

DANCE

Star

SPRING 1991

Newsletter of the Santa Barbara
Country Dance Society

Hands ~~Four~~

One!

Your attention please!
Something's about to happen
that you should know about.

The Santa Barbara Dance community may be losing three of its most valuable players and this will have major consequences on the future of Santa Barbara Country Dance Society.

SBCDS has been growing stronger and stronger for over 12 years and for all of that time Carl Magagnosc has been a motivated, dedicated, indispensable caller, musician and founding member of the Board of Directors. Autumn Brook, who for six years has tirelessly given her time and energy to the goings on of SBCDS and still manages to show up at every dance with the biggest, friendliest smile anyone could hope to see. Together they work with the volunteer groups and takes care of all those nit picky little things that nobody wants to do but must get done.

Also, a couple of years ago Autumn and Carl somehow found the time to fall in love and have a wonderful contra wedding.

For more than eight years Erik Hoffman has made our dance community his life. He has dedicated countless hours to calling, playing

and organizing music and dance events all over the central coast.

These three helped to build Santa Barbara into one of the largest, most respected dance communities on the West Coast, and I am sad to have to be the one telling you this but, sometime during the next year we are most likely losing all three of these extraordinary people.

With there parting our dance community will suffer a great loss, yet we must wish them well because they are off, off to exciting new frontiers.

Erik is going to the East Coast to pursue a career in folk music, singing and playing in dance halls and cafes. Living the dream, he's going to be the dream. Santa Barbara's folk scene will never be the same; New York's folk scene will improve, and he will be surely missed.

We also wish the best to Carl and Autumn, for they are going where it's fresh and clean, far from the ever more crowded urban jungle, to where the air is clear and the mind runs free (hey, I wonder if they've thought about Ojai?) – the Southwest is calling them.

These three have loved Santa Barbara and Santa Barbara has

Irish Ceilís

As you may already know, our dances are happening every first and third Sunday of the month. I'd like to tell you of another happening on the second and fourth Sundays. Upstairs in Rusty's Pizza on the corner of Carrillo and Bath are Irish Ceilís (kay-leees). These are social gatherings that include music, dance, and song.

These parties are fun. One moment a person will stand and sing an a capella song. Next the musicians take off into a fast tune. Then someone will ask for a jig, and do an Irish stepdance. Or the local Irish dance teacher will prompt an Irish set dance for dancers. Others just come to watch, listen, talk, and hang out with friends.

There is a spirit that glows here, the music, song, and dance lift those who come with a wonderful community soul. Check it out.

— Erik Hoffman



Dances with Eyes



When I told Shane that I'd write another piece for the newsletter, the implicit contract was that it have to do with dancing. But I found myself writing something different:

I was trying to be cool about the whole affair. We were talking about normal everyday stuff. The one thing I didn't want to do was get caught up in this romance thing. You know, take it slow. I mean if I'd wanted to get involved why go to Hector's? But the food was great, and cheap, and the Bohemia was kicking in. And she kept looking me straight in the eye. Dammit if it wasn't happening again. Goo-goo eyes. Boundaries were melting... I looked away... The cook's voice impinged on my consciousness. The child in the next booth was crying. I glanced again in my friend's direction. Whew! Back to normal reality.

Ah, eye contact, still the focal point of my contradance experience. Yes, I would write about eye contact, but I was stuck, pacing in agitation. I decided to

take a break, maybe a swim or a soak in the jacuzzi.

At the spa I was floating in warm suspension, when the clank of metal signaled I was no longer alone. A father stood behind his young son, I'd guess he was no more than 18 months old, approaching me with the staggering gate of a miniature linebacker. He came to an unsure halt, gazing in my direction. I detect-

*Eye contact,
still the
focal point*

ed no expression. No social mechanisms were at work. No smile. No sense of acknowledgement. No looking away, and no excuses. Only looking.

