

Santa Barbara Country Dance Society

Windows on Dance Choreography

In addition to my primary interest in life -- contra dancing -- I maintain a secondary interest in computers, which occupies me for 40 to 60 hours per week. So naturally I was interested when Erik Hoffman proposed the idea of a computer program which dance callers could use to design dances. (Practical or not, it sure sounded like a lot more fun than working on something that would pay.) And over this past Christmas holiday I created an initial version of such a program, dubbed "Contra Caller."

Contra Caller runs on IBM PCs under the Microsoft Windows 3.0 environment. The screen display shows a dance list ("dance card") and half a dozen couples. People are seen from the top, showing facings and arm positions (two important considerations in designing dances).

To use the program, you construct a dance by choosing figures from a menu. You can then make the little figures dance the dance, a step at a time, a figure at a time, or through the entire dance continuously. The screen is redrawn once per step (i.e., eight times per figure), providing crude animation. By a happy coincidence, the speed is such that the dancers seem to be moving in realistic dance time. However, there is NO support for sound boards playing old time string band music ... maybe in a future version.

The figures Contra Caller currently knows about are circle, star, long lines forward & back, down the hall, allemande, do si do, swing, gypsy, and balance. (The holiday ended before I got to ladies' chain or right-and-left-through.)

There is no simulation of dancer errors -- the dancers all do what they're told to -- but I'm sure the program has enough bugs to re-create quite a lot of dancer confusion in complex maneuvers.

Would Contra Caller actually be easier than what callers now do, which is to use coins or work out the moves on paper? I doubt it -- but it was a heck of a lot of fun to create, and might be fun to play around with. I started it as an exercise to learn more about Windows programming, and found out that I learned at least as much about contra dancing ("so that's how that move works...") as about Windows.

Of course Contra Caller certainly cannot capture all the wonderful variety of figures and patterns, nor the energy, grace, and personal expression of individual dancers; the elements which enthrall us while we dance, and which keep us coming back again, and again, and again.

Much is needed to be done to make Contra Caller a workable program, but I am interested in ideas and feedback. If you have an interest in these types of things, please drop me a line care of SBCDS.

Jonathan Southard

Coming Events

Cammy Kaynor, Wed March 11

March 11, the Second Wednesday English Country Dance will be visited by that madman from Massachusetts, Cammy Kaynor. Cammy will lead us through history while fiddling, prompting, and dancing, all at the same time! Cammy is known widely as an innovative and zany caller and dance composer, as well as one of the fiddlers in the Fourgone Conclusions, a well known contra dance band. So come enjoy the joys of English country dance with Cammy and local musicians.

Laura Me Smith, Sun May 3

Then May 3, the First Sunday Contra, sees the return of Seattle's Hot Caller, Laura Me Smith. Craig Johnson says Laura Me is the best caller on the west coast. So come and enjoy Laura Me as she graces the ballroom with her blend of humor and fanciful dances. Joining Laura Me will be those purveyors of hot southern string band music, The Growling Old Geezers. Don't miss it!

Third Annual Sprung ~~Floor Fever~~ Floor Memorial Day Weekend, May 22 - 24

Sprung Floor is here again; Memorial Day Weekend, May 22 - 24, is a weekend of dance and fun.

On Friday, both Ojai and the new Pismo Beach dance series will hold dances. The Ojai dance will feature the calling of Wayne Battleson, while a jaunt up the coast to Pismo will let you dance to the calling of Erik Hoffman.

Thenn Saturday, the festivities start at 2, with open mike calling and open band music. Come play, call and dance.

The informal dance is followed at 5:30 by a pot-luck. Bring your favorite dish and share food with friends, old & new. Day-light savings is in full swing, and the beauty of Oark Park serves as an excellent backdrop for dancing, food, and friendship.

Saturday Evening, it's Carl Magagnosc calling the dances and Turtle Creek playing the tunes. Enjoy high energy dances as the sun sets and the stars come out.

The Sunday dance goes from Noon to Midnight, and features callers, Kathy Fanning, Erik Hoffman, Ruth Lowengart, Carl Magagnosc, Susan Michaels, Cara Moore, & Drew Tronvig. Providing the music will be the Growling Old Geezers, Kitchen Junket, the Tecolote Tune Twisters, & Turtle Creek.

