

DANCE STAR

Volume 12 Number 3

Winter 2001-02

How I Became a Contra Dancer *By Keith Connes*

I first became aware of contra dancing about eight years ago, when I was living up in San Luis County and saw the dances listed in the calendar section of a local paper. As a long-time ballroom dancer I was mildly curious but didn't do anything about it until I answered a singles ad. The woman I contacted, whom I will call Laura (I can't remember her name, anyway) suggested that we meet, not for the usual coffee or wine, but at the contra dance that was then held at the Grange Hall in SLO. Ah! Two adventures for the price of one. I duly appeared and almost simultaneously got introduced to Laura and contra dancing.

Early on we were approached by a young woman who identified herself as a reporter for the local paper, doing a piece on contra dancing. "How long have you been contra dancing?" she asked me. "Oh, about 20 minutes," I replied and went on shamelessly to explain the circumstances. The reporter's eyes gleamed at this human interest gem. "Could I get a photo of the two of you?" "Of course," I responded, whereupon Laura, who must have been blushing furiously all the while, let out a shriek and disappeared into another room. I don't know whether Laura was embarrassed by the revelation that she was meeting men via singles ads, or was married, or what; we didn't have much conversation after my inadvertent faux

pas. But that night was the beginning of an infatuation that has lasted for eight years and shows no sign of diminishing ... my love affair with contra dancing, of course.

What's Your Story?

Do you have an interesting story about how you became involved with contra dancing? Share it with the readers of the Dance Star. Send it by email to: kconnes@home.com or snail mail to: Keith Connes, 283 Carlo Dr., Goleta, CA 93117.

Changing of the Guard

After eight years as Editor and Publisher of the Dance Star, **Gary Shapiro** is ready to relinquish his duties. We all owe Gary our thanks for his long and excellent service. Taking over as Editor will be **Keith Connes**, who is a professional writer and book publisher, as well as a former magazine editor. The Publishing duties will now be handled by **Shane Butler**. As a point of interest, Shane is responsible for getting the Dance Star started back in 1989 and was the Editor for the first couple of years. Keith and Shane are hoping to maintain the quality that Gary brought to the paper, while adding some new and exciting ideas of their own. Stay tuned.

Christmas Contras

Please join Los Olivos for an Old Fashioned Christmas and contra dance on Saturday, December 1. Festivities include a tree-lighting ceremony, Christmas carols, Santa Claus, and roasting chestnuts on an open fire. All businesses will be serving cider and cookies and remain open until 7 p.m. Stay for the contra dance at the Grange Hall, 7:30 to 10:30. The **Growling Old Geezers** is the band and **Carl Magagnosc** is the caller. For more info call Jeanette at 688-7122.

Pasadena New Years Dance

This year, bring in the new year by heading down to the **War Memorial** in South Pasadena. There will be a Potluck dinner and music jam at 4:30 then Contras from 6:00 till Midnight followed by an hour of couple dances. The callers will be **Jeff Spero** and **Warren Blier** with music performed by **Chopped Liver** and **Ragged But Right**. The cost will be \$15 and the address is: 435 So. Fair Oaks Blvd., South Pasadena. For more info call Barbara Stewart at: 818-951-8255, bstewart@baumhedlundlaw.com

Double your Pleasure

On Sunday, January 20, 2002 there will be two dances at the Carrillo Ballroom. From 2:30 to 5:30, it's **James Hutson** teaching and calling the dances, and **Michael Mendelson, Jeff Spero** and friends playing the music for a delightful afternoon of **English Country Dances**. Then stick around for our regular evening of Contras. Attend either dance for \$7 or attend both for only \$12. New dancers are welcome at both dances.

Santa Barbara Contra Dances are co-sponsored by SBCDS and

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

The SBCDS is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation
Phone: 805 969-1511,
email: sbcds@sbcds.org
web: <http://www.sbcds.org/>
Board of Directors: Moira Butler, Sammy Ellis, Rob Gardner, Elliott Karpeles, Bob Leonard, Gary Shapiro, Bettine Wallin.
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Dance coordination: Scott Swain
Mailing coordination: Gloria Hall
Mailing list: Mary Ballard, Carl Magagnosc
Liaison to Parks & Rec: Elliott Karpeles
Mr. Helpful: Rob Gardner
Refreshments: Elliott and Donna Karpeles, Tony Marzio, Matthew Thornley and Rebecca Zendejas.
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**SANTA BARBARA ~ OJAI
LOS OLIVOS ~ SAN LUIS OBISPSO**

DANCE SCHEDULE

WINTER 2001~02

CONTRA & ENGLISH COUNTRY DANCE

*Enjoy dancing a thriving tradition of flowing New England contras, plus other delights, to the irresistible rhythms of a live string band.

