



CDS Boston News

The Newsletter of the Country Dance Society, Boston Centre

Spring 2009

Brookline SmartSummers Theater Arts Program

The Brookline SmartSummers Theater Arts Program offers students, ages 7-13 a chance to create and perform an original musical production based on a special theme such as Shakespeare, Greek myths, or fairy tales. The students also take classes in acting, music, dance, and art. Each class focuses on exposing students to age-appropriate techniques and exercises to foster a love of the arts. The teachers are all classroom teachers and/or experienced artists.

To find out more information about the program, please visit the website: <http://theaterartsprogram.googlepages.com/home> or email the program's director, Daniel Lipton, at theaterartscamp@aol.com. To register, you can call Brookline Adult & Community Education at 617-730-2700. The program runs in one and two week sessions, Monday-Friday, throughout July. Session 1 is June 29-July 10, 2009. Session 2 runs July 13-July 24. Session 3 runs July 27-July 31. The program meets at the beautiful Lincoln School in Brookline, Massachusetts. Each session ends with a different musical, so feel free to register for more than one session.

CDS Boston Centre Annual Meeting

Wednesday, March 18, 2009, 7:10 pm
Park Avenue Congregational Church, Arlington

Summer Jobs Available At Pinewoods Camp

See page 11 for details

Dave Stryker Send-A-Young- Dancer-To-England Fund

In memory of David McCauley Stryker
1958-2007

Established by Dave's family, friends, fellow Morris dancers and musicians, this scholarship assists one young Morris dancer and/or musician per year with a cash award of up to \$500 to travel to England with a Morris team for dancing and study. The Scholarship requires a demonstrated need for financial aid. The purpose is to help someone get to England who might not be able to afford it otherwise.

Applications are due by June 1, 2009. Award announced by June 15. This scholarship is administered by Stew Stryker.

A copy of application can be downloaded from www.cds-boston.org/ritual.html

For more information, please contact:
Stew Stryker: stew.stryker@verizon.net
802-674-5219

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Since 1915

The Country Dance Society, Boston Centre works to preserve and promote the knowledge and practice of the traditional and contemporary dance and dance music of England and New England. The Boston Centre sponsors and produces classes, parties, workshops, and residential and special events featuring the best performers and practitioners of English and New England country dancing. Events are open to all, and most feature teaching; no experience or partner is required.

CDS Boston Center Newsletter submission deadlines:

April 24, 2009; July 24, 2009
mailing is approximately 10 days after deadline

To update the CDS Boston Web pages

General CDS Boston site,
English Dance Committee pages,
Special Events, Camp Sessions:
Christine Robb webmaster@cds-boston.org

New England Dance Committee:
Cortni Frecha cf@cortnifrecha.com
Mark Jones markjones@busybusy.org

CDS Boston ECD Collection recordings:
Dan Pearl daniel_pearl@yahoo.com

Join the Country Dance Society of Boston Centre!

Benefits include reduced admission to dances and events, a newsletter, preferred admission to residential programs, and more. Discounts available for students, seniors, and organizations.

Inquiry via membership@cds-boston.org or
www.cds-boston.org/membership-form.html

**Need to look up a dance or venue?
Try one of these resources:**

www.cds-boston.org
www.contradancelinks.com
www.facone.org/fdrb/home/
www.TheDanceGypsy.com
www.dancedb.com/dancedb

Country Dance Society, Boston Centre, Inc.

Officers, Directors, and non-board offices

As of November 1, 2008

Term Limits:

President: One term. Elected via a four-year series of presidential offices: President Elect (1 year), President (2 years), Past President (1 year)

Other Board offices: Limit of two complete two-year terms (partial terms are not counted)

* denotes term-limited, and may not be re-elected to the same office. Year denotes term expiration.

Board Members

- 1) 2009 vacant
- 2) 2009* Carr, Susan - Term #2
- 3) 2009 Gonzales, Dianne - Term #1
- 4) 2009 Carey, Maureen - Term #0 (partial term)
- 5) 2009 Reisberg, Liz - Term #1
- 6) 2010 Diamond, Mitch - Term #1
- 7) 2010* Cole, Julian - Term #2
- 8) 2010 Roderick, Erika - Term #1
- 9) 2010 Petersen, Katy - Term #1
- 10) 2010* Ward, Mark - Term #2

Board Officers

- 11) 2009* President: Jones, Mark (becomes Past President 2009)
- 12) 2010 Vice President: Wagner, Hal - Term #1
- 13) 2010 Treasurer: Callen, Jerry - Term #1
- 14) 2009 Clerk: Barnard, Jacqueline - Term #0
- 15) 2009 President Elect: Erickson, Judy (becomes President 2009)
-) Past President: (next occupied in 2009)

Non-Board Positions - Elected or Appointed

Nominating Committee

Member Elected (3 year terms) (Board Nominates)

- 1) 2009 Wing, Laura - Term #0
- 2) 2009 Diamond, Mitch (partial term)
- 3) 2011 Jones, Mark - Term #1

Board Elected, from the Board (2 year terms)

- 4) 2009 Wagner, Hal - Term #1
- 5) 2010 Erickson, Judy - Term #1

Pinewoods Camp, Inc. Board Representative

(CDS Boston Center Nominates, PCI Board Elects)

- 1) 2010 Ward, Mark: Term #1 (three-year term)



A New Way To Support CDS-BC: Veronica's Attic

open to to CDS Boston Members

Just in time for the Playford Ball an
Open Attic on February 21, 2009!

