

Santa Barbara Country Dance Society

dance star

Volume 12 Number 1 Summer 2001

Center and Back

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Local Highlights

Harvest Moon #18 is sure to be a sell-out; for your best chance of getting in, get your application in by July 15. (Applications before that have no particular advantage.) Applications are included with his mailed copy or are available near where you picked this up.

Volunteer for Harvest Moon. Contact Moira Butler (805 687-5189, moira@sbcdds.org) or Bettine Wallin (805 565-1501, bettine@sbcdds.org). A volunteer meeting will probably be sometime in early July. Note that significant volunteers are guaranteed to get in if they apply with payment by July 15.

Laura Light & Dave Wiesler are touring California and make their final stop in Santa Barbara's Oak Park on July 1.



Dave Wiesler and Laura Light, July 1

They're a Charlottesville, VA-based duo, mixing instrumental and vocal music in an eclectic mélange of original songs and energetic fiddle tunes in a wide range of traditional styles.

If you can't get enough of them, and believe us, you can't, get a preview in San Luis Obispo on June 27 (see calendar) and on June 30, at Throop Memorial Church, 300 S. Los Robles Ave. @ Del Mar, Pasadena. This one's a "Zesty Contra" (minimal walkthroughs), dance 7-11, \$9.

Southern Exposure is Steve Lewis (banjo), Katherine Croshier (fiddle), Joe Wack

(guitar), and sometimes Walter Spencer (bass). We're exposed to them on July 15.

Squirrel Heads is Andy Cameron (guitar), Dave Lynch (fiddle), and Barbara Richter (banjo). They head our way on August 19.

Lynn Ackerson makes her Santa Barbara calling debut on August 26. She calls regularly in the Bay Area and has called all over the US and in Canada.

Ethnic Festivals

Out of town dancers have told us they would like to know if there is any reason to come up early on any particular Sunday. Here's four reasons, plus two Saturday-only bonuses, all at Oak Park, 11 a.m.-7 p.m.

June 2-3: Irish Festival. Step dancing, continuous music/singing and jam sessions, with two officially scheduled: from 4 to 5 on Saturday and 3 to 4 on Sunday see **STAR GAZER**, page 3

Sprung Floor #12 Declared 'Successful'

The Sprung Floor Dance Festival on Memorial Day weekend has been officially declared a success.

One very touching highlight was the recognition of Shirley and Don Ward's 50th wedding anniversary on the actual day, May 27. A real occasion.

The new-this-year Saturday afternoon English Country Dance had more than enough for three sets of "Upon a Summer's Day" and was well received.

Vintage Dance Comes to SB

Medieval to Ragtime: "Waltz to Strauss and Tango like Valentino!"

Dances taught, no partner required.

Tuesday evenings, 6:00 to 7:30 p.m., June 5-September 4, at the Oak Park dance platform. \$3 per person.

For questions, call Amanda at 805 682-8352 or email <apayatt@aol.com>.

Floor Installed at Oak Park

The dance platform at Oak Park has a repaired foundation and a new surface. Join us on the new floor this summer for two Sunday-night contra dances, 14 English Country Dances, and the Harvest Moon Dance Festival (which actually straddles the equinox).



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



Dance Star
Internet edition
Summer 2001 rev 1
29 May 2001

It started out as a simple question...

A couple of issues ago I asked about what I saw as a paradox regarding the center set. One issue ago contained two letters inspired by those comments.

Reasons to even the sets

I believe this center set issue is best resolved away from the dance floor. As a caller, I agree with Faigy that it is a caller's responsibility to be well prepared and to call as well as possible for the evening's dance. However, the caller must also have a sense of how to "work a crowd" and channel the group's collective behavior effectively. I also believe that callers have a responsibility to keep a light tone and do only that which causes everyone to smile. When issues or practices become political, they no longer belong in the repertoire, at least for a while.

The perspective of a caller and that of a dancer are quite different. Individuals may vary, but I assure you, most callers don't try to limit the size of the center set for their own personal glory. I thought I might try to point out two of the very good (and not personal!) reasons that callers want to even up the sets.

The side sets are no place to learn to dance. Inexperienced dancers need the stabilizing influence of good dancers. I have sometimes had to end a dance early or drop it all together because a side set has fallen apart. That means the center set also stops dancing. The caller's responsibility is to give everyone a good time. It is not catering the lowest common denominator to hope for balanced lines, it is the opposite. If the experienced dancers mix up the beginners, the caller can call higher level dances and raise the level of the whole community. Otherwise he or she can only call dances that will be successful for all the lines.

