

THE LETTER BOX

Eye Contact and Smiles

When people ask me "What's contra dancing?" I describe the choreography of it—how men and women line up and perform the various figures—but I never fail to add that the best part, at least for me, is the communal spirit that is engendered when people are constantly making eye contact and smiling as they encounter each other in the course of a dance. We could use more of that in all aspects of our society.

Yes, that convention of contra dancing is great, but it could be even greater. I can't help but notice that about 95% of the women make eye contact and smile at me during a figure, but probably less than half of the men do. It's kind of funny but a little sad to watch men beam radiantly as they dance with women, then kind of look vaguely into space when they are called upon to do an allemande left with another man, if he doesn't happen to be a good buddy.

I guess it comes more naturally with women, who tend to be more demonstrative with each other, bestowing hugs even on casual acquaintances. Men don't do a lot of that, at least not in our society; perhaps men experience more difficulty in drawing a distinction between warmth and sexuality.

But admittedly that's a larger issue. I'm not suggesting anything beyond the very open and pleasant conventions of contra dancing. Come on, guys, let's lighten up! This is a dance. It's okay to smile and make eye contact with everybody who's participating. In fact, it's part of what makes contra dancing so special.

KEITH CONNES
TEMPLETON

Keith tells us he's moving to Goleta.

Star Gazer

Summertime, and the Dancin' Is Easy

And summer is off to a jumpin' start as the Hillbillies from Mars invade our neighborhood on June's third weekend, first at the Live Oak Music Festival (see below) and then at our June 18 Carrillo Ballroom dance, where Erik Hoffman calls contras and squares with this popular Bay Area band.

Also in June, our Oak Park dance jumps to a *Sunday*, June 25 to be exact. This is the world debut of mystery band the Alley Cats and the Oak Park debut of local caller Gary Shapiro.

Some of our favorite Los Angeles talent appears this summer, with callers James Hutson (July 22 at Oak Park), Susan Michaels (July 30 at the Carrillo Ballroom), and Drew Tronvig (August 12 in Carpinteria), and an LA band on July 30, to be named later.

August 20 brings June Apple, the Monterey area's best-known band, to the Oak Park dance platform for their first SB gig. They play a mixture of Southern and New England music, including many original tunes. Local caller Jonathan Southard has teamed with June Apple in

Sprung Floor Festival Update

Two events of the Sprung Floor Dance Festival did not make it onto the lime green Sprung Floor flyer. Both are on Saturday, May 27.

First is a potluck at 5 pm at Oak Park.

And following the evening dance, we head to Rusty's Pizza, 232 W. Carrillo. We'll jam and hang (or pig) out upstairs.

But we hope not only to break crust with you, but to dance with you, Saturday evening at Oak Park, and Sunday noon to midnight at the Carrillo Ballroom.

Monterey and will call this dance.

TWO GREAT FESTIVALS

Pack your sunscreen and maybe a tent for the most entertaining three-day music festival to dazzle the Central and South Coast each year—the KCBX Live Oak Music Festival, June 16–18, near Lake Cachuma.

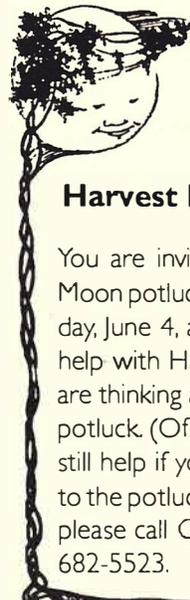
The outdoor festival features internationally recognized musicians, playing everything from world beat to blue grass music, food and drink from capuccino to gourmet pizza, music workshops, children's activities, crafts booths and a variety of entertainers from dawn til' midnight.

Definitely look for the colorful flyer at our dances; the lineup is phenomenal. (805) 781-2030.

A short week later, June 23–25, experience the best in folk music and dance, and celebrate the beginning of summer at the 15th annual Summer Solstice Folk Music, Dance & Storytelling Festival, at Soka University in Calabasas, produced by the California Traditional Music Society.

