



THE LETTER BOX

In the previous Dance Star we printed a commentary by Erik Hoffman on the etiquette for turning down dances. Here are two responses we have received.

'Turning Down' Etiquette #1

Re: "Refuse a Dance---Sit It Out." I like the ethic. I like hearing it discussed and passed on to newcomers. I like seeing it demonstrated in the almost instant re-alignment of partners after every dance.

I would hate to see it become a Rule. I can just see Etiquette Cops snagging transgressors out of contra lines, forcing them to apologize, then sit out the dance with their accusers.

I believe the people who tell me they dance every other dance with their wives, that they promised this dance to someone else, or that their feet hurt. I don't watch for them to verify their stories, to make sure they're nursing their feet or dancing with their wives, and I hope no one's looking to catch me in a real blunder or an inadvertent slight.

Some out-and-out refusals seem legitimate. If you're a beginner it can be disastrous to dance with another beginner. If someone smells really bad, consistently torques your back out of line, or is invariably unpleasant, should you dance with him? Ever? Should you be condemned to the sidelines for refusing to? Do you play Mother and tell him the truth? Or do you say earnestly, "Thank you but I'm waiting for a friend"?

Actually, the most common, effective, and non-brutal refusal is the no-eye-contact technique. Scores of people after each dance simply sail past each other, eyes focused on their True Partners just beyond. Their vacant, tangential gazes say "Don't ask; don't see LETTER BOX, next page

Star Gazer

As Summer Leaves, Fall Into Contra Lines

Lemmings, Chameleons, and Buzzards, oh my! Some rather colorful fauna has crawled onto our calendar page this fall. More to the point, eleven talented bands climb onto our dance hall stages in the coming three months. Read on for news about special events, the return of International Folk Dancing, a healthy assortment of dance camps, and visiting artists.

In Carpinteria alone we'll be treated to Turtle Creek in September, the Chame-



leons with caller Drew Tronvig in October, and in November, a group of popular musicians visiting from Santa Cruz including a hammered dulcimer player. Now we're not sure who the Chameleons are, so we'll all just have to check them out in person.

FOLK DANCE CLASS RESUMES

Our International Folk Dance classes with live music return on September 18 and October 16 (third Sundays) from 5 to 6:30 pm in Room 3 of the Carrillo Ballroom facility. The music is provided by members of Kitchen Junket with instruction by Linelle Glass. Though experienced dancers are encouraged to attend, the class is slated for those who would like to try folk dancing. The dances are at a beginning level and all are taught before being danced to the music. Partners aren't necessary as Linelle is teaching line dances from the Balkans, Middle East and Mediterranean regions. If you have dance requests or questions please call Linelle

Glass at 682-1593.

We're very fortunate to have this unique opportunity in Santa Barbara—folk dancing with live music and all dances taught.

HARVEST MOON AND BEYOND

The Harvest Moon Dance Festival staff—caller Lisa Greenleaf and musicians Kerry Elkin, Jeremiah McLane and Peter Barnes—have agreed to put on a dance for us immediately after the festival, Sunday evening, September 25. Combine this great staff, dozens of buzzed festival goers, plenty of non-festival goers with their fresh energy ready to tap, and the Carrillo Ballroom's great sprung floor, and the synergy can create magic.

The 23rd annual Old-Time Fiddlers Convention convenes in Goleta on Sunday, October 9. If you'd like lots of old-time music and/or some friendly competition, then show up at the Stow House in Goleta from 10:30 am to 5 pm. Call Folk Mote Music at 962-0830 for more information.

October 30, the night before Halloween, brings our annual Masquerade Ball and costume contest. It's a blast to dance incognito, or come as yourself and enjoy the costumes. We'll have fun dancing in either case. Carl Magagnosc calls and Kristina Gibbs & the Ghoul-Tones spirit up the music.

Our annual Thanksgiving Potluck and Dance takes place on Sunday, November 20, starting at 5:30. Bring a dish to share, \$1 and your own eating/drinking utensils. Afterwards we'll dance to the calling of San Francisco's Erik Hoffman and the music of Swing Easy.