In Santa Barbara in particular, the center set will sometimes extend out the door and all the dancers are packed together. There are some dances that require space to be effective. Almost no dances can be fully appreciated when dancers are packed together. Perhaps an individual dancer crams themselves into the bottom of the center set because that is where they

The current issue contains Brenda Cole's reply to one of those letters, and some of my thoughts inspired by the original letters.

Gary Shapiro



choose to dance. Well, what about the others who have now lost their space? No one benefits from this behavior, and the caller is the only one in a position to correct the arrangement. They are responsible for the floor and everyone's good time.

Although the group's behavior might be frustrating, the caller must keep a light tone. As soon as the crowd feels like they are being asked to "eat their vegetables" and to dance with the betterment of the community in mind, some will rebel (sometimes loudly, and in writing!). It doesn't matter who is "right," the larger goal of a good time for everyone is unrealized. So if suggestions to the crowd become bothersome, other methods of keeping the dance fun for everyone must be found. One-on-one conversations might work. A sense of humor might work. Ignoring it might work...the community might fix itself. But nagging will not work. If no methods can be found, and dancers will not take responsibility on their own, then that community will be what it will be, and will survive or expire naturally.

*Love and Twirls,
Brenda Cole*

Here are some of my comments inspired by the letters in the previous issue.

HOT SHOTS

Yes, I agree that's not the most endearing term for enthusiastic embellishers. Point taken.

ON LEARNING TO DANCE

Often new dancers are "freaked out" from trying to absorb so much new information all at once. In this state of high anxiety, the words of the caller are not heard, the frantic directions from other dancers are also not heard. About the only thing one can do is to smile, be patient, use body and eye language, and provide openings for the dancer to arrive in. And most importantly, ask them for the next dance.

Of course, "being patient" is a lot easier said than done. I know this from personal experience. But I try to remember what it was like when I was new. I also remind myself that being impatient is counterproductive. (That said, it remains easier said than done.)

The quickest path to learning to contra dance is to be lucky or plucky enough to have experienced dancers as partners. Quickest by far. When enough of us veterans are proactive in this respect, new dancers won't have to depend on luck.

WHY WE DANCE

People return again and again for various reasons. Some come for the social interaction and the relationships. Some hope to "meet somebody." Some enjoy the dancing and the live music, some get a thrill in learning complicated dances, and some look to achieve altered states, a.k.a. the "dance trance." Some find it rewarding to help others learn to dance, in both the short term and long. Some love and appreciate the inclusiveness of traditional contra dancing.

What makes a dance stimulating also varies by person. Some like those best that flow the best. Perhaps this describes the trance-seekers. Some would love the dance, "Balance and swing. Repeat." and perhaps, "Swing. Repeat." even better. Some like dances that require lots of mental effort. Most are probably driven by a combination of these characteristics and others I haven't thought of.

Even more important, though, is the

music. How a dance works for us depends a great deal not only on its choreography and choice of tune, but how it is played, what the band had for breakfast, what the dancers had for lunch, and what kind of energy is being given off by the hall and its contents that night.

Susan Michaels tells a story of a magical dance that took place in the L.A. area. It was one of those nights where everything clicks, and everyone is dancing a foot or two off the floor.

One year later, Susan arranged for the same hall, the same band, the same tunes, the same medleys and the same dances in the same order. You can guess the punch line: it was a fine dance, but that's all. What was the difference? Susan has a word for it: alchemy.

In other words, it is beyond explanation. Perhaps forces greater than ourselves are at play.

WHY DANCERS LEAVE

Faigy named a few reasons why dancers leave. In addition, some leave because they came to the dance to "meet somebody" and they did. Or they find another dance form they like better, or they received uncomfortable advances (yes, this happens), or they are left sitting out one time too often (yes, this happens).

I believe that the inclusive nature of contra dance is not well suited to provide continually increasing levels of challenge. The Modern Western Square Dance movement is good for that, as are many forms of couple dance. Scottish and English Country Dance can also be plenty challenging. Regardless of the challenge aspect, these forms are experienced by their practitioners as beauty in motion (as can be contra dance).

Gary Shapiro

Return of the Dance Passes

Beginning in June, new-to-contra dancers receive a dance pass good for their next regular-price SB contra dance.