Dear Dancers,

The stash of men's and women's clothing and accessories held by Veronica McClure is now available to CDS Boston members with 50% of the proceeds going to CDS Boston to support its programs.

Some background: Veronica has been involved with clothing one way or another for years. About 2 years ago she became keeper of the Scottish Exchange, a donate-and-resell fundraiser for the RSCDS Boston scholarship fund. Between the Scot Ex and her own clothing interests, her attic is full of wonderful items of many kinds. Now the attic is available to English dancers as well. Proceeds from the items donated specifically to the Scot Ex will go to the RSCDS, but proceeds from the other items will be shared with CDS Boston when purchased by CDS Boston members.

Although there are many tartan/plaid items, there are far more not tartan or plaid items - plus you don't have to be Scottish to enjoy plaids and tartans.

For women, there are lots of good wools, silks, and cottons in all kind of garments, some antique clothing as well as reproduction garments, a selection of petticoats (so feminine!), formal wear, jewelry, and accessories in sizes 4 to 22.

For men, in addition to kilt wear, there are tuxedo jackets, formal, dress, and informal shirts, a variety of vests, and a small but lovely selection of sports jackets, as well as jewelry and accessories. We can certainly "formalize" most men for relatively small money!

There are also laces and trims, buttons, and fabrics for those who sew, garments for costumes, many one-of-a-kinds, some children's items, danceable vintage-styled women's shoes, ladies' dance shoes, several pairs of Capezio jazz oxfords, and even a pair of new dance sneakers.

The vast majority of items are priced between \$5 and \$20.

Some dancers have already taken advantage of the Attic, and you can too at an Open Attic especially for CDS Boston members on Saturday, February 21st from 10 AM to 2 PM.

The Attic is about 3 miles from Springstep at the

junction of Routes I-93 and 60. The address is 116 Beltran Street at the corner of Greystone, in the NW corner of Malden, between the Oak Grove T and the Middlesex Fells. Feel free to email or phone me for directions; be sure to tell me what direction you are coming from.

Special opportunity: I need 2 or 3 Attic helpers as I haven't figured out how to be upstairs and downstairs at the same time. Attic helpers receive Attic credits. If you'd like to be an Attic helper, just let me know.

If you can't come to the Open Attic, we can play calendar tag. Email or phone with a time or two you could come. Either way, here's a chance to support CDS while playing in the clothes.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

All the best,
Veronica McClure
116 Beltran Street (corner of Greystone)
Malden, MA 02148
781-321-0675 (h) • attic@cds-boston.org

First Weekend at Pinewoods, 2009

First Weekend at Pinewoods is a wonderful way to welcome in the summer at camp! Plans for this year's program, on June 19-21, are well underway. The weekend provides exciting dancing and music from American and English traditions, as well as a variety of other fun and family-friendly activities. Co-chairing this year's program are Donna Bednar and Susan Janssen.

The weekend starts on Friday night with dinner and a dance. Each day begins with an all-camp Morning Gathering featuring participatory songs, stories, and musical presentations. Next there are age-specific classes led by staff, followed by other sessions offered by staff and campers throughout the day. Evening dances end the day with dances for all ages.

This year's staff includes dance leaders Brad Saylor, Peter Amidon, and Dan Pearl. Music staff will include Karen Axelrod, Doug Creighton, Linda Henry, Amy Larkin, and Shirley White and others. Music and dance-related activities for children's age groups will be led by Peter and Mary Alice Amidon and others.

At First Weekend, a wide assortment of additional sessions are suggested and led by campers. Over the years, these have included ritual

dancing (border, rapper, longsword, etc.), canoe lessons, swimming across Long Pond, scavenger hunts, yoga, round singing, face painting, volleyball, ice cream making, creating giant bubbles, and a Broadway sing-a-long. If you have an idea for a session you want to lead or request, feel free to let us know. Your expertise and enthusiasm will help to fill out the schedule!

Evening dances begin with figures which are especially accessible to all ages. Part-way through the evenings, parents escort young children off to bed. Camp teens will be on duty to patrol the cabin areas so that parents can return to the dance. As the evening rolls on, the dances increase in intricacy and intensity. By the way, any campers who are age 14 or older and interested in earning some money doing evening cabin patrol should contact us. Pinewoods is a big place, and some parents may also want to bring a good set of walkie-talkies for immediate connection with their children if needed, or just for peace of mind.

We also encourage campers to bring musical instruments. In addition to the dance band class, there are opportunities to play for portions of the evening dance, as well as jam sessions, processions, and other musical happenings open to all.

Pinewoods is a beautiful and unique environment with two wonderful ponds for swimming, canoeing, and looking for frogs, and if we're lucky, some sunshine to warm up the spring waters. We have two qualified life guards and will supplement water-front safety with additional adults to add extra eyes on the water. We discourage electronic distractions, since there is so much else to experience and enjoy.