Suddenly the child was airborne. "He's not too good at making decisions," his father's voice jarringly dissonant with the moment. My reverie dispelled, I moved to the pool, forgetting the incident. Later, I returned home to write:

It's a rare Friday night dance. I am down. Something about facing the reality of my existence. I gather hugs from trusted friends. Bettine takes me to the dance floor. After one dance, I ask her for a second. Grounded now, I venture out. Soon I am dancing with one of my favorite dance partners, a woman I barely know, yet with whom I have twirled in flights of ineffable

ecstasy. I see my partner's face and know that I cannot hide. I breathe, resisting the temptation to look away. And I stay with her eyes. I see and I am seen. My body is a vessel for inexplicable currents, emotions long-quelled, perhaps since childhood...

As I write, the child's image returns to memory with the phrase: "emotions long-quelled, perhaps since childhood." At what age do we stop making eye-contact? At what age do we enter the unspoken conspiracy to not see or be seen by others? I fantasize that the child at the pool still had not left the Eden of innocence. Implicit sanctions of shame and embarrassment, operating under the guise of propriety, had not yet begun to operate.

I believe that eye contact can be frightening. It can bring us to the dark mirror of our souls or take us to spiritual heights so bright that we must avert our eyes. Contradance does this in ritual space, and therein lies its safety. I twirl my partner in perfect balance, endorphins abuzz. I am fully present, locked in another's eyes, and I am able to do this precisely because I know that the dance itself will intervene. We must break, and in the certainty of this finitude, an infinity is born.

I think the power of eye contact goes way beyond goo-goo eyes. In fact, romance itself might be a way of damping down its power, of reducing it to more man-





Harvest Moon Still Shines

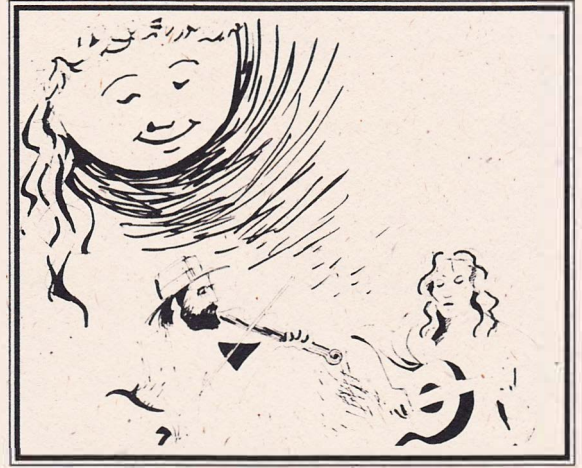
Well, Harvest Moon has come and gone and as you may already know it was a wonderful success. But two days before it was about to start we were a bit nervous! We had a full day of rain and the weatherman was saying that it was going to rain on our parade, so instead of renaming our event "The Splish Splash Dance Bash", a busy day was spent trying to search up an alternate indoor location.

Without much luck and time drawing near we opted to trust in the moon gods love of dancing and with the addition of a plastic cover for the band stand we jumped in feet first and never looked back. Fate was with us – everything went splendidly, with only a few scattered refreshing showers and many hours of superb music and dancing.

Bob Dalsemar brought his own patented blend of contras, singing squares and

genuinely good humor to tickle and delight every heel and toe within ear shot. All this grand calling was elevated to even greater heights from the masterful musical magic of Jay Ungar, Molly Mason and Monica Strauss Toland playing hours and hours of the best folk music ever to grace the Oak Park stage. Now mix this all up with tasty pot lucks, stylish strutting, half-the-night hot tubbin' music jams and you can start to imagine the kind of fun we all had dancing the weekend away under the moon, stars, oaks, sycamores, rain clouds and bright sunshine!

