

# DANCE STAR

News, Articles, and Calendar of Dance Events For Contra & English Country Dancers

SPRING 2009

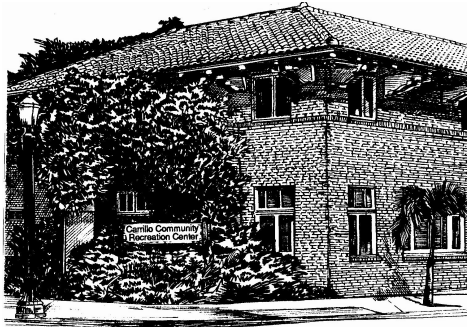
## A "Grander" Carrillo Ballroom

By Shane Butler

As many of you may already know, there will be no Harvest Moon in 2009! Yes, we understand your disappointment but there is a reason. The Carrillo Ballroom will be undergoing an extensive renovation during the second half of the year. After an extensive search for an alternate location, it was reluctantly determined that there isn't any facility in the Santa Barbara area that can compare with the Carrillo Ballroom. Therefore it was decided that it was better to skip a year than to put the energy into a relocation that could ultimately disappoint.

But Harvest Moon will be back in 2010! Bigger and better than ever! Which brings me back to the Carrillo Ballroom's revitalization project. To get the lowdown on the upgrade, I had a chat with Jason Bryan, the Carrillo's Recreation Supervisor and one of the staff spearheading the drive to restore the building to its glory days. Turns out he was brimming with information and passion for the project, and he had a lot to tell.

The Carrillo Recreation Center was built in 1914 and has been a landmark of community pride for almost a century. Unfortunately, over the past 95 years the building has seen some wear and has fallen behind in earthquake preparedness, energy efficiency, and all the amenities necessary to continue being a viable



community center in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. But how to bring the building up to current standards without compromising the grandeur and elegance of a beloved historical landmark?

After years of planning, the city is about to green light a multi-million dollar renovation that includes many improvements and innovations. Their first priority is to discretely strengthen the structural integrity of the building. They will remove all the ivy from the exterior, repair and revitalize the brickwork and enclose the front patio in elegant craftsman-inspired gates and low fencing. They will also replace all of the exterior glass with energy efficient doors and windows designed in the style of the early 1900's. The bathrooms will be enlarged and modernized while maintaining the elegance of the

original design. The Ballroom will receive a professional artistic renovation of paint colors, architectural detail, and discrete mood lighting. New installations include new acoustic ceiling panels, elegant hunter green drapery, and a hidden stage lift for large equipment and handicap access. The work on the Ballroom is expected to take 6 months, hopefully reopening in January of next year.

The remainder of the building will undergo even more renovations that will continue well into 2010. There will be a new elevator, redesigned and relocated bathrooms, a new kitchen in its historic location, a garden patio in the rear of the Baylor Room with a covered 'loggia' designed by Julia Morgan, a new energy efficient heating system,

*(Continued on page 2)*

## A History of Contra Dancing

(Part Two)

by William Noack

After the American Revolution, according to a 1789 newspaper advertisement in New Hampshire, "the newest contra dances" were being taught by John Griffith, a native dance instructor who traveled and advertised dancing throughout the rural parts of the colonies. But in the cities most dance instructors were the French teachers who had earlier popularized "les contredanses." After their own French Revolution they changed to teaching mostly quadrilles since contredanses had been favored by the French aristocracy. These quadrilles subsequently evolved into American square dances.

However, contra dances were still popular in parts of the colonies; in fact, there's a record of Chorus Jig, which we still dance, being danced on Thanksgiving Day 1805. After the War of 1812 in which the British burned the White House, the anti-British sentiment became so great that most urban Americans stopped dancing contra dances and instead danced the French square dances.

Contra dancing was kept alive in rural New England because change came more slowly there than in the fast-paced cities. In the cities professional dance instructors taught increasingly complex dances with specific steps and rules of etiquette to the music of orchestras. Meanwhile in the rural areas the energetic and mostly unchanged contras, danced to the music of local fiddlers, remained popular. Traditions and the un-complex dance steps were valued.

*(Continued on page 2)*

(A "Grander" Carrillo Ballroom Continued)

redesigned office area, and a new mirrored dance studio on the second floor overlooking the street.

For those of you worried about the financial burden to the city, of such an undertaking, the cost is covered under a grant from the Redevelopment Agency with funds allotted for the sole purpose of restoration and revitalization projects like this. Plus the project is pursuing LEED certification by the *Green Building Rating System* and will create many jobs for the local construction industry.