Good news... The rates will remain the same as last year. Fees for CDS-Boston members are \$171 (adults), \$132 (ages 13-17), with a decreasing cost for younger ages. A flyer and application with further details are included in this newsletter and posted on the CDS Boston website. Questions? Contact Donna Bednar at 860-434-0201 / donna@dbandpc.com or Susan Janssen at (413) 587-7969 / sjanssen@edc.org. Hope to see you there!



July 4th, 2009

Mark your calendars! CDS-BC's July 4th weekend at Pinewoods Camp will be held July 2 to July 6, 2009. The session includes four evening dances and three full days of English and American dance classes, along with ritual dancing, singing, and swing dancing. Pinewoods Camp provides the rest: delicious meals, rustic cabins, open-air dance pavilions, wonderful swimming ponds, and a beautiful and relaxing natural setting.

English country dance leaders for July 4th weekend are Helene Cornelius and Joanna Reiner, with Nils Fredland leading American contras and squares. Swing dancing will be taught by Stine and Chris O'Brien.

The ritual dance staff features Judy Erickson, teaching Longsword and Appalachian stepping and, from England, young morris choreographer and founder of the U.K. group "Morris Offspring", Laurel Swift. Laurel will teach both Northwest and her famed Big Morris, which takes Cotswold Morris out of the basic six person set and into a larger, choreographed dance. (See the article by Laurel in this issue for a more in depth description.)

"One-shot" workshops will be offered in Scottish Country Dancing and Lively, Traditional English Country (Joanna Reiner), and English Ceilidh Dance (Laurel Swift). Each day will include singing, one workshop led by John Mayberry and Jamie Beaton, and a harmony singing class by Nils. John and Jamie will also teach a Mumming class, lending their unique style of entertainment to this traditional art form. And, back by popular demand, Laura Sprung will lead a craft class.

Top-quality live music will be provided by some of Boston Centre's best musicians (Bare Necessities, Anna Patton, Dave Langford, Karen Axelrod, and Jody Kruskal). Late-night sessions traditionally include pub night, skit night, and more dancing, jamming and singing. If you are interested in attending, please sign up on the enclosed registration form. This session is generally full by the lottery deadline, so plan accordingly. Hope to see you there!

Lily Kruskal Leahy, and Sukey Krause, co-chairs

Boston Centre Program

Info: www.cds-boston.org or (781) 662-6710

Park Avenue Congregational Church, Park Avenue and Paul Revere Road, Arlington Heights
Concord Scout House, 74 Walden St., Concord • Church of Our Saviour, Carlton and Monmouth Sts., Brookline

English Country Dance

Wednesdays

Park Ave. Congregational Church, 7:30–10:30

A mix of elegantly simple to challenging dances, ranging from traditional to contemporary. Most dances will be walked through, with teaching as needed. One or two may be prompted only, not walked through.

English Dance Basics are offered before the dance at 7:15.

Admission: Newcomers and students \$4.00
Members \$7.00; Non-members \$9.00
12 admission Dance Card \$75.00

The Dance Card is valid at all Wednesday dances for one year from the date of purchase and can be shared with friends and family.

Volunteers are always needed. Ask the door manager.

First Fridays for Experienced Dancers

Church of Our Saviour. 8-11 PM. For dancers thoroughly familiar with basic English Country Dance figures. All dances taught. \$9; \$7 CDS members

See the First Friday flyer or www.cds-boston.org for leaders and musicians.

Harvard Square Dance 2nd & 4th Fridays

7:30 - 9:30pm; September through June
Harvard-Epworth United Methodist Church
1555 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA
\$6 general, \$5 members, \$3 students. View flyer for leaders and musicians. www.cds-boston.org/friday.html

Third Friday Up-Tempo Social Dance

Hot Foot English Country Social, 8:00 – 10:30 pm.
At Springstep in Medford Square, 98 George P. Hassett Drive (www.springstep.org).

You are invited to a lively, up-tempo country dancing party! Music by the Free-Range English Country Boogie Band: Jim Ialeggio, Susie Petrov, Julie Metcalf, Liz Davis Maxfield, Matt Boland, and Eric McDonald

Calling-lite by Judy Erickson with guest musicians:

February 20 – with Matching Orange (Eric McDonald, Eric Eid-Reiner, and friends)

March 20 – Kerry Sets with Adam Cole-Mullen, Tess Ruderman, and Patrick Bowling; and Lily Leahy calling

Admission: CDS and Springstep Members – \$10
Non-members - \$12, Students - \$5 For more information, call: 978-425-4877.

Also call for information on free admission for doorsitting, cleanup help, or refreshment coordination.

New England Contra Dance

At the Concord Scout House,
All are welcome, no partner necessary

\$8 for CDS Boston Members,
\$10 for non-members and
\$6 for young people 21 and under.