Sunday afternoon, with the sun shining through the trees and the breeze gently ruffling the Oak Park big top high above our heads, we all stretched out on blankets, cushions and laps, closed our eyes and feasted our ears on a delightful medley of tunes graciously performed by Jay, Molly and



Harvest Moon drawings by Deb Schoenfelder



Monica. As an added bonus, Monica's husband, Will, treated us all with his impromptu authentic soft shoe clogging skills which was like the Pied Piper to all the closet cloggers in the audience – before you could say Ozark Mountain Dare Devils we had a whole stage full of smiling cloggers strutting their stuff.

Finally, Jay wrapped it all up with his haunting, melodious composition, "Ashokon Farewell," the theme from the recent PBS Civil War television series. All in all, one of those very special weekends that you just never, ever forget.

— Shane Butler

Dancer's Rights

Why do you come contra dancing? This question asked of ten people would get ten answers. All of us come for our own private reasons: social, singles, exercise, fun, you name it. We also come with varying ability.

Looking along dance lines I often see people from 8 to 80 at various stations along the lines. When talking to friends attending I find some in the peak of health while others may be on a blood pressure medicine that fogs the mind into occasional forgetfulness. All are welcome and encouraged to participate. It is for this reason that I advocate Dancer's Rights.

There are those who like to put in an extra twirl whenever possible, or swing to the death, no matter who they are dancing with. It is great when two of these dancers meet: the energy lifts their dancing into ethereal realms. Then there are others who find this activity disorienting and not fun. Worse, these people might feel like they can't keep up and may think they are doing something wrong. By recognizing Dancer's Rights, and learning when to demonstrate restraint, dancing can be fun for all involved.

So what are Dancer's Rights?

- The right to slow a swing
- The right to not be twirled.
- The right to be on time for the next figure.

Slow swing? Where's the fun in that? Well, I certainly have fun in fast energetic swings. But, as said before, who knows what state we are in when we come to a dance? Some people are on medication that makes overly vigorous swings nauseating. Other people are new to the

dance and still get dizzy and disoriented. Swift swings take practice. So, swift swings are most fun when both swingers want them. Those who don't have a right to slow down.

Dance etiquette states it is the woman (follower) who decides to be twirled or not, and how many times to twirl. There are many men (leader role) who like to crank the

*For some, fun is
the roller-coaster
thrill of high
octane swings*

followers around without discretion. At times they catch followers unaware, and leave them spinning off into the ozone. This is not fun for the followers. Followers should know that they can decide not to twirl at anytime.

There are at least a couple ways to do this. One is to hold your hands down when a leader tries to lift it. If, though, you are caught unaware, another is to just let your hand and arm go limp. This may yield glares from leaders unaware, but it is your right to not be twirled, so don't let it trouble you.

Being on time. Often attempts at embellishing a figure or carrying out antics without discretion can leave dancers facing the wrong direction at the wrong time. Though we all make occasional mistakes, when it's chronic it diminishes the fun for oth-

ers in the set. Contra dancing is set to the phrase of the music: learn to feel this phrase, and enjoy the elegance of executing the figures in time to the music, no matter how you embellish the flow.

All of this is about fun. Fun is the primary reason we come to dances. For some, fun is the roller-coaster thrill of high octane swings and twirls. The expectation of this kind of fun leads to disappointment when encountering people who can't or won't engage in this style of dancing. For others it is the sense of cooperation and enjoyment of the wide variety of differences of people who come to dance that creates their sense of pleasure. A good dancer makes it fun for all with whom they dance.

Look at your dancing style: does it diminish the fun for others? When you embellish a figure, does it put you and your partner where you need to be when you need to be there? Does it leave people smiling and encouraged to dance more?

Our dances are designed to include all who want to join in and have fun. Let's celebrate that so many different people can come together in the spirit of dance.

