney, Jacquie Wohl, Jerry Ray Weinert), an Arizona band that holds a first place trophy from the Santa Fe (NM) Fiddle and Banjo Festival. It's also the first day of **Daylight Savings Time**, so "spring forward" to be on time. And here's a promise you can count on: there will be no surprises or jokes on the band, the caller (Chuck Galt), or dancers at this dance. But if you're in the loo, you might want to make sure the band is on stage.

April 8: Annual **Spring Potluck** at 5:30 sharp, preceding the dance. Bring food to share, tableware, and \$1. Turkey provided.

April 29: Jewish Festival, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. at Oak Park. For out-of-towners, just one more reason to come to SB on this day. Directions: take 101 to Santa Barbara and follow the temporary direction signs.

April 29: Caller's Jubilee, meaning if you can talk and count to eight, you can call a dance. Give it a shot! But first contact the caller coordinator, Gary Shapiro, at 682-5523 or gary@sbcds.org, in advance. You'd get to call to the music of **Kristina & Her Right-Hand Stars** while the rest of us would have the privilege of dancing to it and to you calling.

May 1: Our venerable Sun needs another push to keep it rising and setting every day, and the **Monarch Grove Morris Dancers** play an important part as Morris sides world 'round give the sun a good heave and a ho. You can be part of the process by joining MGM at the top of La Cumbre Peak this year shortly before sun-

see **STAR GAZER**, next page

Excellent News for Oak Park Fans

Just when we were all about to give up on the place, two great pieces of news arrive.

The city is planning on replacing the floor, including repairs on the support structure underneath, this year, to be completed by the end of April. That date might be a little optimistic, but let's not look this gift horse in the mouth.

A new Oak Park floor does not make obsolete the floor-over-floor used once, for Harvest Moon last year. For example, a possible nearby dance camp in 2002 could use it to cover an inadequate floor in an otherwise satisfactory

second dance space.

The other exciting news is that local social activist and fundraiser extraordinaire Lori Ann David has taken on the project of turning the Oak Park dance platform into a dance pavilion.

She has obtained conceptual approval from the Santa Barbara Parks and Recreation Department and is working with them, an architect, and the various groups that use the facility, such as the ones that put on the ethnic festivals, and the SBCDS.

Please send any ideas *you* have to the SBCDS.

Logo Design Contest

Design a new logo for the SBCDS and see your winning design anywhere in the world (on the Internet), as well as on our letterheads, business cards, flyers, etc.

What's in it for you? Eternal gratitude, a chance to be creative and have fun knowing that you've contributed to a group that sponsors dances you love. Plus a \$100 gift certificate from Birkenstock Footwear of

Solvang and a \$20 gift certificate for SBCDS merchandise to runners-up.

Complete guidelines and rules are available on the logo design contest flyer, on our web site, or by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to the SBCDS.

Submissions must be received by May 1, 2001.

(See the current logo below, above the return address.)



Post Office Box 21904 • Santa Barbara, CA 93121-1904

**Dance Star
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Reactions to Thoughts About Center Set

1

Re "Thinking Contrarily About Center Issue" (*Dance Star*, Winter 2000-01), here's my two cents:

It's only an issue because certain callers choose to make it so. I was under the impression that, in addition to being in charge of the hall in general and the physical safety of those present, it was the caller's primary responsibility to be well prepared and call the dances correctly, not to decide who should dance where.

Calling a dance is not synonymous with running a private dictatorship. I believe callers should not lose sight of the fact that they are in a position to call because we—the paying public—make it possible. I don't believe there is a "right" way or a "wrong" way to conduct oneself when lining up for a dance. Different people enjoy different things, and options should remain available. I'd like to see a caller respect individual preferences and give dancers credit for their intelligence, and understand that we are quite capable of working things out for ourselves. Being a caller does not give one license to fulfill one's personal fantasy of how dancers should behave. If dancers want to be in the so-called center set, let them. If "community-minded" dancers prefer to dance in the side sets, let them.

Speaking for myself, I will think twice before wasting time on a dance (not to mention the three-hour round trip drive) where I feel I am being controlled, bossed, policed or manipulated. (Yes, breaking up the ones and the twos to form separate lines is a manipulation I personally don't appreciate.)

On another note, I enjoy various forms of dance; and my experience with each dance community is that they are always happy to welcome newcomers. Even so, not one of them caters to the lowest common denominator, as we do in contra dance. New dancers understand and accept that, if they are attracted to that particular type of dance, they will have to be patient while they learn—often at the sidelines. In all my conversations with new contra dancers, they are quite content to be dancing in the non—"hot-shot" dance line. They have enough to absorb,

without feeling overwhelmed by the experienced dancers.

