



[Local Highlights]

Sept. 20: This is it. The post-Harvest Moon Sunday night dance featuring Wild Asparagus. \$10. 7 p.m.

Sept. 27: Hambo Workshop with Erik Hoffman. Learn to Hambo from 4:30–6:00 p.m. in the Carrillo Ballroom. \$5 donation. If you've ever wondered about that couple dance we do frequently at the end of the break, the one that's not polka, not waltz, not schottische, not zwiefacher, and not swing, it's the Hambo, an alleged Scandinavian dance that's actually from the planet Haamboor. Fortunately, Erik has visited that planet and has been authorized by its rulers to teach the Hambo to us Earthlings.

Oct. 4: Laura Light, all the way from Virginia, and Michael Gutin join forces.

Oct. 11: Old-Time Fiddlers' Convention. See separate announcement.



Nov. 1: Boo! It's that time again. Steal the kid's costume if they're outgrowing you (that's a scary thought) and wear it to our annual Halloween Masquerade Ball.

Nov. 21–22: Sixth annual All-City Acoustical Jam. 10–4 on Saturday and 12–4 on Sunday at the Unitarian Society, 1535 Santa Barbara St. It's free! Here's an opportunity to see and hear many of our own dance musicians up close in a relaxed setting. Or bring your instruments and play along. Sunday afternoon features a song sharing circle and a sing along.

Nov. 22: Another annual event, only this one's more filling: the pre-Thanksgiving Potluck. Bring tableware, a dish to share, \$1, and an appetite. Turkey provid-

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

August 30 at Oak Park

A reminder: the August 30 dance is at Oak Park. It's also an open mike/open band dance. If you'd like to play in the open band, contact Tony Johansen at (805) 687-1045. If you'd like to call a dance or two, contact Gary Shapiro at (805) 682-5523 or garyes@iname.com.

27th annual Old-Time Fiddlers' Convention

Join us for a day-long celebration of traditional American folk music on October 11, 10:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m. The Convention is held on the grounds of historic Stow House in Goleta. Enjoy and even participate in the individual and group competitions in various instrumental and singing categories. Prizes are awarded at the beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels. In addition we present a noontime concert, a Second Stage (acoustic, noncompetitive music—sign up to perform!) and jam sessions, with food (including vegetarian), beverages and Convention T-shirts for sale. For the finale, join us for a little contra dancing with an open band.

Visit our web site <www.signif.com/oldtime/fiddlers.htm> for all the details or phone the co-coordinators: Linelle Glass, (805) 682-1593, or Hilda Wenner, (805)

966-1191. We hope to see you there.

Linelle Glass, Co-Coordinator, OTFC

No Parking at Carrillo Gym

The SB Recreation Department has asked us to refrain from parking in the small lot adjacent to the ballroom, in front of the gymnasium, even if it appears that nothing is happening in the gym. These spaces are reserved for staff.

New SBCDS e-mailing list

The SBCDS now has an Internet mailing list for announcements, news and discussions about SBCDS and related activities. To subscribe, send a blank email to sbcds-subscribe@makelist.com or visit the SBCDS web site, <<http://www.rain.org/~gshapiro/sbcds/>>, and use the online form there.

New dancer promotion

Coming soon: first-time dance passes for new dancers. If you have some friends who have been hemming and hawing about coming to their first dance, perhaps this will push them over the top.

Note that these passes cannot be combined with any other promotion, such as the "Bring Two New Dancers and Get In Free" program, and are for brand-new, first-time dancers only.

more News on back page

ed. After the repast, waddle through the double doors into the ballroom where the Hot Flashes play and James Hutson calls.

Nov. 29: It's a fifth Sunday so we have a Caller's Jubilee and open band. Don Ward coordinates the callers. He's at (818) 353-8052 or dward@loop.com. Linelle Glass coordinates the open band: (805) 682-1593.

Dec. 6: a CD release party at our regular dance (with Erik Hoffman and Sliding Scale) for local musician Michael Mendelson's new CD. See the winter Dance Star for details, or visit Michael's web site at <<http://www.silcom.com/~fiddle>>.