Check for flyers and calendars for additional dates.
Web page: www.cds-boston.org/american
Email: nedc@cds-boston.org

Committee Phone: 857-499-8907 OR
CDS-BC Office announcements: 781-662-6710

2nd Saturday Contra Dances

Performers to be announced:

14 March, 2009, 8 – 11 pm

11 April, 2009, 8 – 11 pm

9 May, 2009, 8 – 11 pm

Chris Weiler with Julie Vallimont, Eric McDonald and friends

13 June, 2009, 8 – 11 pm

5th Saturday Contra Dances

30 May, 2009 Concord Scout House Fundraiser
Lisa Greenleaf with Ethan Hazzard-Watkins, Anna Patton and Owen Morrison.
Co-sponsored by CDS Boston Centre

5th Sunday: Squares & Then Some

Squares, Odd Formations, and Contras that include Square Dance moves

* * This dance is at PACC in Arlington * *
Sunday, March 29, 2009, 7–10pm
Woody Lane with Rodney Miller, Gordon Peery and friends



Other Regular Boston Area Dances and Events

Mondays

Monday Contras. Concord Scout House. 7:30-10:30 PM. Various callers and musicians. Adults \$8 (\$5 after 9:30pm); Age 22 (and under) \$5
Info: 978-369-1232 or 781-272-0396
www.mondaycontras.com/dance-schedule.php

Scottish Country Dancing. Springstep, Medford. 7:45-10:15 PM. Live music. \$7, \$4. billmers@rcn.com, www.rscdsboston.org

Tuesdays

Contra Dance for All @ MIT. 2nd and 4th Tuesdays. All welcome, no experience or partner needed. 8-10:30PM Band sit-ins welcome. \$6, MIT & Wellesley students free, other students \$3. Prospective callers & musicians, contact acowan3@earthlink.net or (617) 354-0864.
Info: (617) 354-0864
MIT Folk Dance Club (617) 253-FOLK, <http://mit.edu/fdc/www/contra.html>

2nd & 4th Tuesdays. Boston Gender Free English Country Dance. (Experienced on 5th Tuesday) First Church of Jamaica Plain UU, Centre & Eliot Sts. 7:30-10 PM. Come at 6:30 PM with a brown bag dinner & socialize! Various leaders. \$7. Info: (617) 522-2216 (Janet) or (617) 512-5554 (John), www.lcfd.org/bgfe/

Thursdays

New England Contras & Squares. Concord Scout House. 7:30-10:30 PM. \$8, \$5 students.
Info: NEFFA, (781) 662-6710;
Cal, (781) 272-0396; Dan, (508) 229-2854;
www.neffa.org/Thurs.html

Fridays

2nd Fridays. Contras, Squares, & Couple Dances. Unitarian Church, 27 School St, Carlisle MA 8-10:30 PM, potluck at 6:30. Sue Rosen, Walter Lenk with O'Connor's Mob. \$5. Info: (617) 547-7781 or (978) 369-3353, www.configular.com

3rd Fridays through June. Roaring Jelly: Contras and Squares. 1st Parish Church, 7 Harrington Road, Lexington MA. Beginners 7:45, dance 8-11 PM. Susan Elberger with Debby Knight. \$6. Children under 12 free with parent. \$20 family max. Info: (781) 944-3544, RoaringJelly@hotmail.com, <http://roaringjelly.org/>

4th Fridays 8-11 PM October Through May
The Lancaster Contra Dance
Lancaster Town Hall, 695 Main Street (Route 70), Lancaster, MA Usually \$8 and \$5 for young people
www.songsailor.com/contra.html

4th Fridays. Mostly Squares, 8 - 11 PM.
Payson Park Church, 365 Belmont Street, Belmont, MA
Tony Parkes, calling, Music by Amy Cann and friends

Saturdays

1st Sat. Varies month to month. Check for flyers.
Concord Scout House.
74 Walden St., Concord, MA

1st Sat. Contra Dance Berlin, MA 8-10:30 PM
Admission: \$5 per person or \$12 max per family
NEW Location: Berlin Town Hall, 2nd floor, 12 Woodward Ave., Berlin, MA
www.geocities.com/brlncountryorch/

1st Sat. Medway Contra Dance, 7:30-10:30pm. Christ Episcopal Church, School Street in Medway, MA. \$7 adults, \$3 teens, 12 and under free.
www.contradancelinks.com/medway.html

3rd Sat. Beth Parkes with Swinging on a Gate. Contra Dance, 8-11 PM. Concord Scout House. \$10; \$8, 21 and under. Info: (978) 667-7459.
<http://www.hands4.com/csh/>

3rd Sat. Contra Dances, Melrose Unitarian Universalist Church, 70 W. Emerson St., Melrose. \$6.
7-10 PM. Info: Cammydance@earthlink.net or <http://mysite.verizon.net/manystings6/dance/>

4th Sat. Walter Lenk with Debby Knight and Jack O'Connor. New England Contras and Squares, 8-11 PM. Concord Scout House. \$8; \$6, 21 and under.
(617) 547-7781 or (978) 369-1232
www.configular.com/dance/

2nd & 4th Sat. Gender Role-Free New England Contra & Square Dances. 1st Church of Jamaica Plain (Unitarian-Universalist), Corner of Centre & Eliot Sts. 7:30-11 PM unless noted. \$10, \$6 students. www.lcfd.org/jp/
Info: Chris (617) 852-4042 or (781)-982-8042

Sundays

Scottish Country Dance. Church of Our Saviour, Carleton & Monmouth Sts., Brookline. Sept. - May 6:30-8:30 PM. \$5 donation. Info: (617) 325-6657
www.rscdsboston.org/classes-listing.html