With all the energy expended on complaining about—and micromanaging—who dances where, I'd like to see more of that energy channeled into finding ways to keep good dancers happy. Such as, creating more opportunity for challenging contra dance evenings, where they can also enjoy a dance, free from the annoyance of having to constantly field marshal inexperienced dancers as they progress up or down the line. A measly few fifth Saturday dances throughout the year barely whet the appetite. I have personally introduced a couple of good dancers to contra dance, who lost interest almost immediately because they were bored. I have also spoken with former contra dancers, who told me they left because they eventually found it to be too boring, and others who now come only rarely for the same reason. The fact is, we do lose good dancers because we fail to offer enough stimulating dances.

So, to summarize my two cents (or was that three?) what we need are good, prepared callers and bands and a good mix of stimulating dances, not more controls and limitations.

*Faigy Avnon
foreveryoung@witty.com*

2

I was taken aback by last issue's article regarding the "Center Set Issue." I didn't realize that there was an issue and I was shocked to hear dancers referred to as "hot shots." Even more troubling to me was the implication that ours is a divided dance community, since my impressions have been the opposite.

I do many types of dancing, including folk dancing, Cajun, all types of swing, and Salsa. I have encountered divided communities or no communities at all those dances, as well as competitive dancers out to impress others.

In my opinion, the contra dance community here in L.A. and Santa Barbara is in a class by itself. To me, it is a remarkably homogenous group with incomparable warmth, friendliness, and inclusiveness. Everyone is always welcome and they are

welcome in every line.

I often dance in the center set and the reasons are simple. First, contra dancing without any improvising, embellishing, or playfulness, gets boring for me. In the center set, I encounter more neighbors whose dance styles are fun for me. Second, I enjoy the energy of those referred to as "hot shots." I think of these dancers as "embellishers," and, to me, they are talented dancers feeling free enough to dance the way that makes them happy. I find their happiness contagious.

I know of only one reason to rush to the top of the set; fear that the dance will be uneven. Even with sets of comparable lengths, dancers at the bottom of the line lose out. People who value every moment of dancing don't want to lose out. Why do callers include uneven dances?! Aren't there enough good even dances to fill an evening?!

I am not so presumptuous as to think everyone has the same preferences as I. (A week dancing with New Englanders in St. Croix made that clear!) Rather, I would like to believe that we have a dance community which tries to make the dance fun for everyone. If that means preferring one line over another, so be it.

Frankly, I don't attend contra dances because I think contra is the best type of dancing. I attend because the people are the best.

*Gina Lyons
path2riches@earthlink.net*

Send any replies to these reactions to dancestar@sbcds.org, mail them to the SBCDS, place them in our suggestion box, or hand them to a Board member.



Star Gazer

from front page
rise. In addition, help wrap the maypole, dance, and break the fast with your own potluck contribution. For more information about this annual May Day event, or about our local Morris team, email Gene.Lerner@gte.net or call 685-8007.

Out of Town Events

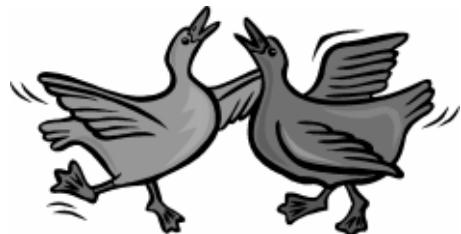
Please check our literature table or scour the Internet for all kinds of fun to be had at dance weeks and weekends in California and beyond.

Sprung Fever Breaks Out as Sprung Floor Festival Looms

Here's the schedule-in-progress for the 12th annual Sprung Floor Dance Festival on Memorial Day Weekend.

Look for the flyer and a more complete schedule in May.

Time	Event	Band	Caller	Price
Saturday, May 26				
At Carrillo Gymnasium, 102 E. Carrillo St.:				
2:30–5:30	English Country Dance	TBA	TBA	\$5
5:30–7:00	Dinner Break			
7:00–10:30	Contra Dance	Stump Tail Dog	Chuck Galt	\$10
At Rusty's Pizza, 232 W. Carrillo St.:				
10:45–?	Jam session and party, upstairs			
Sunday, May 27				
At Carrillo Recreation Center and Ballroom, 100 E. Carrillo St.				
\$25; \$15 after 7:30 p.m.; \$10 after 10 p.m.				
1:30–3:45	Contra dance	Turtle Creek	Jeff Spero	
3:45–6:00	Contra dance	Growling Old Geezers	Gary Shapiro	
6:00–7:30	Putluck Dinner—bring food to share, tableware (to reduce waste)			
7:30–10:00	Contra dance	Stump Tail Dog	Erik Hoffman	
10:30–1:00	Contra dance	New Young Buzzards	Susan Michaels	
Also on Sunday, dance workshops TBA and a singing session				