Of specific interest to our readers are the Friday and Saturday night contra dances, and dance workshops of many kinds on three floors including one dedi-

see STAR GAZER, back page



Harvest Moon Dance Festival

September 22–24, 1995

Harvest Moon Launch XII

You are invited to a pre-Harvest Moon potluck and meeting on Sunday, June 4, at 12 noon. If you can help with Harvest Moon 1995, or are thinking about it, come to the potluck. (Of course you can still help if you can't make it to the potluck.) For location, please call Gary Shapiro, (805) 682-5523.



We usually refer to our hobby as "contra dancing," yet it's certainly true that we do dances in the square formation too. And a little experience will convince anyone that the square dances we do are different from what's done at square dance clubs around the country. All this makes for confusion. So here is a little background on the various forms of square dancing. Some of this is generally accepted fact, based mainly on the writings of—and discussions with—Bob Dalsemer and Tony Parkes (both very famous callers and dance scholars). The rest



The various forms of square dance

■ *First of two parts*

is speculation, based on my own experience calling and teaching some of these dance forms. I hope anyone who either is better informed or has alternative speculations to offer will write an article too.

Square dance includes at least three, perhaps four, different forms: New England, Southern, traditional Western (which may or may not qualify as a separate form), and modern, which is usually called "modern Western." Here's a sketch of each.

New England squares feel a lot like contras to dance. They are strictly phrased to the music: once through the dance equals once through the tune, and the moves fit the 8-count phrases the same way contra dance moves do. New England musicians play the music for these at a quite moderate tempo, and the tune may well be a jig (the kind that goes, "Yompety-yompety"). (This is not to say one can't do them to other styles of music and at other tempos. You can, and you can have a lot of fun. But old-time New England musicians play them in the way I've described.) New England squares have either "heads" or "sides" doing the figure, or all four couples moving at once, and usually include a partner change.

New England squares derive from French quadrilles, a court dance which dates back hundreds of years. (You can see this old and beautiful dance form at the French Festival, but to dance them takes instruction. They're quite sedate and formal compared with our modern dances—probably just as well considering the amount of clothing people had

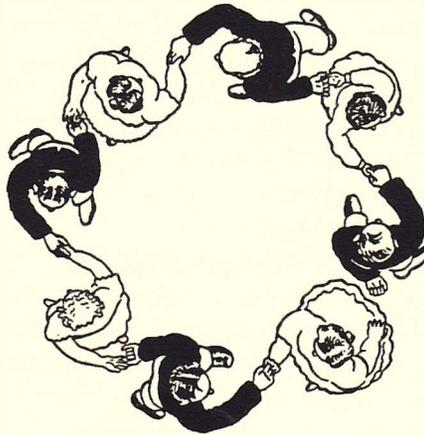
A Square Dance Breakdown

by Jonathan Southard

to wear back then!) I would guess—though I can't prove—that some of our common calls such as "do si do" (an anglicization of the French for "back to back") derive from quadrilles.

Like contras, New England squares are very much a living, evolving dance form. They are danced joyously in contra dance communities everywhere (except those places that don't like to do squares), and new ones are being written all the time.

Southern squares originate in the Appalachian mountain country, the northern Appalachians to be precise. In the southern Appalachians, the traditional dances were



done in a big circle formation, with folks dancing in groups of four and then progressing around the circle to the next couple (a bit like a Sicilian circle). (This dance form is sometimes incorrectly called "Kentucky Running Set." When the Englishman Cecil Sharp observed this dance form around the turn of the century, he asked the participants what they were doing, and they answered, "Oh, runnin' a set." Presto, a new name was coined. Sharp didn't know that this was just the local vernacular, as in, "Runnin' a plow." The locals' own name for the dance form was..."square dancing.") Square, big circle, or "runnin' a set," a lot of the moves and characteristics of the dance are the same.