FALL & WINTER, MUSIC & DANCE

Look for flyers at our dances for the following events, or call the phone numbers indicated.

see STAR GAZER, back page

Firsthand

Memoirs of a Reluctant Dancer

by Bob Hamber

If you're a local dancer like me who has never been to the Carpinteria dance, then this is for you. Somehow I have never made it down there. I wondered why. Maybe you can relate to my answer:

"With the grand Rec Center ballroom and the beautiful Oak Park, why go all the way down there to some stuffy little hall?" Well, I want to share the personal answer that just popped into my head in the hope it saves another soul.

First you have to understand that I was a devout non-dancer. Emphatically! "Thanks for asking but I don't dance." Only three of the most strong-willed and self-confident women I know ever got me out on a dance floor from high school through age 28. One to rock, one to folk, one to disco. Aaugh! Then a dear friend I was visiting in Ithaca, New York, dragged

me to the local contra dance. I went just to watch and listen. After smugly doing just that for fifteen minutes or so some kind woman asked for my hand. "I don't dance," I said in my most resolute voice. Or was it? Was the spirit of the small hall insidiously melting my resistance? "I don't know how," I begged. "Oh it's easy, any one can do it!" "Oh you don't what a dance klutz I am!" Something ... everything ... was making it safe to risk. The live fiddle music was infectious. Ooooooh kaaaaay I'lllllll trrrry ittt. Yeah, I had a good time. I danced the rest of the night. My soul was saved.

So what's the point? I just realized I'm missing the best local opportunity to experience this kind of dance environment. I'm sure if the Ithaca venue was like our ballroom, no one would've asked me be-

cause I would've been safely away in the balcony. And it's too imposing. And somehow, Oak Park wouldn't have done it either. It's a feeling of intimacy that was key in Ithaca, and I bet it's here at Carp too.

If you are reading this you are past the point of resistance to dancing. (Unless some well meaning dance friend has stuffed this in your non-dancing face in another attempt to convince you try it. *) But from what I've heard about it, the Carp dance has this intimate feeling the other local dances don't. I encourage you to try it. I predict the change will do you good! See y'there soon!

* So you're like I was? Still resistant? Do what I did. Just go to Carp to watch and listen. That can't hurt you, can it? You may be glad you did. You have the most to gain. I'm almost jealous I can't lose my dance-virginity again. But once was enough. It's a wonderful memory.

Letter Box from front page

make me be rude." If you think that some people just always look this way, pick a night when there's a big gender imbalance and see how someone who normally doesn't focus between 18 inches and 20 feet is suddenly scrutinizing the field with the sharp eye of a hungry raptor.

This technique can work too well. Hastening to the rest room between dances one evening, I passed one of my favorite dance partners, both of us gazing intently into the beyond. When I emerged at the end of the walk-through, he was sitting down. I know the rules so I sat down too. It was a lovely dance. At the end he moaned, "What a shame to have missed that." "Were you too tired?" I asked. "Of course not," he replied, looking puzzled, "I just thought you didn't want to dance."

VALERIE COOLEY
LOS ANGELES

'Turning Down' Etiquette #2

I respond to Erik Hoffman's invitation in the Summer issue of the *Dance Star*.

The etiquette of contemporary contra dancing suggests that if a man (say) asks a

woman to dance, she will ordinarily accept. Under what circumstances, and how, is it appropriate for her to decline? (The sex roles could be equally well reversed; I need to be definite about my pronouns.)

- If she has already accepted an invitation, she naturally offers, "Sorry, I already have a partner." To be gracious, she would ordinarily add something like, "But perhaps we can work it out later." Or, if that does not reflect her feelings, she might well make use of one of the honest answers suggested below. This would avoid awkwardness later both for herself and for the asker.

- If she genuinely proposes not to dance the next slot, it is reasonable to state, "I am planning to sit this one out." Note that I suggest "planning" rather than the more forceful "I am going to sit this one out." She may find a long-lost friend in town for just this dance or maybe a square set needs "one more couple." So she cancels her plan to sit out. To maintain a reputation for gracious behavior, she would normally make a point of arranging a dance with the rebuffed partner.

- She might say, "I was planning to ask a newcomer [or wallflower or beginner]."