Contra Dancer Meets ECD

As a dancer I'm thrilled to find myself drawn to a style of dance similar yet quite different from my beloved contra dancing. Although new to me, the English Country Dances are hundreds of years old (plus new ones being written in our era). Since I am a long-time contra dancer, I thought the English dances would pale in comparison to the high energy I am used to in contra dancing. I was at once drawn to the romantic music used for this style of dancing. It sets the tone for the dances, which range from slow and deliberate to very lively and quickly paced. I had thought this type of dancing would be too rigid and formal for me but instead I found that the dances flow with a graceful rhythm.

In movies such as *Sense and Sensibility*, based on Jane Austen's novel, we are able to get some picture of the time period in which these dances arose. This was an era when it was difficult for single men and women to find ways to be alone together. The dance was a chance for unchaperoned interaction between the sexes. So everyone could "strut their stuff" with plenty of time for playfulness and outrageous flirting. Interaction between dancers is everything and there is plenty of opportunity for it in these dances.

The English Regency and English Country dances are thriving in other dance communities. I hope the same will happen here. I would like to encourage you to come and check out this style of dancing. I think you will be pleasantly surprised at how much fun it is to step back in time through these dances from a past era.

Linda Bernson

Check the calendar page for ECD opportunities in Los Olivos, San Luis Obispo, and Santa Barbara.

Earth to Contra Dancers

For every person on this planet who has a car, there are 19 who don't. Some of those people live in the Santa Barbara area and some of those same people would like to contra dance.

The MTD bus will get you to the dance, but it won't get you home, unless you leave early.

In my opinion, what we need is a way to guarantee a ride home with a copasetic person to anyone who takes the bus to the dance. I would love to see someone take this on as a project. Talk to me. GS

ECD News

New Mini Dance Festivals

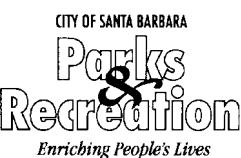
Come April, it'll be like mini-dance festivals in Los Olivos and SLO each month.

Contra dances will be preceded by a two-hour English Country Dance (ECD) in both locations.

The San Luis Obispo ECD runs 5:15–7:15 with the contra dance starting at 8:00. In Los Olivos, it's 4:30–6:30 with the contra dance starting at 7:30. ECD admission is \$3. In Los Olivos that includes \$1 off the contra dance.

New dancers are welcome.

Santa Barbara contra dances are co-sponsored by



and



Post Office Box 21904 • Santa Barbara, CA 93121-1904

a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation

Phone: 805 969-1511

email: sbcds@sbcds.org

web: http://www.sbcds.org/

Board of Directors: Moira Butler, Sammy Ellis, Rob Gardner, Elliott Karpeles, Bob Leonard, Gary Shapiro, Bettine Wallin.

Bookings: Kelli Butler

Bookkeeping: Gunn Toms, Rob Gardner

Dance coordination: Scott Swain

Mailing coordination: Gloria Hall

Mailing list: Mary Ballard, Carl Magagnosc

Liaison to Parks & Rec: Elliott Karpeles

Dance Star: Gary Shapiro, 805 682-5523, dancestar@sbcds.org

Helping in other ways: Many other volunteers
Opinions expressed are those of the individual authors. Express yours in the next issue.

Next issue copy deadline: May 9, 2001

SANTA BARBARA • LOS OLIVOS • OJAI • SAN LUIS OBISPSO

SPRING 2001 DANCE SCHEDULE

CONTRA DANCE & ENGLISH COUNTRY DANCE

Enjoy contra dancing to the irresistible rhythms of a live string band. We'll dance flowing New England contras, a thriving tradition, plus other delights. All dances are taught and prompted: no experience or partner necessary. Generally, the simpler dances are taught earlier in the evening. Wear comfortable clothes and shoes. Enjoy an introductory workshop 30 minutes before each contra dance except Los Olivos. English Country Dances (ECD) are also taught and prompted: no experience or partner necessary. Music is said to be like "folk-chamber music" and the dances are varied in tempo, formation, and spirit. All info subject to change. *All phones in the 805 area code.