— Erik Hoffman

Honor Roll

SBCDS would like to formally thank and show our appreciation to those people in the community who have gone out of their way to make our dances more enjoyable and help with the behind the scene operations go a little smoother:

For helping with the making and displaying of the beautiful decorations for Halloween and/or Christmas Dances, thank you:

Candice Stewart
Lily Bastug
Milli Lefevre
Jeff Alford
Barbara Meyer
Jean Olsèn
Pam Carey
Bob Hamber

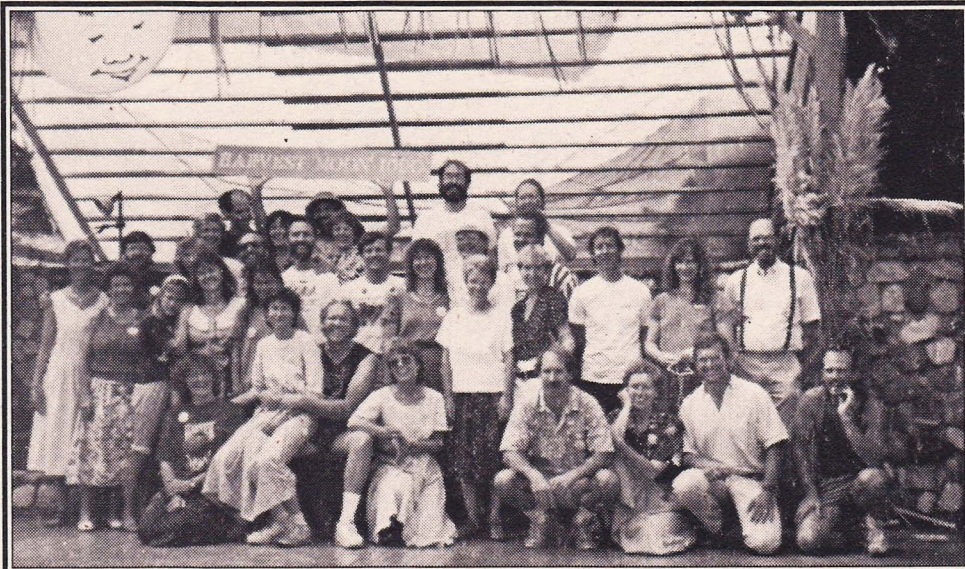
For working on the computer with the hundreds of names on the roster, thank you Paul Hartloff.

For the general organization of all of our regularly scheduled dances, thank you Mike Kline.

And, last but not least, the dance coordinators each week devote their time to managing an evening's dance:

Rich Scholl
Lloyd Simms
Ann Paff
Cara Moore
Pam Carey
Jo Wamser
Jan Leavit
Al Slatick
Tim Anderson
Debbie Feltman

Thanks a lot to the lot of ya!



1990 Harvest Moon volunteers line up on their well-worn feet for a final, richly-deserved self-portrait – photo by Jungle Payne.

Hands Four, from page 1

loved them but it's time for change. Hearts will be hurting and tears will come but their memories will linger on for they are the foundation of what we have today and without them we might not have a SBCDS.

But then, this is all tentative. Maybe none of this will happen and if it does it won't be right away; it may take until the end of the year. As you receive this newsletter, Erik is in New York checking out the folk scene, testing the waters and lining up a few gigs, then he'll be back in Santa Barbara. So, when you see him in February wish him luck and ask what's up. In the Spring, Carl and Autumn will be taking their exploratory trip so there's still opportunity to be with these warm friends before it's time to say goodbye.

Yet, when they are gone what are we going to do? How will the SBCDS Board manage without its backbone? We are going to need help. We need community support or else we'll have to hire about ten people to do what three have done for free

for so many years. You can do it, you can be a part of what makes us grow. You can be a member of the SBCDS Board of Directors. You can make it all happen. This is your dance community and it needs you

Do you care about the future? Do you want to see things change? Or do you like everything as it is? Please join with us and make the future happen. If this sounds interesting then we want to talk to you soon. Come to our next meeting (first Monday of every month) and be a part of tomorrow.

