

'Every Sunday' Up in the Air

It's decision time.

We're not breaking even on the every-Sunday dance series. Attendance per dance is down.

We can address the problem in many ways. We've thought of some, and other folks will undoubtedly think of more. Here's some relatively obvious ones we have come up with so far: have dances less often than every week, raise the regular price to \$7, increase attendance (but how?), reduce costs (but how?), and locate benefactors (the SBCDS is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and contributions are tax-deductible).

(Note that most of these ideas need varying amounts of development, elaboration and/or thinking through.)

The SBCDS Board does not want to make these kinds of decisions without giving the entire dance community a chance to discuss these options, to come up with new ones, to help

think them through, and to participate in their implementation.

To this end, Board members are, as always, happy to talk about these or other issues with dancers, musicians, callers and other interested parties.

Above and beyond that, to allow for brainstorming, we are holding special discussion groups on March 8, at the dance during the break. We will establish a number of discussion areas with at least one Board member present at each to facilitate and take notes. We are planning to let the break run a little longer than normal and end the dance a little later as well. Certainly open for discussion would be whether it would be good to have more discussions at another time soon.

Please make an extra effort to attend the March 8 dance, or at least the break, and help determine our future course.

Santa Barbara Country Dance Society **dance star** Volume 8 Number 4 Spring 1998

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Spring for a Dance

Come dance every Sunday and there's no way you'll miss these upcoming local highlights:

March 15: Peter Spicer, a veteran New England piano player trained in the traditional style, tickles our fancy along with the ivories. Frank Hoppe fiddles for us and caller Susan Michaels.

March 22: St. Patrick comes to a contra dance and brings a step dance demonstration during the break. Some leprechauns, disguised as members of the young Celtic Fiddlers, join Kitchen Junket for a few sets. Linelle Glass teaches us a couple of Irish dances, too.

March 29: This fifth Sunday dance is a Callers Jubilee. Callers new and experienced, local and from out of town, ascend to the stage (one at a time, for the most part) and teach us wonderful ways to get from point A to point A.

April 5: Spring Potluck at 5:30. Digestion at 6:30. Dance at 7. Story at 11. A dish to share and \$1 gets you into the potluck. Turkey, maybe ham, provided.

Please bring your own table settings. If you forget to move your clocks forward, there won't be any food left when you arrive, but you'll be in time to enjoy James Hutson's superb teaching and calling and the Growling Old Geezers' superb bow-in', pickin', and a-strummin'.

April 19: George Marshall with Nightingale. This could be a dance to rival the post-Harvest Moon dance last September with this very same band. The caller is perhaps best known as the resident caller with Wild Asparagus, and Nightingale is, well, just ask around.

.....news & announcements.....

English Dance Group Forming

A group of English Regency Dance and English Country Dance aficionados is forming for the purpose of starting an English dance series in Santa Barbara. For more information, or to help in this endeavour, contact Gary Shapiro, (805) 682-5523, garyes@iname.com.

Medieval Dance Class

A Dances of Medieval Europe class is offered by Santa Barbara Adult Education this spring. These are simple dances, from *Orchesography* by Arbeau, mostly in a cir-

SPRUNG FEVER

May 23-24: Ninth Annual Sprung Floor Dance Festival on the Saturday and Sunday (plus an eensy bit of Monday) of Memorial Day Weekend. Look for a flyer by early May, but we know this much now:

Saturday festivities start at Oak Park with a free dance at 2:30 p.m. It's another Callers Jubilee with an Open Band. Then at 5:00 we cross the creek to the picnic area for a Potluck Dinner. The first under-the-stars Oak Park dance of the year

see STAR GAZER, next page

cle with no particular partner. Class meets 7:30-9:30 p.m. for six Tuesdays starting April 14 at the Wake Center's Thornton Auditorium (multi-purpose room), 300 N. Turnpike Rd. For more information call the Wake Center at (805) 964-6853.