In the smaller hall there will be Ruth & Lynn's famous Hambo Workshop, Carl teaching zweifachers, English Country dancing, and perhaps more. There will be jam sessions, a pot-luck or go out dinner break, and lots of good fun. See you there!

SUMMER CAMP MADNESS

Summer is coming soon, and it's time to plan for dance camp! There are lots of great camps, on both of the coasts providing lots of opportunities to dance the night and day away

The first of the west coast events is Camp Alta Sierra. This year will be the first week-long camp leading the rest from June 13 - 20. High in the Sierras near Kings Canyon, Alta Sierra boasts of beautiful mountains, a small private lake, and of course, great dancing.

The Bay Area sponsors dance camps held at the Mendocino Woodlands Camp. This year they are putting on two week long camps, English & American Adult Week, July 13 - 20, and Family Week, July 25 - August 1. Adult Week has given many dancers great memories of after-hours waltzing, and crazy antics, along with great dancing.

Family Week is new this year. Family camp, with a wide variety of dance and activities scheduled for adults and children as well, promises to be an opportunity to broaden your experience with children and friends, be they your own, or others.

The mail order music store, Lark in the Morning, puts on a gala music and dance camp at the Woodlands too. This is an intense experience where hundreds of folk musicians and dancers take to the woods. There are classes in every possible folk instrument you can imagine and more. Dance teachers cover contra, square, Irish, English, International, traditional Californian, French, and more. The music is non stop, 24 hours. It's an eye-opening and enriching experience to be around such a wide variety of music and dance.

Farther north, the Spokane Folklore Society puts on Lady of the Lake, on Lake Coeur d'Alene, on the western border of Idaho. This year SFS is putting on their regular adult week June 21 - 27, as well as their first family week, August 16 - 22.

The east coast hosts many camps. If you can travel there's something going on every week of the summer, including the grand-daddy of them all, Pinewoods. Pinewoods is the camp put on by the Country Dance & Song Society, and has been doing it longer than anywhere.

If a week is too long, weekend festivals

abound too.

There is KCBX's Live Oak Music Festival, this year on Father's Day Weekend, June 19 - 21. It's a camp-out right over the hill near Lake Cachuma. Lots of great music and some dancing.

Then June 26 - 28, it's the Solstice Festival. At the beautiful Soka University, in Agoura, this festival has non-stop dancing Friday evening and 10 - 6 on Saturday and Sunday on three dance floors: American, International, and Celtic.

Even though there is non-stop dancing, the Solstice Festival is primarily a participatory music festival, with classes and concerts on every acoustic instrument known to people (almost!).

Labor Day it's back to Alta Sierra for a holiday weekend of music and dance.

September brings Harvest Moon. This year the dates are September 18 - 20, and the staff includes caller extraordinaire Kathy Anderson, and tunes are provided by wizards of music, the Panel of Experts (Peter Barnes, piano; Mary Lea, fiddle; & Sam Barlett, mandolin & guitar).

If you miss Kathy, Mary & Sam, hop up to 6,500 ft at Echo Summit Dance Camp and join them again for a gala affair the following weekend, September 25 - 27.

So, make your plans. If you want to find out more, leave a message on the hot-line and someone will get back to you with information. See you dancing!

Erik Hoffman

Why Dance?

What makes you keep coming back to the dance? If you have a story or an idea, will you send it to me, or tell me? I am planning an article or issue on why we dance.

Send articles or ideas to me, care of SBCDS, Box 21904, SB CA 93121, or call me at 969-977.

Thanks!

Erik Hoffman

Spring 1992

Old-Time Contra Dance Calendar

The Santa Barbara Country 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 contras of New England, the colorful square dances of the Old West, plus a few old-time couple dances such as waltzes and polkas.

Introductory Workshop

There is an introductory workshop before each regular 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, SB.
Co-sponsored by the Santa Barbara Parks & Recreation.
R3: Room 3, Upstairs, 100 East Carrillo Street.
CP: Carpinteria Community Church, 1111 Vallecito, Carp. Off Carp. Ave., towards 101 between Linden Ave. and Casitas Pass Rd.
OP: Oak Park Dance Platform, on Junipero at Calle Real.