*All dances are taught and prompted, with no experience or partner necessary. Generally, the simpler dances are taught earlier in the evening.

*Enjoy an introductory workshop 30 minutes before each contra dance (except Los Olivos).

English Country Dances 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.

Wear comfortable clothes and shoes.

San Luis Obispo Veteran's Hall

801 Grand Ave.
(East of 101, Cal Poly SLO exit)

Time: 8:00-11:00 Cost: \$7

Dec. 15 **Barbara Stewart** / Growling Old Geezers

Jan. 12 **Greg McKenzie** / Paddy O'Furniture

Feb. 16 **TBA** / Growing Old Geezers

Sponsored by
Central Coast Country Dance Society
Phone: (805) 541-0201

English Country Dances

Westside Community Center

423 W. Victoria
(where Victoria dead-ends at the 101, downtown side)

Time: 7:30- 9:30 Cost: \$2 (CD's) or \$5 (live music)

Dec. 4, **Kathy Lear** / TBA

Dec. 11 **Gary Shapiro** / Thruppence

Jan. 20 See Carrillo Ballroom schedule

Feb. 19 **Kathy Lear** / TBA

Feb. 26 **Gary Shapiro** / Thruppence

Sponsored by
Santa Barbara Country Dance Society
Phone: (805) 969-1511

Carrillo Ballroom

100 E. Carrillo St.

(Take the Carrillo exit off the 101, go east to Anacapa)

Time: 7:00-10:00 Cost: \$7 unless noted

Dec. 2 **Barbara Stewart** / Chopped Liver

Dec. 9 **Jeff Spero** / Kristina & Her Right Hand Stars

Dec. 16 **Jonathan Southard** / Southern Exposure

Dec. 23 **Gary Shapiro** / Glendessary Jam

Dec. 25 **Drew Tronvig** / Bayou Seco

Our 14th annual Christmas Day night dance,
Dancing till 10:30 pm. This is a FREE DANCE

Dec. 30 **Caller's Jubilee** / One Night Stan'

(to Call, contact Gary Shapiro at: 682-5523)

Jan. 6 **Gary Shapiro** / Chopped Liver

Jan. 13 **Jonathan Southard** / Kitchen Junket

Jan. 20 **English Country Dance** from 2:30 to 5:30

James Hutson / Chopped Liver

Jan. 20 **Jeff Spero** / Growing Old Geezers

Jan. 27 **Chuck Galt** / Michaels Mixed Nuts

Feb. 3 **Warren Blier** / The Chameleons

Feb. 10 **Erik Hoffman** / Kristina & Her Right Hand Stars

Feb. 17 **Susan Michaels** / Sail Cat's (Frank Hoppe and friends)

"Special FREE President's Day Weekend Dance"

sponsored by **William Noack**

Feb. 24 **Gary Shapiro** / Hot Flashes

Sponsored by
Santa Barbara Country Dance Society
P.O. Box 21904, Santa Barbara CA 93109
Phone: (805) 969-1511
www.sbcds.org

Santa Ynez Grange Hall

2374 Alamo Pintado Ave. Los Olivos

Time: 7:30-10:30 Cost: \$7 (\$5 for members)

Dec. 1 **Carl Magagnosc** / Growling Old Geezers

Jan. 5 **Donna and Elliott Karpeles** / Paddy O'Furniture

Feb. 1 **Carl Magagnosc** / Growling Old Geezers

Sponsored by
Santa Ynez Grange
Phone: (805) 688-7122

Ojai Art Center

113 S. Montgomery

Time: 8:00-11:00 Cost: \$7

Jan. 5 **Susan Michaels** / Back Forty (Frank Hoppe and friends)

Feb. 2 **Jeff Spero** / Sliding Scale

Sponsored by
Ojai Contra Dances
Phone: (805) 646-0832