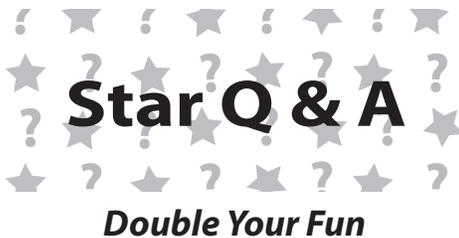
Weekly Celtic Jam

Join the free Celtic Music Jam session at 5:30-7:30 p.m. every Thursday (except holidays). Musicians, listeners, and dancers are welcome. At Dargan's Pub (across Ortega from The Press Room, but set back; call 568-0702 if you get lost). Information: Linelle Glass, (805) 682-1593, lglass@sbjrhhigh.sbceo.k12.ca.us.

Star Gazer from first page

with caller **Erik Hoffman** follows at 7:00, workshop at 6:30. After the dance we sashay over to Rusty's Pizza, 232 W. Carrillo at Bath, with open jamming until they kick us out.

Sunday brings us to the **Carrillo Ballroom** and its sprung floor, a floor so great we named a festival after it. Join the dancing bright and early at 1 p.m. and keep dancing until 1 a.m. You also might opt



Q: Why is a double progression dance said to be more fun with an odd number of couples in the set?

A: First, let's explain what a double progression dance is.

As you probably know, a contra dance has a certain sequence of figures that are repeated over and over. After (or sometimes during) each time through the dance you and your partner move on, or progress, to new neighbors. This is single progression. To move on to a new neighbor is to progress.

In a double progression dance you progress twice. You do part of the "one time through," you progress, you do the remaining part, and progress again.

(This should not be confused with dances that progress early, but still only once, or with dances where you interact with future neighbors, but still come back to original neighbor before progressing.)

Let's look at an actual double progression contra dance:

"Marshes of Mallow" by Cal Howard (printed by permission)

Formation: duple improper

- A1 Balance & swing neighbor
- A2 Long lines forward & back
1's swing, end facing down
- B1 1's with new neighbors go down
the hall 4 in line, turn alone
Return, bend the line
- B2 Ladies chain
Circle left 3/4, pass through

The A part of this dance is rather standard, but then in the B part you meet new

neighbors and stay with them until the "pass through" figure at the end.

BEYOND CITY LIMITS

First, we must confess to **mixing up** two different Arizona dance weekends in the last issue:

May 15–17: May Madness is the correct name for the dance weekend in Prescott, Arizona, a mere nine-hour drive. Boston caller **Dan Pearl** joins Seattle superstars **KGB**. Register by March 15 for early bird discount. (520) 445-8823, wmliller@northlink.com.

A **Dance in the Desert** dance camp exists but it's in Oracle, Arizona, near Tucson, and not until Halloween weekend this year. Look for exciting details in the

neighbors and stay with them until the "pass through" figure at the end.

In a single progression dance, if the set contains 12 couples, you meet every couple after 12 times through.

In a double progression, you meet two couples each time through the dance, so in a 12-couple set you meet each couple after six times. You meet half the couples during the A part of the dance (let's call them the "odd" couples) and the other half during the B part (the "even" couples). After 12 times through, you again meet the odd couples during the A part, and the even couples, during the B part.

But let's say the set has 13 couples in it. You meet each couple after six and a half times through the dance, and then you start meeting them again, but starting with an *odd* neighbor during the B part, then an *even* neighbor during the A part, and so on. So the first time through the set, you balance & swing your odd neighbors and circle 3/4 with the even ones. The second time through it's the other way around, only because the set contains an odd number of couples.

Some of us think that dancing every part of the dance with every neighbor once is more fun than dancing just part of the dance with every neighbor twice.

Gary Shapiro

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Send your questions to the Dance Star or we'll have to make some up.

next issue.

April 10–12: Dance Awakening at Harbin Hot Springs Resort near Calistoga. Caller **Susan Michaels** is joined by musicians **Greg & Jere Conote** with **David Cahn**. Cajun/zydeco workshops, full resort access. Shane & Kelli Butler, (805) 649-5189, thinkdance@earthlink.net.

The **Bay Area Country Dance Society**, bless their hearts, sponsors three week-long camps every summer:

June 27–July 4: Family Week at Alta



Sierra Camp near King's Canyon National Park includes English Country, Contra, Square, ritual dance,

singing, storytelling, crafts. (707) 765-6559, emjer@netdex.com.