Such altruism would generally be socially acceptable. And it might even be a graceful way out of the predicament of the next paragraph.

- What does she do in the more difficult case where she wants to dance, but not with the particular man who first asks her? Let us discuss this situation in detail.

Some authorities advise outright lying: "I already have a partner," or less blatant lying, "I think I have a partner." I favor truthfulness as being a more satisfactory life style; if you really want to duck the issue, "I have other plans," or even "No thank you" are possibilities.

However, I advocate a proactive response. Maybe you can have a positive influence on the trait that bothers you: "We really don't dance well together," or "May I show you how I could be more comfortable as your partner." If it is the truth, you might just as well say, "I don't dance with beginners," as lie, though I hope that very few people feel that way.

Or, if you judge his behavior to be uncompromisingly unsuitable, "I think you set a bad example; I'd rather not be part of it." That's pretty strong stuff and you see ETIQUETTE, back page



Fall 1994

Old-Time Contra Dance Calendar

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

Location Key

CB Carrillo Ballroom, 100 East Carrillo St., Santa Barbara. Co-sponsor: SB Adult Programs.

CARP Main School, corner of 8th and Palm, Carpinteria.

OP Oak Park Dance Platform, on Junipero at Calle Real, SB.

Come dance on the finest floor in the West at the Carrillo Ballroom, under the stars at Oak Park, and at the more intimate Carpinteria setting. Join the fun! Dance to the irresistible rhythms of live old-time string bands. We'll do the flowing contras of New England, colorful square dances, plus a few old-time couple dances such as waltz.

We hold an **Introductory Workshop** before each dance. Come at 6:30 to learn the basics. No prior experience or partner is necessary. All dances are taught and prompted. Generally, the dances are simpler earlier in the evening. Wear comfortable shoes and clothing, and have a good time!

Times & Admission

(unless otherwise noted)

Admission: \$5

Dance time:

7:00–10:00 pm

Introductory Workshop:
6:30 pm

FOR THE LATEST DANCE INFORMATION, CALL (805) 969-1511, THE SBCDS 24-HOUR DANCE HOTLINE

DATE LOC CALLER • BAND • Etc.

Sept 4	Sun	CB	Erik Hoffman • Hot Flashes • (<i>sizzle</i>)
Sept 10	Sat	CARP	Gary Shapiro • Turtle Creek • (<i>gurgle</i>)
Sept 18	Sun	CB	Carl Magagnosc • Kitchen Junket • Prior to tonight's contra dance, International Folk Dancing in Room 3, 5–6:30, \$4. <i>Live music</i> by Kitchen Junket. No experience needed—all dances taught by Linelle Glass.
Sept 25	Sun	CB	Lisa Greenleaf • Kerry Elkin, Jeremiah McLane, Peter Barnes (\$6) This post-Harvest Moon dance, featuring the exceptional Harvest Moon Dance Festival staff plus great dance festival energy, is open to all!
Oct 2	Sun	CB	Gary Shapiro • Immortal Lemmings • The Santa Barbara debut of a new band featuring Michael Mendelson, Barbara Ritcher and Rick Drake.
Oct 8	Sat	CARP	Drew Tronvig • The Chameleons We'd tell you who these Chameleons are, but they keep changing.
Oct 16	Sun	CB	Jonathan Southard • Kitchen Junket • Prior to tonight's contra dance, International Folk Dancing in Room 3, 5–6:30, \$4. <i>Live music</i> by Kitchen Junket. No experience needed—all dances taught by Linelle Glass.
Oct 22	Sat	OP	Susan Michaels • New Young Buzzards • Our last OP dance of the year!
Oct 30	Sun	CB	Carl Magagnosc • Kristina Gibbs & the Ghou-Tones • Our annual Halloween Masquerade Dance. Scare or be scared but don't be scarce.
Nov 6	Sun	CB	James Hutson • Growling Old Geezers • It's (unofficially) Appalachia night with Appalachian music and calling done right.
Nov 12	Sat	CARP	Jonathan Southard • Dennis Murphy, Carol MacMillan, Beth Chaparral, Bruce Holgers • Our Santa Cruz guests feature a hammered dulcimer.
Nov 20	Sun	CB	Erik Hoffman • Swing Easy • Prior to tonight's contra dance, our annual Thanksgiving Potluck, 5:30. Bring a dish to share, \$1 and eating utensils.