## WE NEED YOUR EMAIL!

Do you want to become part of the SBCDS Group and receive updates on community events? Visit [www.sbc.ds.org](http://www.sbc.ds.org) and sign up for one or more of the email lists, or email Gary Shapiro at: [garys@sbcds.org](mailto:garys@sbcds.org)

If you want to get the best bi-weekly email on all of So. Cal. contra happenings get on Louise's dance calendar at: [louise-danceinfo@earthlink.net](mailto:louise-danceinfo@earthlink.net)

(The History of Contra Dancing Continued)

In the early 1800's any excuse was used for holding a dance, events such as barn raising often became an excuse, which contributed the name "Barn Dances" to the genre in New England. But by the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century the only contra dance surviving outside of New England was the Virginia Reel, since Washington was still idolized as the father of his country.

As America expanded westward in the mid 1800's, the homesteaders brought their traditions with them. Those from New England brought the contra dance – still the most popular type of dance in their farming communities – while settlers from Southern Appalachia brought their preference, the square dance. Mostly on the Western frontier the calling of dances developed as a custom – usually the fiddler would be the Caller and tell the dancers what to do. As this custom of calling dances spread, it horrified the professional dance instructors of the urban areas, who by the 1870's felt their rules of etiquette threatened.

Also in the West and other rural areas variations of the balance step, stomping of feet, or other adornments began to be added by some dancers, many of these individualized variations influenced by Irish dancing, Southern blacks, or even Native Americans. The crosscurrents of dance and music influences went in both directions. But the biggest change in contra dancing was when the swing was added, allegedly by an anonymous 19<sup>th</sup> Century New Englander. Considered a gross corruption of dancing as well as being immoral, especially in the waltz position, the swing permeated contra dancing and won over the dancers. By 1880, this scandalous addition actually started to change some of the traditional dances, such as the aforementioned Chorus Jig – the traditional ending, forward and back, instead became a balance and swing.

(For further reading on contra dancing in this period I highly recommend the book *A Time to Dance* by Richard Nevell.)

## Jude's Journal:

**Bon Voyage** to our Toni Charbonneau. She's part of a sailing crew moving a boat from Panama to Florida! Fair winds to ya Toni!

**Donnalyn's back:** She has just returned from Mallorca, Spain where she was visiting her son and his family. Ask her about her trip.

**Ellen ~ we miss you gal!** Ellen is looking after her dad up in cold Wisconsin. The day I received her e-mail it was MINUS 20! Brrrr!

**Correction:** Bill Ossa is in Africa, not China. Good thing, we don't want him getting into anything made with melamine! He's teaching at the Morogora Teacher College. Go Bill! Teach the folks how to contra, spread the word and dance steps!

**Kudos** to the wonderful music Simon Kiefer has been booking on our dancing behalf! Music and callers have been outstanding!!!

**More Kudos** to our regular dancers, who in the course of an evening help out our newcomers (potential continuous community dancers). Steering a newcomer in the correct direction with your hand movement, eye direction and body language is very helpful.

I remember being a newcomer. Wow, it was confusing for a long time and I really appreciated those of you who took a little time out to help my direction along the way. Sometimes I still need direction! HA! (no comments from the peanut gallery, thank you very much)

**Dance Floor Courtesy:** Please, no perfume, heavy scented lotions or aftershaves.

**A local dancer has a gallery showing!** Aspiring artist, Mary Thompson, will have her sculptures on display in the Faulkner Gallery at the SB Library, 40 W. Anapamu St, SB ~ thru Feb. 28

For even more Jude's Journal and current updates catch her new web page as part of the Dance Star On-line edition at: [www.sbc.ds.org/dsonline/](http://www.sbc.ds.org/dsonline/) and be sure to let Jude know your comings, goings and celebrations. This column is for this dance community. Write Jude at: [cloud-merlin@roadrunner.com](mailto:cloud-merlin@roadrunner.com)

# Dance Etiquette during the Civil War

by Barbara Briggs

On the eve of the Civil War at a drum barracks in Wilmington, California (San Pedro harbor) the US Army held a Grand Contra Gala for all enlisted soldiers.

