



Elise Nichols

Elise Nichols, long-time musician for the Boston Centre, died on April 6, 1989. Though she was an accomplished "violinist" (in the Philadelphia and the Boston Women's Symphony Orchestras), we knew her as an accomplished "fiddler" who played for the Country Dance Society for more than thirty years. She played for ALL the CDS activities--American square and contra dancing, morris, rapper, long-sword, and English country dancing--until her failing eyesight caused her to retire in 1974. In the years that she played for English country dancing, we knew that, come Wednesday night, Elise would be there (she was *never* sick!), full of energy, ready to play any tunes we asked for, willing and able to make (and keep!) a tempo a "grain" faster or slower, and often eager to share a few peppery remarks with us about dancing, dancers, and life in general.

In the June 1974 issue of Ralph Page's magazine, *Northern Junket*, Louise Winston wrote, in an article on dancing in Greater Boston, "One of the finest fiddlers and friends CDS has ever had is Elise Nichols, who has just retired...from a career which for faithful loyal service and high standards of musicianship cannot...be matched anywhere."

Ted Sannella has written this about a last amazing visit with Elise:

One Tuesday afternoon in late March, 1989, I went to the Suburban Manor Nursing Home in Acton to visit my mother. We decided to go for a walk along the corridor, but didn't get very far. For in the very next room, I saw an elderly lady on the bed nearest the door, with slippers on which the name ELISE NICHOLS was written in large print. I said to the nurse, "I think I know that lady. Is she the Elise Nichols who used to play the violin?" The nurse turned to her patient and asked, "Elise, did you use to play the violin?" "I sure did," was the reply. I said, "Mrs. Nichols, my name is Ted Sannella. I'm a square dance

caller and you used to fiddle for me." She replied, "And a damn good caller, too!" I mentioned to the nurse that Elise has worked for many years selling candy at the Country Store in Concord. Elise piped up, "I *ran* the candy department"...The following Tuesday, on the way to my mother's room, I looked in and saw that Elise was asleep. Upon leaving, I looked again and saw no movement...Two days later, Elise died. In retrospect, it was good to know that she was feisty to the end.

--Helene Cornelius



75TH ANNIVERSARY UPDATE

The CDS 75th anniversary celebration begins on September 23. There will be dance performances in Cambridge and Boston and an evening dance featuring both English and American dances. Look for the flyer with this newsletter for more information. The focus of this event is to bring new dancers into the group, so we should all try to bring a friend who has never danced before and we will show them how much fun they can have.

The winner of the logo contest is...**Herb Jacobs**. He submitted a lot of different designs, all of which were beautiful. We chose one and you will be seeing it everywhere over the next year. My thanks also to Shag Graetz and Chris Reynolds for their entries.

Watch this space for more information on the Anniversary Ball in the spring. Sandy Borden is in charge of that event if you would like to volunteer.

--Rich Jackson

Thanks

To Harvey Cohen, Helene Cornelius, George Fogg, Lisa Greenleaf, Deborah Hawkins, Jean Humez, Rich Jackson, Herb Jacobs, Joe Kynoch, Robin Kynoch, Robin Rogers-Browne, Brad Saylor, Deb Small, Mary Stafford, Carole Talley, Gordon Talley, and the stalwarts of the Mailing Militia.