[Dance Camps]

Sept. 18–20: Echo Summit Dance Weekend near Lake Tahoe. KGB, Mike Richardson, For Old Times' Sake, Erik Hoffman. (916) 739-8906, davesue@calweb.com.

Oct. 9–11: 4th annual Camp Sturtevant Hike & Dance Weekend. Contra, English, plus workshops. Hike into a beautiful trail camp, while the last pack mule train in the Angeles Forest carries gear. Caller Mary Devlin with music by Laura Light, John Light, Ken Shaw et al. (310) 831-1975 or navep@earthlink.net.

Additional camps abound. Find flyers on our literature table in the lobby.

..... *comments & opinion*

Women holding up less than half the guy

I have a dance problem that I have not heard discussed. At first I thought it was just me but after the last Sprung Floor Festival I found out that I was not the only man with the same complaint: a worn out right arm.

During and after a dance, especially a long dance event such as Sprung Floor or Harvest Moon, my right arm gets extremely sore from swinging. I have learned to relieve my arm by changing how I swing, such as swinging with both arms on my partner's back or, if it fits in the dance, swinging in the reverse direction, counter clockwise, with my left arm on my partners back.

I do not think the problem is all in the way I swing—there are ladies I can dance with all night and never have my arm get tired. There are other ladies who I like and would dance with more often but who are too hard on my arm during a swing. This has little to do with size or weight as some of the largest ladies seem as light as a feather in my arms. Other dancers, including some who are quite small and light, are a literal pain in the arm. During a swing they throw their weight back and do not hold on so I am forced to carry all the weight. It is almost



as if I am giving them an amusement park ride.

I surmise that the origin of the problem is that when someone is new to contra dancing they are often told to give weight during an allemande or swing. Giving weight during a swing does not mean that one partner is holding the other partner's weight but that each partner is individually in balance and shares weight with their partner. The best swings, both for fun and comfort, happen when both partners are balanced and holding their own weight. If either partner were to let go the other one should not fly away or fall.

I do not know how to teach this during a dance; maybe someone could suggest a method of instruction that would be effective. Possibly at the next dance festival we could have a workshop on the biomechanical aspects of dancing. In any case I wanted to let other dancers, male and female, know, and maybe we can learn to

make the dances more comfortable for everyone.

Lawrence Wallin

Thanks, Lawrence, for bringing this up. I have seen callers (I can't remember which) teach this. They take the concept presented above about either partner letting go of the other and work with it.

First, women are instructed to get their left hand behind the man (instead of resting it on the front of his shoulder), and provide some support. Next, the two swing, and the women are told to let go. The couples generally can keep swinging. Next, women are told to hold on again, and then the men are told to let go. This is when it starts getting interesting. In short order the women learn what it means to share the weight in a swing.

Next, I hope, we will receive letters from women, not only about this topic, but also about what *men* can do better during the dance.

GS

Harvest Moon date conflicts

We received a letter from Steve Davis expressing concern about the scheduling of the 1998 Harvest Moon Dance Festival relative to the Jewish holiday of Rosh Hashanah.

The early planners for HMDF refer to calendars that include Jewish holidays and avoid conflicts when possible. For this year and next, though, we're locked into the second-to-last weekend in September. (This lock is likely to continue into the next century.) In neither this year or next does the Festival itself conflict with a Jewish holiday. However, this year the Sunday night after-dance coincides with the beginning of Rosh Hashanah, and next year's after-dance coincides with the beginning of Yom Kippur. The after-dance is highly regarded by many and we are sorry that it conflicts with religious observance by some members of our dance community.

Transitional awareness

Contra dancing is full of transitions. So what?

The usual rap is that the transitions from figure to figure are at least as important as the figures themselves and that great transitions make a great dance. No argument there, but I wish to discuss how an awareness of transitions can help us dance better.