September 1994

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Other Events in Our Vicinity

Ojai — Saturday, Sept. 17 and Friday, Oct. 7, 7:30–10:30 pm, intro 7. Ojai Art Center, 113 Montgomery St. Admission \$5.

San Luis Obispo — Second Saturdays, 8–11 pm, and fourth Sundays, 7–10 pm, at the SLO Veteran's Hall, Grand Ave. near Monterey St. Intro one-half hour earlier. Admission \$5. For more

info call David at (805) 541-1148 or Cynthia at (805) 546-0518.

Fiddlers Convention — Oct. 9, Stow House, 304 N. Los Carneros, Goleta, 10:30–5. Info: Folk Mote Music, (805) 962-0830.

Los Angeles area — Contra dances every weekend and every Thursday. Call the LA Dance Hotline at (818) 951-2003.

Star Gazer from front page

Our very own 11th annual **Harvest Moon Dance Festival**, September 23-25. As we go to press, there is still room for men. (805) 563-0932.

Echo Summit Dance Camp, near Lake Tahoe, September 16-18. Callers **Lisa Greenleaf** and **Erik Hoffman** with two bands. **For Old Times' Sake**—**Jim Mueller**, **Amber Roullard** (two-thirds of the **Growling Old Geezers**), and **Bruce** and/or **Barbara Reid**—will alternate with **Kerry Elkin**, **Jeremiah McLane** and **Daniel Steinberg**. (916) 481-1974.

BACDS' Fall Dance Weekend at Monte Toyon, October 7-9. **Susan Kevra** calls

contras and squares, **Scott Higgs** leads English Country and **Tony Barrand** leads Morris and Rapper. Musicians include **Kathrine Gardner**, **Craig Johnson**, **Chris Jong**, **Stan Kramer**, **Laurie Riven**, **Peter Spicer** and **Bill Tomczak**. (415) 856-2559.

Sturtevant Hike and Dance Camp is just that. Hike in to the Sturtevant Camp in the San Gabriel Mountains, dance, and hike back out. October 15-16. Caller **Cris Miller** joins musicians **Jerry Frakes**, **Chris Cooper** and a fiddler to be named later. (818) 249-9369.

CTMS Malibu New Year's Camp. Music and dance. (818) 342-7664.

San Francisco Folk Music Club's **Camp Harmony**, also around New Year's. Join the SFFMC by September 1! (415) 661-2217.

Santa Barbara Country Dance Society

dance star

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The *Dance Star* encourages articles, letters, artwork, comments and suggestions. Send or phone them to the SBCDS, or bring them to a dance.

Contributions may also be submitted on 3.25" disk; please include a printout.

Etiquette from page 2

would do well to have advance discussions with a few stakeholders before trying it. However, I believe there is little point to repeatedly side-stepping dealing with difficult behavior. If you put an offender in a position where he can scarcely rationalize away adverse opinion, he will probably shape up or abandon such a milieu. Either way you have gained.

LARRY JENNINGS
BELMONT, MA

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Letters to the Dance Star may be sent to SBCDS, P.O. Box 21904, Santa Barbara, CA 93121.

Membership Info

Join the Santa Barbara Country Dance Society. You'll receive a \$1 discount at regular dances (generally those in the main listing) and priority admission to the Harvest Moon Dance Festival. Membership is \$18 per calendar year, pro-rated by calendar quarter. For October 1-December 31 the cost is \$4.50. To join, send a check to the SBCDS or sign up at one of our dances.

International Folk Dance/Class

featuring **LIVE MUSIC** by

Kitchen Junket

and dance instruction by

Linelle Glass

Sundays Sept. 18 and Oct. 16
5:00-6:30 p.m. Room 3
Carrillo Recreation Center
100 E. Carrillo St., Santa Barbara

Class is beginner-friendly;
all dances taught. \$4.

Contra dance follows at 7 pm in the ballroom. Separate admission.



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You will not receive SBCDS mailings after date on label unless you sign in at a dance or notify us.