Typically, Southern square figures are led by each couple in turn. If the caller has you

count off as "number one couple," etc., it may be a Southern square. The dances are done to the fast Appalachian-style hoedown music. (Fairly simple figures to really hot music—that's Appalachian dancing.) And—here's the biggest dif-

ference, from the dancers' point of view—the Southern dances generally are not phrased strictly to the music. One step per beat, sure, but there's no telling where in the music—or phrase—figures might begin and end.

This is true, I suspect, for three reasons. The first is that in many of the traditional Appalachian figures, it's impossible to choreograph the moves so that dancers will always do them in a precise number of beats. The caller just watches, and when folks are about done, gives the next call. The second reason is that because Southern music is played in a different style from New England music, the phrases aren't as strongly defined to begin with. (I'm going to let one of our local musicians elaborate on this in his/her own article.) Many of the popular tunes don't adhere to the 32-bar structure either; they're "crooked," as the term goes. And the third reason, I suspect, is that whereas in the 19th century it was quite common for folks in New England to attend classes from a dancing master (callers didn't have the same role of teacher that they do now), this would not have been true in the traditional Appalachian setting.

Traditional Appalachian dancing no longer survives in its original localities. We occasionally dance Appalachian figures at our dances; or with luck one can go to a camp, attend a workshop, and learn much more about how to dance these dances. (If you ever get the opportunity to attend one of Bob Dalsemer's workshops on this subject, do so, as he is the foremost scholar and teacher on these dances today.) Fortunately, we have an amazing wealth of traditional Appalachian figures to enjoy.

The opinions in the foregoing are strictly my own. Responsibility for any errors is, of course, entirely mine. I welcome corrections and the presentation of alternative points of view.

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Part 2: traditional Western square dance and a bit about the modern square dance movement.



Summer 1995



Santa Barbara Contra Dance Calendar

Santa Barbara Country Dance Society • P.O. Box 21904 • Santa Barbara, CA 93121-1904 • (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.

June 4	Sun	CB	Gary Shapiro • Kitchen Junket
June 10	Sat	CARP	Jonathan Southard • Hot Flashes They're hot, but they're not just flashes in the pan.
June 18	Sun	CB	Erik Hoffman • Hillbillies from Mars (\$6) The last time Erik called here, the band was from out of town.
June 25	Sun	OP	Gary Shapiro • Alley Cats • Yes, this is a <i>Sunday</i> dance at Oak Park.
July 2	Sun	CB	Gary Shapiro • David Roine & friends Enjoy (metaphorical) fireworks two days early for a meta-Fourth of July.
July 8	Sat	CARP	Carl Magagnosc • Immortal Lemmings During the break, have some lemming meringue pie.
July 16	Sun	CB	Jonathan Southard • Chameleons
July 22	Sat	OP	James Hutson • Growling Old Geezers Each member of the band is a GOG.
July 30	Sun	CB	Susan Michaels • TBD A charismatic caller with one of her favorite bands.
Aug 6	Sun	CB	Carl Magagnosc • Immortal Lemmings The only way to catch these lemmings is to catch their music.
Aug 12	Sat	CARP	Drew Tronvig • Chameleons The caller's from Santa Monica. The band hangs out in the shadows.
Aug 20	Sun	CB	Jonathan Southard • June Apple The SB debut of this band from Monterey that sounds sweet even in August.
Aug 26	Sat	OP	Carl Magagnosc • Growling Old Geezers Join us for the last Oak Park dance of the year (other than Harvest Moon).

June 1995

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August 1995

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Other Events in Our Vicinity

Ojai — Saturday, June 3: Susan Michaels with the New Young Buzzards. 7:30–10:30, intro 7:00. Ojai Art Center, 113 Montgomery St. Admission \$6. For more info call Ginny at (805) 646-0832.
San Luis Obispo — Second Saturdays, 8–11 pm, intro 7:30. SLO Veteran's Hall, 801 Grand Ave. near Monterey St. Admission \$5. For info call (805) 541-0201 (hotline).