Also beginning in June, if you bring two new-to-contra dancers to the dance, you get in free. Not only that, the deal in paragraph one still applies. That's five (count 'em) dances for the price of two!

Logo Contest Winners

It was a very difficult contest (designing a new logo for the SBCDS) to judge. So we awarded first place to all entrants. All zero of them!

So what would it take to get you, Mr. or Ms. Graphic Designer, amateur or otherwise, to enter the contest if it's run again?

GS

ECD News

Live Music This Summer

Various musicians, including members of Chanson Danse, an ensemble consisting of three recorders, play for some of our English Country Dances this summer at Oak Park.

Keep your eye on the web page at <http://www.sbcds.org/e.cd/> for the latest news or subscribe to the English Dance email list by sending a blank email to sbfeed-subscribe@egroups.com.

Dancing vs. Internet

Even though dancing is more fun than the Internet, you can use the Internet to find out about dancing.

For starters, there's the SBCDS web site, <http://www.sbcds.org/>. From there there are links for finding out about contra and English Country dances both here and in other locations.

Then there's the email list for news and announcements related to contra dance in SB. Send an email to sbcds-subscribe@egroups.com or sign up at the above web site. If any of those schedule details "subject to change" change, you'd probably find out first on that email list.

On Usenet, check out the newsgroup rec.folk-dancing, with discussions that frequently center around contra dancing. If you don't know about Usenet news, try typing "news:rec.folk-dancing" into the address bar of your web browser and hope that an application is launched and that it has a Help function.



Star Gazer from front page

in the Encampment Area. All are welcome to bring instruments.

June 16: Caribbean Festival (Saturday only).

June 30: Chinese Festival (Saturday only, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.)

July 14-15: French Festival.

July 28-29: Greek Festival.

August 25-26: Italian Festival.

Out of Town Events

Please check our literature table or scour the Internet for all kinds of fun to be had at dance weeks and weekends in California and beyond.

In particular, notice the newsprint flyers for the CTMS Summer Solstice Folk Music, Dance and Storytelling Festival, the color flyer for the KCBX Live Oak Music Festival, brochures for this summer's BACDS American, English and Family dance weeks, and a flyer for Labor Day weekend at Camp Alta Sierra.

Santa Barbara contra dances are co-sponsored by

CITY OF SANTA BARBARA
**Parks
& Recreation**
Enriching People's Lives

and



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

a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation

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web: <http://www.sbcds.org/>

Board of Directors: Moira Butler, Sammy Ellis,
Rob Gardner, Elliott Karpeles, Bob Leonard,
Gary Shapiro, Bettine Wallin.

Bookings: Kelli Butler

Bookkeeping: Gunn Toms

Dance coordination: Scott Swain

Mailing coordination: Gloria Hall

Mailing list: Mary Ballard, Carl Magagnosc

Liaison to Parks & Rec: Elliott Karpeles

Mr. Always-There-When-Needed: Rob Gardner

Refreshments: Elliott and Donna Karpeles,

Tony Marzio, Matthew Thornley and
Rebecca Zendejas.

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dancestar@sbcds.org

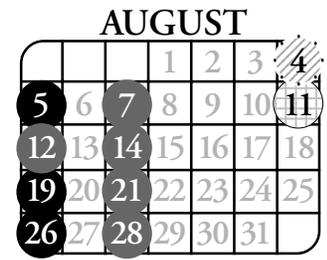
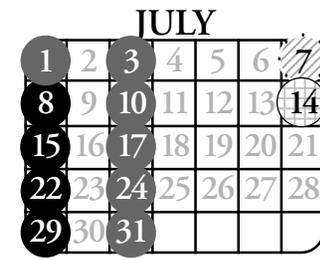
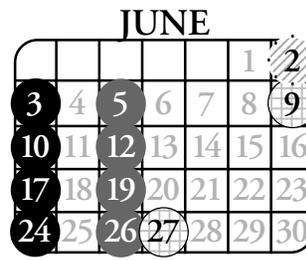
Helping in other ways: Many other volunteers

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

Next issue copy deadline: August 2, 2001

SANTA BARBARA • LOS OLIVOS • SAN LUIS OBISPO
SUMMER 2001 DANCE SCHEDULE
 CONTRA DANCE & ENGLISH COUNTRY DANCE

Enjoy contra dancing to the irresistible rhythms of a live string band. We'll dance flowing New England contras, a thriving tradition, plus other delights. All dances are taught and prompted: no experience or partner necessary. Generally, the simpler dances are taught earlier in the evening. Wear comfortable clothes and shoes. Enjoy an introductory workshop 30 minutes before each contra dance except Los Olivos. English Country Dances (ECD) are also taught and prompted: no experience or partner necessary. Music is said to be like "folk-chamber music" and the dances are varied in tempo, formation, and spirit.