I'm not looking forward to dancing without these wonderful folks: Autumn's smile and energy, and even her sweaty hands! Erik's humor, buoyancy and his Egyptian squares. Carl's piano playing, dedication and who's not going to miss his "Salty Dog Rag"!

I've mentioned but a small portion of what makes these people so special. They will be missed – and loved – for a long time.

— Shane Butler

Want Ads

STORAGE: We're looking for someone who has some extra space in a garage to store SBCDS supplies. Call Carl at 964-0442.

MUSICIANS AND BANDS: Can you play an instrument and want to play in or start a band? Call Erik Hoffman at 969-9777.

VIDEO CAMERA: It would be great if there was someone in the dance community who has a video unit and would like to film various events at SBCDS' expense. Call Shane at 683-1308.

CALLERS: Have you ever wanted to try calling or are you already a caller and would like to perform in Santa Barbara? Call Erik at 969-9777.

Dances with Eyes, from page 2

ageable, more familiar terms. Contradance is an earthly delight, yes. But, at its best, like no other such delight I know, it provides a context which occasionally, miraculously, allows us, with the complicity of another human being, direct access to the Transcendent Source. And while this experience must be shared with another person, it is entirely transpersonal; one need not know one's partner.

Well, I suppose you all knew this anyway. Or maybe I'm just full of it. In any event, you'll hear no more from me on the matter. But I do think the ritual in which we engage is one adult path back to the Eden from which we were whisked as children. One thing is clear. Us dancers are a wholesome bunch – openly meeting to get secretly high every other Sunday night – and on city property, no less.

— John Pickerill

This special edition of the SBCDS Dance Star was edited by Shane Butler, with graphic design and production by Jungle Payne. Contributors include Erik Hoffman, John Pickerill, and Deb Schoenfelder.

For a one year subscription to the Dance Star, send six dollars to SBCDS, P.O. Box 21904, Santa Barbara, CA 93121.

We would also appreciate your comments – about the newsletter, about the dances, about SBCDS – and would love to publish your poems, articles or art work. So feel free to send us your best dance-inspired creations.



PO Box 21904
Santa Barbara, CA
93121

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Old Time Barn Dance Calendar

The Santa Barbara County Dance Society, PO box 21904, Santa Barbara, CA, 93121, (805) 969-1511

Come dance on the finest dance floor in the West at the Carrillo Ballroom or under the stars at Oak Park. Join the fun! Dance to the irresistible rhythms of a live old-time string band. We'll do the flowing contra dances of New England, the colorful square dances of the Old West, plus a few old-time couple dances such as waltzes & polkas.

Beginners' Workshop

There is a beginners' class before each weekend dance! Come a half-hour early to learn the basic moves. No prior experience is necessary as all dances are taught and prompted. Wear comfortable clothes. Generally dances become more challenging as the evening progresses.

Location Key

- CB: Carrillo Ballroom, 100 East Carrillo Street, Santa Barbara. Co-sponsored by the Santa Barbara Parks & Recreation.
- OP: Oak Park dance platform, Junipero at Calle Real, Santa Barbara.
- CP: Carpinteria Main School. 8th St. & Palm Ave., Carpinteria.
- VT: Santa Barbara Vet's Hall, 112 W. Cabrillo, (on the beach!), Santa Barbara

Phone

For the latest dance information call: (805) 969-1511.

Sat. Feb 23 VT
Erik Hoffman and the J & T Fiddle Band host the second evening of advanced Contras. 7 - 10. No intro. \$5.

Sun. Mar 3 CB
Join Erik Hoffman and the Growling Old Geezers as we wish Farewell to the Geezers' guitar player, Chris Floyd. 7 - 10. Intro: 6:30. \$5

Sun. Mar 17 CB
Carl Magagnosc and the J & T Fiddle Band join forces for a St. Patrick's Jamboree. 7 - 10. Intro: 6:30. \$5.