KCBX Live Oak Music Festival—June 16-18. Live music, optional camping, among the oaks near Lake Cachuma. (805) 781-3030.
Summer Solstice Folk Music, Dance & Storytelling Festival—June 23–25. At Soka University in Calabasas. (818) 342-7664.
Los Angeles area — Contra dances every weekend and Thursday. For more info call the LA Dance Hotline at (818) 951-2003.

Star Gazer

from front page

cated mostly to contras and squares all day Saturday and Sunday. Contra/square dance staff includes callers **Ron Buchanan**, **Dan Pearl** (caller for Harvest Moon 1995), **Susan Michaels** and **Leda Shapiro**; and bands **Turtle Creek**, the **Immortal Lemmings**, **For Old Time's Sake** and the **L7's**, plus special bands from New England and Quebec on Friday night.

In addition, at any one time, up to 28 additional workshops, demos and performances are going on simultaneously. Clone yourself if possible!

Look for the purple tabloid-format program at our dances or call (818) 342-SONG (7664).

BACDS WEEK-LONG CAMPS

The Bay Area Country Dance Society is sponsoring three week-long camps this summer, and spaces may still be available. We have at least one brochure for each camp at our literature table, or call the number listed. All three camps have retained exceptional callers, leaders, instructors, musicians and chefs.

Sierra Swing, June 24-July 1. A week-long American music and dance camp at the Alta Sierra camp near King's Canyon. Contra, square and swing dancing. Registration info: (510) 521-7377.

General info: (415) 864-6911.

Family Week, July 2-8. Moves to Alta Sierra this year. (707) 765-6559.

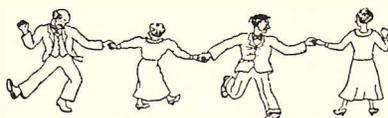
English Week, July 8-15. At the magical Mendocino Woodlands camp. 17th-18th Century and Contemporary English Country Dance, English Ceilidh (*kay-lee*) featuring **Colin Hume** of London, England, and more. (415) 878-8785.

MORE SUMMER AND FALL CAMPS
Alta Sierra Labor Day American Dance Camp, Sept. 1-4. The bands **Wild Asparagus** and most of the **Clayfoot Strutters**, and callers **George Marshall** and **Ron Buchanan** mean this camp will fill up fast, if not instantly. Check for flyers or call **Drew Tronvig** at (310) 459-7179.

Echo Summit Dance Weekend near Lake Tahoe, Sept. 15-17. Callers: **Erik Hoffman**, and **Cis Hinkle** of Atlanta. Bands: **Hillbillies from Mars** and **For Old Times' Sake**. (916) 481-1974.

Harvest Moon Dance Festival, Sept. 22-24. Hey, this is our own dance weekend! See the flyer inserted into this issue. (805) 969-1511.

Monte Toyon Fall Dance Weekend near Santa Cruz. Oct. 6-8. (415) 856-2259.
Camp Harmony isn't until the end of the year, but you must be a member of the San Francisco Folk Music Club by September 1 to attend. (415) 661-2217.



Santa Barbara Country Dance Society

dance star

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<http://www.rain.org/~gshapiro/sbcds/>

Editing & layout: Gary Shapiro

The SBCDS encourages articles, letters, artwork, comments and suggestions.

Send or phone them to the SBCDS, or bring them to a dance.

corrections

In the last calendar we misspelled the name of David Roine, musician and sound technician.

Rich Cageo points out that ca-dance-coop-l is an e-mail mailing list that includes messages beyond calendar information. The full calendar by itself can be obtained whenever desired by sending an e-mail message to mailserv@pitzer.edu and including in the body of that message:

get ca-dance-coop.schedule

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Forward & Address Correction

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