All info subject to change. *All phones in the 805 area code.

DANCE DETAILS

Sponsor	Phone*	Price	Time	Location codes and location information
Santa Barbara Country Dance Society PO Box 21904 Santa Barbara CA 93109-1904 www.sbcds.org	969-1511 (24 hours)	contra \$7 ECD \$2-5	7:00-10:00 7:30-9:30	CB Carrillo Ballroom, 100 E. Carrillo St., on the corner of Anacapa. Use 101 Carrillo exit (note the two R's in "Carrillo" and avoid similar street names) and go east. OP Oak Park folk stage, on Junipero at Calle Real. (All ECDs at Oak Park feature an open band or recordings.)
Santa Ynez Grange (in Los Olivos)	688-7122	contra \$10 ECD \$3	7:30-10:30 5:00-7:00	LO Santa Ynez Grange Hall, 2374 Alamo Pintado Ave., Los Olivos. ECD in June only, before the contra dance.
Central Coast Country Dance Society, San Luis Obispo	541-0201 (24 hours)	contra \$7 ECD \$3	8:00-11:00 5:15-7:15	SLO Veteran's Hall, 801 Grand Ave., East of 101, Cal Poly SLO exit. ECD in June only, before the contra dance.

DANCE SCHEDULE

Date	Type	Loc	Caller • Band • Etc.	Date	Type	Loc	Caller • Band • Etc.
Jun 2	Sat	both	LO Gary Shapiro • Glendessary Jam	Jul 15	Sun	contra	CB Jonathan Southard • Southern Exposure
Jun 3	Sun	contra	CB Barbara Stewart • Kitchen Junket	Jul 17	Tue	ecd	OP Kathy Lear
Jun 5	Tue	ecd	OP Kathy Lear	Jul 22	Sun	contra	CB Erik Hoffman • Michael's Mixed Nuts
Jun 9	Sat	both	SLO Greg McKenzie • Growling Old Geezers	Jul 24	Tue	ecd	OP Gary Shapiro
Jun 10	Sun	contra	CB Gary Shapiro • Paddy O'Furniture	Jul 29	Sun	contra	CB Caller's Jubilee • TBA • To participate as a caller, you must contact Don Ward by July 26 (dward@loop.com, 818 353-8052).
Jun 12	Tue	ecd	OP Gary Shapiro	Jul 31	Tue	ecd	OP Gary Shapiro
Jun 17	Sun	contra	CB Leda Shapiro • Spontaneous Combustion	Aug 4	Sat	contra	LO Joe Aleks • Glendessary Jam
Jun 19	Tue	ecd	OP Gary Shapiro	Aug 5	Sun	contra	CB Warren Blier • Kristina & Her Right-Hand Stars
Jun 24	Sun	contra	CB Jonathan Southard • TBA	Aug 7	Tue	ecd	OP Gary Shapiro
Jun 26	Tue	ecd	OP Gary Shapiro	Aug 11	Sat	contra	SLO TBA • TBA
Jun 27	Wed	contra	SLO Gary Shapiro • Laura Light & Dave Wiesler (\$10, concert/dance, 7-?)	Aug 12	Sun	contra	OP Chuck Galt • Chameleons • Please notice the "OP" for "Oak Park"
Jul 1	Sun	contra	OP Jeff Spero • Laura Light & Dave Wiesler • See you at Oak Park (\$8)	Aug 14	Tue	ecd	OP Kathy Lear
Jul 3	Tue	ecd	OP Gary Shapiro	Aug 19	Sun	contra	CB Drew Tronvig • Squirrel Heads
Jul 7	Sat	contra	LO Jonathan Southard • Growling Old Geezers	Aug 21	Tue	ecd	OP Gary Shapiro
Jul 8	Sun	contra	CB Gary Shapiro • Chopped Liver	Aug 26	Sun	contra	CB Lynn Ackerson • Hot Flashes
Jul 10	Tue	ecd	OP Gary Shapiro	Aug 28	Tue	ecd	OP Gary Shapiro
Jul 14	Sat	contra	SLO TBA • TBA				