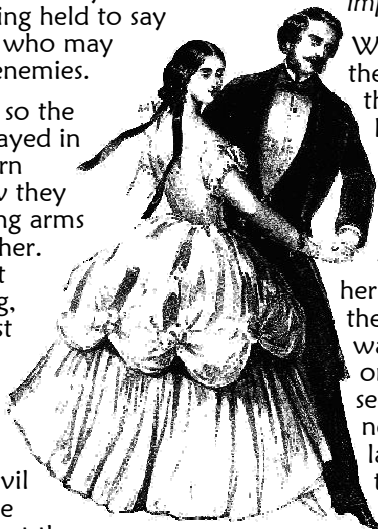
It was well known that many of the officers, from southern states, would be resigning their commissions the next day to join the Confederate Army, often as enlisted men, to take up arms against the US Army. Therefore the Ball was being held to say farewell to the men who may well soon be there enemies.

Tensions were high, so the Virginia Reel was played in honor of the southern soldiers, for all knew they would soon be baring arms and fighting each other. Differences were put aside for the evening, all were on their best behavior and the evening was a big success.

Most formal dances at the time of the Civil War were held in the contra dance style, but they were also known as Scottish Country or English Country, and the more playful and bawdy Irish Pub Dances. In the United States, the form of dance we know as Contra Dancing, took the form of a reel, while contra squares were mostly performed as Quadrilles.

The rules of dance etiquette were quite a bit different than we use today! A lady would never ask a man to dance! A gentleman would always make the proper introduction and the lady would then write his title (Major, Captain, Mr...) and his proper name on her dance card. The gentleman would then arrive at the agreed upon time to escort her

onto the dance floor, but hand holding was forbidden. They would proceed by touching only the finger tips of her left hand with the finger tips of his right hand (to switch to the right in the dance line, as the lady is always on the right!). A right or left hand star was performed by the 2 couples in the Quadrille only touching finger tips and rotating in the proper direction. Again in a courtesy turn, the Gentleman would never touch a lady, who was not his wife, on the back. *Our modern tradition of the gent placing his right hand on the ladies right hand, held behind her back in a courtesy turn, stems from the necessity of a lady to fend off improper advances!*



When the dance was over the gent would thank her for the dance and escort her to her seat, touching only finger tips. Once the Lady was seated the gent would either offer refreshment, secure her a companion or find the next gentleman on her dance card. Once one of the aforementioned duties was performed then and only then was he free to secure or move on to his next dance partner! Also a lady would never dance two dances in a row with the same gentleman (scandalous).

My how things changed!!! During the course of the Civil War, Balls were held in the Contra tradition, before many major battles, in both the North and the South, however gentry, officers and their friends and families, were usually allowed to attend.

Many times the musicians were of Scots, Irish or German decent and many of today's dances were adopted from these traditions (we still dance *The Waves of Torry*).

However, today things are a lot different. All are welcome, no one is left out and we can finally hold hands!

## Upcoming Contradance Camps

### Mt Baldy Contra Dance Weekend

March 20-22 (Los Angeles County)

Band: The Rosin Sniffers. Caller: Jeremy Korr

[www.thelivingtradition.org/MtBaldyDance.html](http://www.thelivingtradition.org/MtBaldyDance.html)

### Queer Dance Contra Dance Camp

April 3 - 5 at Monte Toyon in Aptos CA.

Band: The Figments. Callers: Carol Ormand & Michael Cicone

[www.lcfd.org/sf/DanceCamp/wcamp.html](http://www.lcfd.org/sf/DanceCamp/wcamp.html)

## Letters to the Dance Star

Letter to the Editor:

*I just wanted to say what a great newsletter this is! Please pass along kudos to all involved.*

*I've always been one who's enjoyed the "other stuff" besides just having the schedule.*

*It's a very helpful tool for community esprit de corps, you know?*

Suzanne

Hi Shane,

*The last two issues (I guess since you took over) have been the best I've seen in the years that I've been getting them.*

*It's interesting stuff you're coming up with. I find myself waiting anxiously for the 'History of Contra Dance, Part II'.*

*All of that stuff is out there, it's just someone taking the time to find and edit it. You are doing that. It makes the Dance Star more than just a vehicle for the calendar.*

*I hope your creative juices have legs.*

Kudos! Rick

Santa Barbara Country Dance Society

In partnership with:

CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

Parks  
&  
Recreation

*Enriching People's Lives*

**SBCDS** is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation

805-682-1877 [www.sbc.ds.org](http://www.sbc.ds.org)

PO Box 21904, Santa Barbara, CA 93121

The Dance Star is edited by Shane Butler.