Notice how one figure leads into the next. Do the figures flow into each other, as in a hey for four leading into a gypsy? Do the directions reverse between the two figures as in a swing followed by a chain figure? Do you share (or give) weight or offer an assist to get from one figure to the next? How does it fit with the music? Can you figure how to make an awkward transition less so? Exploit and relish transitions, dare to improve them. Look forward to them.

see **TRANSITION**, back page

dance star

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Opinions expressed are those of the individual authors. Express yours in the next issue!



Fall 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 necessary. Wear comfortable clothes and shoes.

SANTA BARBARA DANCES

Sponsor: SB Country Dance Society

Dance from 7–10 p.m. every Sunday, usually at the Carrillo Ballroom, truly one of the best dance floors anywhere. Carrillo dances are co-sponsored by SB Parks and Recreation Department. 24-hour Dance Hotline: (805) 969-1511.

tional folk dancing precedes at 5:30. SLO 24-hour Danceline: (805) 541-0201.

OJAI DANCES

Sponsor: Ojai Art Center

Dance 7:30–10:30 p.m. For more information call Ginny at (805) 646-0832, or Karin at (805) 933-0660.

KEY TO DANCE LOCATIONS

- Santa Barbara Carrillo Recreation Center Carrillo Ballroom **CB** 100 E. Carrillo St.
 Ojai Art Center **OA** 113 S. Montgomery
 San Luis Obispo Veteran's Hall **SLO** 801 Grand Ave. East of 101, Cal Poly exit

SAN LUIS OBISPO DANCES

Sponsor: Central Coast Country Dance Society

Dance in SLO on the second Saturday of each month (with occasional exceptions) from 8–11 p.m. Break-time snacks are potluck. Interna-

INTRODUCTORY WORKSHOP

All three groups hold workshops 30 minutes before each dance evening. Also, the simpler dances are generally earlier in the evening.

ADMISSION

\$6 for all dances unless otherwise noted; subject to change.

DATE	LOC	CALLER • BAND • Etc.
Sept 6	Sun CB	Susan Michaels • New Young Buzzards
Sept 12	Sat OA	Please call (805) 646-0832 or (805) 933-0660 for information.
Sept 12	Sat SLO	Jean Gorrindo • Growling Old Geezers
Sept 13	Sun CB	Don Ward • Chameleons
Sept 20	Sun CB	George Marshall • Wild Asparagus (\$10) • These post-Harvest Moon dances are what legends are made of. Miss it at your own risk.
Sept 27	Sun CB	Erik Hoffman • Growling Old Geezers Preceding the dance, Erik leads a Hambo Workshop. 4:30–6:00, \$5 donation.
Oct 3	Sat SLO	Warren Blier • Laura Light & John Light • Note date (first Saturday).
Oct 4	Sun CB	Jonathan Southard • Laura Light & Michael Gutin • Virginia fiddler
Oct 11	Sun CB	Susan Michaels • Spin Cycle • Will they hang us out to dry?
Oct 17	Sat OA	Cris Miller • Michael Mendelson & Suzie Richmond
Oct 18	Sun CB	Chuck Galt • Kristina & Her Right-Hand Stars
Oct 25	Sun CB	Gary Shapiro • Growling Old Geezers • Adjust your clocks back an hour.
Nov 1	Sun CB	Jonathan Southard • Chameleons Our annual Halloween Masquerade Ball. Come as your favorite reptile.
Nov 8	Sun CB	Warren Blier • Sliding Scale
Nov 14	Sat OA	Drew Tronvig • Kitchen Junket • Special: folk dancing too!
Nov 14	Sat SLO	Jim Saxe • Michael's Mixed Nuts • Berkeley caller
Nov 15	Sun CB	Gary Shapiro • Kitchen Junket
Nov 22	Sun CB	James Hutson • Hot Flashes • Preceding the dance, the pre-Thanksgiving Potluck at 5:30. Bring a dish to share, tableware, and \$1. Turkey provided.
Nov 29	Sun CB	Caller's Jubilee • Open Band • During the break we'll have a dessert potluck. Want to call? Contact Don Ward, (818) 353-8052, dward@loop.com . Want to play in the open band? Contact Linelle Glass, (805) 682-1593.