July 5–12: Sierra Swing American Dance Week features contras, squares, swing and Lindy Hop, also at Alta Sierra Camp. (510) 215-2785, smolian@aol.com.

July 11–18: English Week at Mendocino Woodlands. English Country Dance, ritual dance, singing, and ahh, the Woods. Camp info: (510) 524-7990. Registration: (650) 856-3038, pbolt@earthlink.net.

This was just a sample. Check the literature table in the CB lobby for more info and more events, and talk to those of us crazy enough to go to these things.

Perspective from back page

evening and are willing to send this information to the caller upon request. Unfortunately this has been the case with only about 50% of the bands I've worked with. Even more helpful (though a bit above-and-beyond) would be a recording of each of these tune sets played even just one or two times through. The same tune can sound very different when played by different bands.

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There's more. Lots more, some of it excellent. But you'll have to go on the Internet to get it, or bribe a networked friend to print it out for you, or ask the Dance Star editor nicely.

Towards the end of the thread, one participant, Erna-Lynne Bogue, went out of her way to thank Steve for presenting his feedback to callers in a positive, helpful way.



Spring 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.

Come for the **Introductory Workshop** held 30 minutes before each dance evening. Also, generally, the simpler dances are earlier in the evening.

Santa Barbara dances are sponsored by the Santa Barbara Country Dance Society and are held from 7 to 10 p.m.

Dances at the Carrillo Ballroom, one of the best dance floors anywhere, are held every Sunday, co-sponsored by the Santa Barbara Parks and Recreation Department.

Call the SBCDS Dance Hotline at any time: (805) 969-1511.

San Luis Obispo dances are sponsored by the Central Coast Country Dance Society.

Dance in SLO on the second Saturday of each month (with occasional exceptions) from 8 to 11 p.m. International folk dancing precedes at 5:30.

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

Ojai dances are sponsored by Ojai Contra Dances and are held from 7:30 to 10:30 p.m. For more information call Ginny at (805) 646-0832.

Admission for all dances is \$6 unless otherwise noted, and subject to change.

Key to Dance Locations

Santa Barbara Carrillo Ballroom	CB	Carrillo Recreation Center 100 E. Carrillo St.
Oak Park	OP	Junipero at Calle Real, SB
San Luis Obispo Veteran's Hall	SLO	801 Grand Ave. East of 101, Cal Poly exit
Ojai Art Center	OA	113 S. Montgomery

DATE	LOC	CALLER • BAND • Etc.
March 1	Sun	CB Carl Magagnosc • TBA • Or something like that.
March 8	Sun	CB Don Ward • Hot Flashes • Important Dance Community meeting @ break
March 15	Sun	CB Susan Michaels • Frank Hoppe & Peter Spicer
March 21	Sat	SLO Graham Hempel • Lime in the Harp • Note date (third Saturday).
March 22	Sun	CB Drew Tronvig • Kitchen Junket • St. Patrick promises to bring surprises!
March 28	Sat	OA Jeff Spero • Sliding Scale
March 29	Sun	CB Many callers • Chameleons • A special Caller's Jubilee.
April 5	Sun	CB James Hutson • Growling Old Geezers • Before the dance, our Spring Potluck at 5:30 PDT. Bring a dish to share, tableware, and \$1. Turkey provided.
April 11	Sat	SLO Gary Shapiro • Over the Edge
April 12	Sun	CB Gary Shapiro • Kristina & Her Right-Hand Stars
April 18	Sat	OA James Hutson • Hot Flashes
April 19	Sun	CB George Marshall • Nightingale (\$7) • Cancel dinner with the boss.
April 26	Sun	CB Jeff Spero • Growling Old Geezers
May 3	Sun	CB Carl Magagnosc • Sliding Scale
May 9	Sat	SLO Jean Gorrindo • Growling Old Geezers
May 10	Sun	CB Warren Blier • Chameleons
May 16	Sat	OA Drew Tronvig • Kitchen Junket • Double Junket Weekend
May 17	Sun	CB Gary Shapiro • Kitchen Junket
May 23	Sat	OP Erik Hoffman • TBA (\$7)
Sprung Floor Dance Festival Preceding this special 7 p.m. evening dance: free Caller's Jubilee/open-band dance at 2:30, a potluck in the park at 5, Intro at 6:30 as usual. Party and open jam session at Rusty's Pizza after the dance.		
May 24	Sun	CB Caller Erik Hoffman, plus several other callers and bands. Dance on the super sprung floor from 1 p.m.-1 a.m. Simultaneous afternoon workshops. (\$TBA)
May 31	Sun	CB Chuck Galt • Michael's Mixed Nuts with hot Bay Area guest fiddler Chris Knepper