MIT Chantey & Maritime Sing

Open Chantey Sing - 2nd Sundays, 1-4pm

Come sing sea music and chanteys with a room full of maritime enthusiasts, professional and amateur. Free and open to the public bring your voice and join in!
MIT Museum, 265 Massachusetts Ave, Cambridge, MA
Admission is free
More Info: <http://www.nechanteysings.com>

The Skellig Song Session

typically on 4th Mondays 7:00pm

The Skellig Irish Pub, 240 Moody Street, Waltham, MA
Waltham Center T-stop ~12 min. from Porter Sq. by Commuter Rail. www.bostonsongsessions.org

Outside the Boston Area

English Country Dance

Cape Cod, MA 3rd Friday

Lively and Elegant English Country Dance on Cape Cod. Feb. 15 & Mar. 14. Linda Nelson with Jan Elliott and friends. \$8, \$6 students & seniors. Basic figures taught at 7:30, dance party at 8 PM. Call for location. Info: 508-540-1151, or lindan@capecod.net.

South Amherst MA Mondays & Saturdays

Mondays - Robin Hayden with live music. \$6. Info: Robin at (413) 256-8260, www.amherstecd.org

1st Saturday, Amherst Assembly, 7:45-10:45 PM. Graham Christian with various musicians. Special refreshments. \$7. Info: bray1699@yahoo.com

3rd Saturday, Pleasures of the Town English Country Dance. 7:30-10:30 PM. Music, Joyce Crouch, piano, & Doug Creighton, flute & melodeon, with guest musicians. \$7. Info: (413) 253-3828, madrobin@rcn.com, or www.amherstecd.org

Rhode Island - Saturdays

NEW LOCATION: the South Kingstown Land Trust, 17 Matunuck Beach Road in South Kingstown. All dances will take place from 7:30 to 10:30 PM, and admission is \$10, \$8 for CDS Boston members and South Kingstown Land Trust members. Live music will be provided by a variety of guest musicians. For information and directions, call John & Susan at 401-539-3009 or visit www.kingstonenglishcountrydance.org.

February 14 Helene Cornelius

February 28 Mary Jones

March 14 Priscilla Borden

March 28 Orly Krasner

April 11 Michael Cicone

May 2 Linda Nelson

New Hampshire - 2nd Sunday, Sept.-June

Presidential Oaks (Odd Fellows Home), Minot St. off Pleasant, Concord NH. 5:30-7:45 PM. \$7, \$6 members. Info: Dave Bateman (603) 433-2735, www.nhecads.org

Connecticut - Fridays

English Country Dance. New Haven CT. Neighborhood Music School Recital Hall, 100 Auburn St. 8:00-10:30 PM. \$8. Info: (203) 776-6929 <http://pantheon.yale.edu/~bfr4/NH.English.html>

The Hartford Ball

May 9, 2009 contact: Helen Davenport (860) 285-8694 dancerhiker@yahoo.com



Contras

Rehoboth, MA 2nd, 4th and 5th Fridays

8-11PM, General admission: \$8; \$5 for ages 16 and under; \$18 for families with children under 16. <http://www.contradancelinks.com/rehoboth.html>

Salem, MA 1st Saturdays, October – June

Tabernacle Congregational Church, 50 Washington St, Salem. 8:00pm. \$8; \$6 seniors & students; \$20 family maximum. Wear clean, soft-soled shoes. Beginners welcome. Info (978) 745-9391 or lew134@lycos.com. www.contradancelinks.com/schedule_emass.html#salem

Worcester, MA 2nd Saturdays

8pm. Wesley Methodist Church, 114 Main St. Worcester \$8. \$6 students, \$18 family maximum, under 12 free www.worcesterdance.org

Greenfield, MA nearly every Friday and Saturday

401 Chapman St. www.guidingstargrange.org

South Amherst, MA 4th Saturday.

Munson Library, 1046 South East St. South Amherst <http://www.alongtheriver.com/dances.html>

Cape Cod, MA Saturdays

For general information about the following dances, contact shabam@ais.net

1st Saturday. Contra Dance. Woods Hole Community Hall, Main St., Woods Hole. (508) 548-6229 or 548-6661

2nd Saturday. Contra Dance. Freedom Hall, 976 Main St., Cotuit. Info: (508) 563-6750

3rd Saturday. Contra Dance. East Sandwich Grange, Old County Rd., Sandwich. Info: (508) 563-6934

5th Saturday. Contra Dance. North Falmouth Congregational Church, 155 Main Rd., N. Falmouth.