Fri. Mar 22 CP
Carl Magagnosc with Michael

Mendelson & Friends. 7:30 - 10:30. Intro: 7. \$5.

Fri. Mar 29 OP
From LA, Susan Michaels and Turtle Creek. 7 - 10. Intro: 6:30. \$5.

Sun. Apr 7 CB
Join the Tecolote Tune Twistes and a host of callers for our annual Spring Potluck. Chuck Galt, Cara Moore, and Kathy Fanning-Tingos will share the calling. Potluck: 5:30, \$1. Dance: 7 - 10, \$5. Intro: 6:30.

Sun. Apr 21 CB
Erik Hoffman and Kitchen Junket host the evening. 7 - 10. Intro: 6:30. \$5.

Fri. Apr 26 CP
Cara Moore and Kathy Fanning-Tingos share the calling. Music by Carrick. 7:30 - 10:30. Intro: 7. \$5.

Sat. Apr 27 VT
Drew Tronvig and the Tecolote Tune Twisters for an evening of Advanced Contras. 7 - 10. No intro. \$5.

Sun. May 5 CB
Carl Magagnosc and Kitchen Junket. 7 - 10. Intro: 6:30. \$5.

Sun. May 19 CB
From LA, James Hutson along with O'Ryan's Belt. 7 - 10. Intro: 6:30. \$5.

Memorial Weekend Fest!

Fri. May 24 CP
Carl Magagnosc and the Fabulous Hillbillies from Mars! 7:30 - 10:30. Intro: 7. \$6

Sat. May 25 OP
Erik Hoffman and those Hillbillies from Mars. 7 - 10. Intro: 6:30. \$6.

Sun. May 26 CB
Our Second Annual *Spring Sprung Floor Dance Festival*. Join a cornucopia of California callers and bands for dancing from Noon to Midnight!

Sunday only: \$20.

Sat. eve and Sun. \$25.

All three weekend dances: \$30.

Other Areas

Ojai Art Center:

Saturday March 30 & Saturday April 20. At the Art Center on Montgomery St. just off Ojai Ave, Ojai. 7:30 - 10:30. Intro: 7. \$5.

San Luis Obispo:

Second Saturdays: March 9, April 13, & May 11. San Luis Grange, 2880 So. Broad St. 8 - 11. Intro: 7:30. \$5

The May 11 dance features Ralph Blizzard's incredible fiddle and the calling of Drew Tronvig.

Irish Ceili's (Kay-lees):

Every second and fourth Sunday evenings, the Rusty's Pizza on the corner of Carrillo and Bath Streets hosts Irish Ceili's. These are Irish parties featuring music jams, singing, and both solo and set dancing in a highly social spirit of fun. Free!

Join the Santa Barbara Country Dance Society. Members of the Santa Barbara Country Dance Society receive a \$1 discount at all regular dances. Members also receive the *Dance Star*, our quarterly newsletter. Membership is annual, from June 1 - May 31. To join, simply send a check for \$18, name, and address to:

SBCDS
PO Box 21904
Santa Barbara, CA 93121.

If you just want a subscription to *Dance Star*, a years subscription may be had for \$6.

Memorial Day Weekend, Santa Barbara Country Dance Society is proud to announce the second annual:

Spring Sprung Floor Dance Festival!

Our Festival features a cornucopia of Californian dance callers and bands with Special Guests, **The Hillbillies from Mars!**

Friday, May 24, The Hillbillies are joined by Carl Magagnosc at the Carpinteria Main School, 8th and Palm, in Carpinteria. Dance from 7:30 - 10:30, with an intro at 7. \$6.

Saturday, May 25, Erik Hoffman joins forces with the Hillbillies outside at Oak Park in Santa Barbara. It goes from 7 - 10, with an intro at 6:30. \$6.

Sunday, May 26, Non stop dancing from Noon to Midnight, with a host of callers and bands from Santa Barbara and around the state. \$20.



P.O. Box 21904
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93121

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