MARCH					APRIL					MAY				
27	1	2	3		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30		
25	26	27	28	29	30	31								

"Type" codes on Dance Schedule: c=contra | ec=ECD | ec=ECD then contra

DANCE DETAILS

Sponsor	Price	Time	Phone*	Location codes and location information
Santa Barbara Country Dance Society PO Box 21904 Santa Barbara CA 93109-1904 www.sbcds.org	contra \$7 ECD \$2	7:00–10:00 7:30–9:30	969-1511 (24 hours) 682-5523 (24 hours)	CB Carrillo Ballroom, 100 E. Carrillo St., on the corner of Anacapa. Use 101 Carrillo exit (note the two R's in "Carrillo" and avoid similar street names) and go east. WS Westside Community Center, 423 W. Victoria, where Victoria dead ends at the 101, downtown side. BC SB Ballet Center, 29 W. Calle Laureles, between State and De la Vina. Upstairs.
Santa Ynez Grange in Los Olivos	contra \$10 ECD \$3	7:30–10:30 4:30–6:30	688-7122	LO Santa Ynez Grange Hall, 2374 Alamo Pintado Ave., Los Olivos. W. of flagpole. ECD precedes the contra dance beginning in April.
Ojai Art Center, Ojai	contra \$7	7:30–10:30	933-0660	OA Ojai Art Center, 113 S. Montgomery
Central Coast Country Dance Society, San Luis Obispo	contra \$7 ECD \$3	8:00–11:00 5:15–7:15	541-0201 (24 hours)	SLO Veteran's Hall, 801 Grand Ave., East of 101, Cal Poly SLO exit. SLG SLO Grange Hall, 2880 Broad St. ECD precedes the contra dance at either location beginning in April.

DANCE SCHEDULE

Date	Type	Loc	Caller • Band • Etc.	Date	Type	Loc	Caller • Band • Etc.
Mar 3	Sat	c	LO Barbara Stewart • Paddy O'Furniture	Apr 14	Sat	c	OA Susan Michaels • Kristina & Her Right-Hand Stars
Mar 4	Sun	c	CB Don Ward • Kristina & Her Right-Hand Stars	Apr 14	Sat	e,c	SLO Warren Blier • Growling Old Geezers
Mar 6	Tue	ecd	WS Gary Shapiro • recordings	Apr 15	Sun	c	CB Warren Blier • Growling Old Geezers
			Steve Davis' 50th Birthday Dance. Free!	Apr 22	Sun	c	CB Gary Shapiro • Sliding Scale
Mar 11	Sun	c	CB Susan Michaels • Chameleons	Apr 29	Sun	c	CB Caller's Jubilee • Kristina & Her Right-Hand Stars • To participate as a caller, contact Gary Shapiro in advance. 682-5523, gary@sbcds.org .
			Dance 7–10:30 p.m., snack potluck at 6.				
Mar 13	Tue	ecd	BC Gary Shapiro • recordings				
			Extra couple dances. Folk dance at the break.				
Mar 17	Sat	c	SLO Barbara Stewart • Paddy O'Furniture • No slip covers	May 5	Sat	e,c	LO Gary Shapiro • Growling Old Geezers
Mar 18	Sun	c	CB Barbara Stewart • Kitchen Junket • St. Patrick's Day surprises	May 6	Sun	c	CB Jeff Spero • Jump Fingers
Mar 20	Tue	ecd	WS Gary Shapiro • Linelle Glass, Robert Winokur, Jean Olson (\$5)	May 12	Sat	e,c	SLG Gary Shapiro • Paddy O'Furniture
Mar 25	Sun	c	CB Jonathan Southard • Hot Flashes	May 13	Sun	c	CB Drew Tronvig • Chopped Liver • Yummy music no matter how you chop it.
Mar 27	Tue	ecd	WS Gary Shapiro • Thruppence • Worth every penny (\$5)	May 19	Sat	c	OA Barbara Stewart • One Night Stan
Apr 1	Sun	c	CB Chuck Galt • Privy Tippers • April Fool's Dance. Daylight Savings Time.	May 20	Sun	c	CB Gary Shapiro • Kitchen Junket
Apr 3	Tue	ecd	WS Kathy Lear • recordings	May 22	Tue	ecd	WS Kathy Lear • recordings
Apr 7	Sat	e,c	LO Jonathan Southard • Erika Smith & Friends	May 26–27			SPRUNG FLOOR DANCE FESTIVAL—See schedule-in-progress on page 3
Apr 8	Sun	c	CB Gary Shapiro • Michael's Mixed Nuts • Before the dance, our Spring Potluck at 5:30. Bring plenty to share, tableware, and \$1. Turkey provided.	May 29	Tue	ecd	WS Gary Shapiro • TBA (\$5)