Manchester, NH 3rd Fridays

Mill City Contra Dance. Various callers and musicians. Beginners Workshop 7:30pm. Dance 8-11pm \$8, \$5 young people, under 12 free. 250 Commercial St. Manchester, NH. www.nhdances.org/millcity/

European dance Web sites:

England

Set and Turn Single - www.setandturnsingle.org.uk

English Folk Dance & Song Society, (EFDSS) www.efdss.org Email: info@efdss.org

Halsway Manor Soc. -- Residential programmes office@halswaymanor.org.uk www.halswaymanor.org.uk

Denmark

www.tscdd.dk

Margot Gunzenhauser; margot@gunzenhauser.dk

Belgium - Anglo-American Dance Shop

Contact Frieda Van Vlaendern: aads.vzw@pandora.be www.aads.be

In Praise of Country Dancing

Editorial reprinted from www.guardian.co.uk
The Guardian, Friday 30 January 2009

In these difficult times, it is more important than ever to remember what makes for a happy life. Naturally work and financial security are important. But the top influences are community, exercise, listening to music and doing things in a group. These are the top four predictors of contentment. Counterintuitively, perhaps, they are all found together in country dancing. It seems unimportant whether it is Scottish, Irish or English, line dancing or the polka, the effect of all that twirling with family and friends while responding to the music produces a sense of wellbeing hard to replicate in any other single activity. It may be at odds with other known attributes of country dancing - the quasi-martial atmosphere of barked commands, the withering look of your partner when you go up rather than down the line, the pipes at what seem unnecessarily close quarters, and other people jumping on your toes. Yet the cumulative impact defies the individual elements. Economists who have made a business of studying happiness, such as Richard Layard and Richard Easterlin, might point to the larger impact of cohesive, broadly equal societies - Scandinavia, Canada, Ireland and New Zealand show up most strongly on the happiness heat map - but those of us condemned to the miserylands of Britain know that, in a community hall near us, happiness awaits in the shape of friends and strangers, old and young, all ready to share in a common activity. It is quite pointless, except that we feel better afterwards.

This article was published on guardian.co.uk on Friday 30 January 2009. It appeared in the Guardian on Friday 30 January 2009 on p 42.

courtesy of George Fogg

The Skellig Song Session

Based on a traditional English pub sing, but with a bit of an American flavor, this session is open to all singers who want to join in, with chorus songs that are easy to learn and fun to sing. We love the fine old drinking songs and know plenty of sea chanteys and chorus songs from the British Isles and New England, but anything goes as long as it's fun and easy. Bring a song to share, or just join on the chorus!

4th Mondays, The Skellig Irish Pub, 240 Moody Street, Waltham. More details on p. 6 or visit www.bostonsongsessions.com

Introducing a Beginner to Contra Dancing

by Chris Weiler

This article is an edited and expanded version of a response to a question on the "Boston Area Contra Community" (BACC) email list on Yahoo Groups. The questioner asked "Given that you may only have 20 minutes to teach some contra basics, what figures do you teach first? What 'lesson plan' will give the most 'bang for the buck'?"

I believe that this subject is extremely important to any dance community. Because how we introduce beginners is their first impression of dancing and what we are like as a community. It has a direct effect on whether or not they will continue to dance the rest of the evening or come back another time.

Guiding principles for my actions when interacting with beginners:

1. Beginners are generally in sensory overload their first night. They are being spun around, held, looked at, listening to new music and exercising aerobically.
2. Beginners are generally in information overload their first night. They are learning a new dance style and moves that are generally easy, but are receiving it almost all at once.
3. Beginners are having several social taboos broken by a new community's standards of behavior (personal space being invaded, prolonged eye contact, etc.). This can make them uncomfortable depending on their background.
4. The caller will be evaluating the skill level of the dancers and teaching figures as necessary.
5. Some moves are easily understood and can be taught "on the fly" through gentle guidance while dancing.

Everything that you can do to keep things simple and relaxed will make a dancer's first experience (and several after that) more enjoyable!!!

Before the dance:

With these principles in mind, when I introduce someone to contra dance, I teach three moves. I limit to three to keep them from being overloaded with information. This keeps the introduction short and relaxed. Sometimes you only have a few minutes before the dancing starts and it's important to be brief. I choose these three because they both are not taught by the caller (generally) and are difficult to teach "on the fly" during the dance. They are listed below with a description of how I teach them.

Here is what I teach:

A. A walking swing

B. Do-si-do

C. Courtesy turn (for both a right and left thru and ladies chain)

A. I teach a walking swing by first turning them by two hands. I ask them if they remember playing this game when they were children. This also lets me control the speed and amount of arm tension that they're feeling. When it feels right, I say "see how this feels? This is how a swing feels, but we hold each other in a different way. Remember this feeling." Then I either stop and get them into a ballroom position, or I pull them close in a smooth motion. If necessary, I remind them to walk forward with a smooth step. I have had a roughly 90% success rate with this technique. This means that 90% of them have a swing that is not awkward and perfectly sufficient to get them through the next few nights of dancing. If they keep up with dancing, they can be shown a buzz step swing later.

At this point, I usually mention that if they want to keep from getting dizzy, most people find it helpful to look at some point on their partner. I mention that a lot of people enjoy looking into each other's eyes, but it's not necessary. See item 3 above.

B. I teach a do-si-do because there is no contact and people often find it confusing if they don't know what it is. I usually demonstrate with an experienced partner WITHOUT twirls. Then I have them do it. Once they're successful, I mention that they are going to see other people twirling and (with an experienced partner) demonstrate a do-si-do with mad spinning. I let them know that they don't have to copy this. And that as long as they end up in the place they started, facing the same direction, everything is good.