Articles, announcements, contributions

and letters to the editor, for considera-

tion in the Summer '09 issue, must be

submitted before May 1st. Please send

everything to:

**dancestar@sbc.ds.org** or mailed to:

Dance Star,

SBCDS, PO Box 21904,

Santa Barbara CA 93121-1904

All schedule information subject to change. Accuracy not guaranteed.

# DANCE SCHEDULE Spring 2009

## Santa Barbara Contra Dances

Carrillo Ballroom, 100 E. Carrillo (at Anacapa)  
805-682-1877

### Dance Every Sunday

\$8.00 unless otherwise noted

6:30 to 9:30 (6:00 Contra dance workshop)

<u>DATE</u>	<u>CALLER</u>	<u>BAND</u>
Mar 1	Gary Shapiro	Screaming Earwigs, from L.A. Tom, Patrick & Mike Sauber with Steve Lewis
Mar 8	Jon Southard	Turtle Creek
<b>Daylight Savings Dance:</b> Remember to set your clock ahead		
Mar 15	Jean Gibson-Gorrindo	Ragged Edge: L.A. band with Steve Shapiro, Kurt MacInnis, and Emil Olguin
Mar 22 <b>\$10 dance</b>	Bob Isaacs: <i>On tour from New Jersey</i>	Chopped Liver
Mar 29 <b>Zesty \$9</b>	John Rogers	Dogwood
Apr 5	Jean Gibson-Gorrindo	Kristina & Her Hey for Four
Apr 12	Gary Shapiro	Contradictions
April 19	James Hutson	Atlantic Crossing
April 26	Susan Petrick	Fiddle Tunas
May 3	Jon Southard	Chopped Liver
May 10	Warren Blier	Michael's Mixed Nuts
May 17	Donnalyn Karpeles	Growling Old Geezers
May 24 \$15 <b>Sprung Floor Dance Festival</b> John Roger / Turtle Creek (2:00 to 5:00) <i>Potluck in the Baylor Room</i> Susan Michael / Bonfire (6:30 to 10:00) Watch for special flyer in April		
May 31 <b>Zesty \$9</b>	Lynn Ackerson	Michael's Mixed Nuts

## SBCDS English Country Dances

805-682-5523 [www.sbcds.org/ecd/](http://www.sbcds.org/ecd/)

All dances led by Gary Shapiro and/or Alice Williams.  
Live music on last Wednesdays; otherwise, recordings

### Santa Barbara Dances

Westside Community Center, 423 W. Victoria St.

Dance every Wednesday, 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. Cost: \$3; \$6 on live music nights

Live music on last Wednesdays: March 25, April 29, May 27, featuring the Westside English Band.

*Special Theme Dances (have some fun with dress-up?)*

April 1: No comment

April 15: Come as your favorite tax form (we promise no audits)

April 22: Earth Day

**Experienced ECD:** Programmed with an eye towards the preferences of experienced dancers.

Once per month on a Sunday afternoon, 2:00 to 4:30. Cost: \$3

March 8 at First Presbyterian Church of Santa Barbara, 21 E. Constance Ave. (at State St.)

April 19 at Santa Barbara Dance Center, 9 W. Ortega St. (opposite the Macy's building)

May 17 at First Presbyterian Church

**Ventura Dances** at New Location! Floating dance floor!

House of Dance, 3007 Bunsen Ave. Suite E, Ventura (near Buenaventura Golf Course)

First Sunday of every month, 2 to 4:30 p.m.

\$5 adults, \$4 students 12-24, \$1 ages 7-11

## San Luis Obispo Contra Dances

Odd Fellows Hall, 520 Dana St, San Luis Obispo  
(From SB: Hwy 101 Marsh St. exit, left on Nipomo, left on Dana) 805-541-0201 [www.ccds.org](http://www.ccds.org)

Dance on Second Saturdays (unless noted)

7:30 to 10:30 (7:00 Workshop) Admission \$9

March 14 Potluck 5:30	Greg MacKenzie	Foggy Bay String Band
April 11	Lynn Ackerson	The Growling Old Geezers
May 9 Potluck 5:30	Warren Blier	Crabapples

## Ojai Contra Dances

OJAI ART CENTER, 113 S. Montgomery St  
805-933-0660 [www.ojaiartcenter.org/dance](http://www.ojaiartcenter.org/dance)

Admission \$9/ Art Center members \$8/ teens \$5

March 14	Jon Southard	Chopped Liver
May 9	John Rogers	Southern Comfort