March 1998

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April 1998

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May 1998

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27	28	29	30	31	

..... comments & opinion

Calling from a Dancer's Perspective

The outspoken Steve Davis, aficionado of several styles of dance including his own take on contra dancing, has spoken out once again, on the subject of contra dance calling from a contra dancer's (his) perspective, based on being at our dances in the few months before December 1997. This time he spoke out on the Internet, both in private emails and on the rec.folk-dancing newsgroup. Quite a lively exchange took place.

Steve spoke out on six topics. We present all six, and then include just one response.

Steve Davis, sdavis@silcom.com:

(1) I really like callers who are prepared with their dances. Nothing is more frustrating for me than to listen to a caller try to figure out a dance from the dance card, and who clearly did not review the dance ahead of time (for example, forgets that the dance is a double progression), or a caller who thinks they have the dance memorized, only to forget part of it half way through the teaching.

(2) I prefer extended walk-throughs in the first half only. For example, taking the time to go over a hey-for-four or contra corners, especially for beginners, is important, but extended walk-throughs do slow down the pace. If extended walk-throughs are in the first half only, then the second half of the dance can have a faster pace with faster walk throughs (or even no-walk-throughs, which I especially like).

(3) I like challenging dances. Later in the evening of a dance, I think callers can challenge the regular dancers with at least one more difficult dance. Unless you have lots of beginners, regular dancers can certainly help the beginners, to everyone's benefit.

(4) I do not like callers who are pedantic ("too concerned with formal rules") and who "lecture" instead of "teach." Contra dancing is *fun*. For example, a caller can *suggest* that the dance lines be made equal length, but should not *demand* that dancers move. A caller can *remind* dancers to keep straight lines, but not *insist* on it.

(5) I like callers who choose a variety of dances. There are certainly enough to choose from. If an evening averages 12

dances, and a caller's repertoire is say 100 dances, then dances are only repeated once every 8 times a caller calls.

(6) I like callers who take the time with the band to match the dances and the music. Some types of music just "feel better" than other types of music for a given dance. And bands are certainly open to caller suggestions about the pace of music which would go best with a particular dance.

Warren Blier, blier@cloud.atmos.ucla.edu:

I agree in general but from my perspective as a caller believe there are a couple of things here dancers should be aware of:

(1) We don't always completely plan the program in advance. When I'm calling with a band I've worked with previously and to a group of dancers I'm familiar with, I'll generally plan out the specific dances beforehand. Otherwise, though, I've generally found it works better to do it on the fly, matching the musical style of the band and the level of the dancers as best I can. And even when I've had the whole program set, I've sometimes had to make a lot of last minute changes — say if a whole group of novice dancers unexpectedly shows up. It's thus almost impossible to avoid having to at least sometimes call dances without advance preparation and this will inevitably lead to the occa-

sional mistake.

(2) Especially with more interesting and "challenging" dances, it can be hard to anticipate every potential problematic detail in advance of calling it for the first time.

(3) As with any other sort of live performance, mistakes will sometimes happen. This is particularly true when the combination of caller, band, and dancers changes from one evening to the next, but at the same time this variety helps maintain the energy and vitality of the dance.

(4) It would help *a lot* if the bands were prepared *in advance* with a list of tune sets they will be prepared to play on a given

see **PERSPECTIVE**, page 2

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The SBCDS welcomes articles, letters, illustrations, comments and suggestions.

Opinions expressed are those of the individual authors.



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