C. I have been experimenting with different ways to teach the courtesy turn. My latest technique is to break it down by getting them into promenade position with left hands joined in front and right hands next to the ladies hip. Then I have them wheel around in place with the gent backing up. Then I have them face another couple and do a right and left through. Pass the opposite by the right shoulder and wheel around ("scoop the ladies" in Lisa Greenleaf's terminology) to face them again. Repeat a couple of times. Then I show them the variation of that by doing a ladies chain.

Once again, I will use an experienced partner

to show them what a twirling courtesy turn is. I explain that this is people showing off and not necessary. I let the women know that they can stop this by pulling their hand down. I usually add Lisa Greenleaf's addendum to this: And then smile at him to let him know that you're thankful for the suggestion and that you definitely don't want to twirl.

Once I'm done teaching these figures, I may mention about asking people to dance (everyone asks everyone) and reassure them that people will be friendly and helpful. That the caller and other dancers will teach anything else they need to know. I remind them to relax and have fun! Then I ask one of the women to dance. Throughout the evening, I'll try to find men and women who are good with beginners and ask them to dance with a particular new dancer.

During the Dance:

First, I offer a good example by listening to the caller while they're teaching the dance. Often, the caller will be teaching figures that my partner needs to know. Also, I'm not confusing them by making them choose between listening to the caller or myself. I'll only speak as necessary to clarify a move that the caller just prompted during the walkthrough.

When I'm dancing with a new dancer, I also try to reduce their overload by taking out twirls and flourishes. This means not twirling during a do-si-do, courtesy turn, Rory o'More or Petronella figures. I swing them slowly and do not twirl them out. I make sure that when I'm done dancing with them, they are facing the correct direction with the correct hand free. I use hand gestures and pointing to make it clear what they are doing next. Words generally require too much mental processing and terms that are unfamiliar.

Most importantly, I SMILE!!! I praise them on doing well! I let them know that I'm having fun dancing with them! It lets them relax and enjoy themselves, too. They'll be more likely to come back because they felt welcomed.

Parting thoughts:

One of the most important lessons that I have learned as a dancer is to tailor how I dance to each person I interact with. Some people give too much weight, some none at all. Some want to swing fast and twirl like mad, some get dizzy and don't want to swing at all. Everyone is at a different stage of learning how to dance and has different

preferences for how they like to dance. The more you can adapt your dancing style to the needs of your partners and neighbors, the more people will enjoy dancing with you and seek you out. And the more fun you'll have! It just happens that it's especially important to adjust your dancing with beginners. The same is true of teaching dance. The above technique is only a guideline and you might have to adjust it to how quickly or slowly the person is learning, or to that person's learning style. Some learn by doing, some by watching and some through being told. Tailor your teaching based on what works for the student, not your own preferences.

So relax, smile and ask a beginner to dance! Offer praise and welcome. I have made some great friends because I danced with them while they were still learning. Don't miss out on the fun!

Chris Weiler is a dancer, caller and list moderator for the Boston Area Contra Community [BACC] discussion group, living in Goffstown, NH



Big Morris.

by Laurel Swift

Where did it all start? Well, assuming that nothing has an absolute beginning or end, I shall tell you where it started for me. My parents are both Morris dancers so I was carted around festivals and the like from day zero. Aged ten, I was allowed to “dance out” for the first time as the team would have been one person short of a set otherwise! Fast forward fifteen years and my Mum and I are having an animated debate about how to get a major festival to be able to take morris as seriously as it takes its main stage artists. Fast forward ten months to 7am on an August morning where 13 bleary-eyed twenty-somethings plus 8 equally coffee-starved musicians are standing in a park in East Devon looking at the dewy hulk of Sidmouth International Festival's Arena Theatre stage.

This is a brand new venture (in choreography for me; in playing for morris for most of the musicians; and in dancing anything other than straight morris for all the dancers) and we're a smidgen under-rehearsed to say the least. We've had three all-day rehearsals over the last 4 months (of which

the whole company was present for no more than 3 hours) and spent 4-5 hours of last night sweating our way through the less-than-final details. We've got the stage to ourselves for two hours before another 150 dancers descend to top and tail “Flame”, the massive realisation of that heated discussion the previous autumn. Flame will involve around ten different groups and is to be an exploration of where morris came from and where it might go next. Other spectacular commissions for the event include Black Swan Rapper's dance with flaming swords and Berkshire Bedlam's recreation of the Matachin dance. My part in Flame is a commission to write two ten-minute dances exploring the potential of Cotswold Morris on a big stage. With only 10 hours to go and no rehearsal time left we're all truly terrified.

So that was the starting point with “Big Morris” — a commission for the 2003 Sidmouth International Festival in Sidmouth, England. The festival directors were incredibly supportive and as a result the Arts Council, the PRS Foundation for New Music and English Folk Dance & Song Society all contributed funds, meaning we could work with the best musicians, buy costumes and film the results. The questions I asked were: Can the intimate, subtle details of Cotswold Morris ever work on a large stage? How can the interaction and bond between dancers within the set be translated to something that is portrayed to the audience outside? How would it be if everyone in that 5000-seater arena could feel the excitement and power that you get when watching morris up close? In addition I order two giant puppets and asked how would morris change if we had giant beasts as huge and as beautifully crafted as those of Eastern or African cultures?