September 1998

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October 1998

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November 1998

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English Country Dancing— co-sponsored by the SBCDS. Pub, 18 E. Ortega St. (set back from the street) Schedule varies. For latest schedule call (805) 682-5523. **Dancing in the Los Angeles area**— Contra dances every **Celtic Music Jam**— every Thursday, 5:30–7:30, Dargan's weekend. L.A. Dance Hotline: (818) 951-2003

Gender imbalance engenders complaints

Gender imbalance at our regular dances is certainly an issue that dancers talk about, and, yes, sometimes complain about. In that regard, allow me to relay an experience I had at a dance week a couple of years ago.

The organizers did not gender balance the camp and so significantly more women attended. In short order there were significant complaints as well:

- Women who were unwilling or unable

. . . *news & announcements* . . .

Farmers Market dance

A group of dancers hope to have a contra dance at a Saturday Farmers Market, hopefully in October. There's a theory that Farmers Market shoppers have a higher likelihood of being interested in contra dancing.

Ideas into action, part deux

Let us just say that the wheels are turning slowly, although some activity is noted above and on page 1. If you would like to help speed things up a little, please contact Elliott Karpeles at (805) 682-1877.

SBCDS co-sponsors

English Country Dances

The SBCDS is now a co-sponsor of the English Country Dance series. Dances are every Tuesday from 7 to 9 p.m. at Oak Park, until the weather forces us indoors. At that time the new schedule and location will be announced. For further information, call (805) 682-5523 any time or visit the SB Friends of English Dance web site, <<http://www.rain.org/~gshapiro/sbfed/>>.

The SBFED has an Internet mailing list, which provides news and updates about SBFED and related events. To subscribe, send a blank, subject-ignored email to sbfed-subscribe@makelist.com or visit the web site and use the form there.

Oak Park floor status

The Park Department has delayed their repair work on the dance platform. In the meantime, we plan to do what we can ourselves before the Harvest Moon festival. Please contact Elliott at (805) 682-1877 to enlist your help in this regard.

to book aggressively on the dance floor ended up sitting out or dancing with other women a disproportionate amount of time. They complained that other women were booking ahead, booking in-line and booking as soon as the music stopped, such that women sitting out couldn't get to the sets in time to get a partner.

- Women complained that they felt they *had* to book ahead and so forth if they wanted to dance with a man.
- Men were feeling inundated, and uncomfortable sitting one out.

The complaints didn't stop, so during the middle of the week the organizers called a camp meeting where we all talked about it. With good facilitation, we heard how

our co-campers were affected by the situation, and we, the campers, came up with a solution that made the rest of the week go much better for everyone.

I am a little reluctant to describe the solution. Shouldn't we find our own solutions to our own problems? Do we even have a problem? But I found it compelling, so here goes.

The women agreed to tone down the aggressive booking, and to take turns dancing the man's role or sitting out. The men agreed to be aware of which women were sitting out or dancing with women, and to take that into account when seeking a partner. This was all by consensus!

I'm not sure how or if any of this applies to our gender-imbalanced dances. Let's hear your ideas.

Gary Shapiro

Transition from page 2

Such awareness serves us in several ways:

- It brings greater enjoyment of the dance.
- It can help bring about the "dance trance" phenomenon.
- It helps those around us dance better.
- It can improve one's choreographic skills. (You don't have to be a caller to write a contra dance.)
- It facilitates body memory of the dance.

Have you noticed how you often know what the next figure is without even

thinking about it? That's body memory. If your transition between figures is a non-descript nothing, there will be little for the body to remember, and you'll have more trouble body-memorizing the dance.

Perhaps callers (especially this one) could spend a little time on this topic. All we tend to teach is one figure followed by another, with transitions left as an exercise for the dancer.

And dancers: if you have a question about how one figure leads into the next, ask!

Gary Shapiro



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

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