Working in partnership with Rob Harbron and Chris Wood, musicians from the English Acoustic Collective, I began to consider some answers and write the dances. There was a strict boundary in my head and nobody would be dancing anything that “wasn't morris”. Whether all the spectators agreed with my definition is an ongoing topic! I sourced every decent young dancer I could find and they were all brilliant. There were plenty of glitches along the way (such as turning up to first rehearsal with well planned choreography but no idea what steps we'd be dancing!) but it was great fun.

Apparently the buzz radiating from the dancers that first night was simply electrifying. It was

certainly a high to rival any other! It's anyone's guess whether we ever achieved the original aims; however the audience loved it and the group of outstanding individuals became a team the moment we walked off stage. Morris Offspring has gone on to develop two full-length shows, commissioning more new music, costumes and dances along the way. We've toured arts centres and festivals and appeared on national television and radio. Apparently several teams describing themselves as "mediocre" have been inspired to "raise their game" and improve their own performances as a result. Not only that but we've reached out to both the general public and the "serious arts world" and changed a good few people's minds about the huge artistic value of traditional dance.

Morris Offspring is a fantastic thing to be part of, whether rehearsing or performing and has offered me many opportunities to build on the ideas that founded it. I am delighted to be returning to Pinewoods this summer to try out some more ideas and lead classes, including "Big Morris" at July 4th Weekend.

Labor Day Weekend at Pinewoods

September 5–8, 2009, Saturday–Tuesday
Pinewoods Camp, Plymouth, Massachusetts

Labor Day Weekend is chance to visit (or revisit) all the joys Pinewoods Camp has to offer: American, English country, international music and dance workshops, Morris and ritual dance classes, family and children's programming, evening dance parties, and various staff and camper-led activities amid the lovely pine forests.

American and English dance callers are Linda Leslie and Marci Van Cleve. Musicians include Vince O'Donnell, Ken Allen, Susan Janssen, Eric Buddington, Eric Martin, Tony Pisano. Folk Arts Center of New England will run international dance and music workshops.

Camper fees include all activities, all meals from Saturday supper through Tuesday breakfast, and three nights' lodging in rustic but comfortable cabins and cottages on the camp's wooded hills and shores. Campers dance in open-sided pavilions under the trees, and enjoy the waterfront on two clear ponds.

More information on Labor Day Weekend, or an application go to the CDS Boston website www.cds-bosgon.org/camp.html or contact Janet Scudder at 617/926-1708.

Labor Day Weekend for Teens

by Alice Fristrom

Labor Day Weekend makes Pinewoods kind of like a second home to me. It's where I get to see friends that I don't usually see and make new ones. The food is always great and everything else is just incredible.

I've been going since I was 2 and I'm 13 now. I suppose Labor Day Weekend was the place I really learned how to dance, though the evening dances used to be too late for me to go to, just going and leaving at the break was still great. I always tell my friends at school that contra dancing is the REAL dancing. Some of the evening dances at Pinewoods have a fun spin to them too, like the theme dance, that you can wear a costume to.

The workshops are very interesting. There's a billboard in front of the Dining Hall with some and then anyone can put a workshop (within reason) on the grid. The workshops can be in any of the buildings, cabins, or on one of the dancing floors (like C#). At the end of the weekend there's the Mad Hatters Tea Party, where the workshops can show off what they've done (like Morris, or sword dancing, or a play, or music). The show also includes people who might want to do something and just signed up beforehand.

Of course everyone has a job or chore. You sign up and write which job you'd like. Some jobs involve a whole group of people, like setting up the Dining Hall, or clearing after dinner, or you can sweep or do other things.

Summer Jobs Available At Pinewoods Camp

We are looking for full-time and volunteer crew for 2009. Possible openings: Assistant Cooks, Office Manager, Kitchen & Grounds Crew. Full-time crew candidates need to be available from June 3 through Labor Day.

Volunteers need to be available for at least 3-4 weeks of work. Crew members live at camp and participate in the dance and music programs offered. For more information and an application contact: Judy Savage, Executive Director, Pinewoods Camp 80 Cornish Field Rd., Plymouth, MA 02360. manager@pinewoods.org
Tel. 508-224-4858

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The desires of the heart are as crooked as corkscrews,
Not to be born is the best for man;
The second-best is a formal order,
The dance's pattern; dance while you can.
Dance, dance, for the figure is easy,
The tune is catching and will not stop;
Dance till the stars come down from the rafters;
Dance, dance, dance till you drop.
-- Death's Echo, W. H. Auden

CDS Boston Centre Meetings

All meetings are open, and members are welcome. Please ask a committee member or officer for date, time, and place—or call the office.

Boston Centre's website:
www.cds-boston.org
Office telephone:
(781) 662-6710

Communicating with the Board

If you are planning an event or some other matter requiring consideration by the CDS Boston Centre Board, please send a brief summary to:

president@cds-boston.org
or by mail to the address in the above left corner

To Contact the Editor

If you are planning an event, write it up! Send articles or announcements by e-mail to

editor@cds-boston.org

Next newsletter deadline
April 24, 2009