Phone

For the latest dance information call the SBCDS 24 hour dance hotline: (805) 969-1511

- Sun Mar 1 CB A Special First Sunday dance featuring Fiddling Frog Staff, Mike Richardson calling and Anita Andersen and Rex Blazer playing the tunes. 7 - 10, Intro: 6:30. \$6
- Wed Mar 11 R3 Massachusetts' Wild Man Cammy Kaynor leads it all at the Second Wednesday English Country Dance. Cammy prompts, plays fiddle, and dances all at the same time, come join the fun! 7 - 10. \$4.
- Sun Mar 15 CB Join Carl Magagnosc and Swing Easy for a fun filled Third Sunday Dance! 7 - 10, Intro: 6:30. \$5.
- Sat Mar 28 CP Great things happen when Drew Tronvig joins forces with The Growling Old Geezers at the Fourth Saturday Contra Dance. 7:30 - 10:30, Intro: 7. \$5.
- Sun Apr 5 CB Enjoy the calling of Kathy Fanning-Tingos while the Tecolote Tunetwisters keep you hopping at the First Sunday Contra. 7 - 10, Intro: 6:30. \$5.
- Wed Apr 8 R3 Flow with style at the Second Wednesday English Dance. Robin Brodeur again leads the dance. 7 - 10. \$4.
- Sun Apr 19 CB Our Spring Potluck is on Easter! Come share food with friends, then dance to the calling of Erik Hoffman, and the festive sounds of Kitchen Junket. Potluck: 5:30, \$1. Dance: 7 - 10, Intro: 6:30. \$5.
- Sat Apr 25 CP Cara Moore and Kathy Fanning-Tingos share the calling while Swing Easy play that swinging music at the Fourth Saturday Contra. 7:30 - 10:30, Intro: 7. \$5.
- Sun May 3 CB Hot Hot Seattle caller, Laura Mc Smith brings her inimitable style to the First Sunday Contra. She's joined by those rhythm drivers, The Growling Old Geezers for a night of incredible fun. 7 - 10, Intro: 6:30. \$6.
- Fri May 8 OP Our first outdoor of the year finds Cara Moore and Chuck Galt teaming up for calling while The Carik String Band plays the tunes. 7 - 10. Intro: 6:30. \$5.
- Wed May 13 R3 Flirt & flow with Robin Brodeur at the Second Wednesday English Dance. 7 - 10, \$4.
- Sun May 17 CB Join Erik Hoffman and O'Ryan's Belt for the Third Sunday Contra. 7 - 10, Intro: 6:30. \$5.

Third Annual Sprung Floor Dance Festival

- Fri. May 22 See Ojai & Pismo, below in other dances for dances on the way to the Sprung Floor Dance Festival.
- Sat May 23 OP Sprung Floor starts at 2 pm join with an Open Band & Open Callers afternoon of music & dance. Then Pot-luck at 5:30. Free! From 7 - 10 join Carl Magagnosc and The Turtle Creek String Band for a fun filled evening of Dancing under the stars at Oak Park. 7 - 10, Intro: 6:30. \$5. Then it's over to Rusty's Pizza for late night jamming and ??? We have the upstairs room in the Rusty's on Carrillo and Bath Streets, 232 W. Carrillo, 10 - Midnight. Free!
- Sun May 24 CB Noon to Midnight dance all day and all night (almost). Join a cornucopia of California Callers & Bands for a feast of dance and music. Contras, Squares, Jam sessions, Hambó workshops, and more! There will be a dinner break. \$20.

Other Dances in Our Vicinity:

- Ojai: Sat., Mar 7; Sat., Apr 4; & Sprung Floor Weekend, Fri., May 22. Ojai Art Center on Montgomery St., just off Ojai Ave. 7:30 - 10:30, Intro: 7 pm. \$5.
- SLO: Second Saturdays: Sat, Mar 14; Sat., Apr 11 *Special: at the Pismo Vet's Hall! (See Pismo, below, for exact location.)* Sat., May 9. SLO Grange Hall, 2880 So. Broad St., SLO. 8 - 11, Intro: 7:30. \$5. Info: (805) 544-7924.

New Series!!!

- Pismo: Fourth Fridays, Starting April 24, with a special opening dance on Second Saturday, April 11. Fourth Friday dates: Fri. Apr 24; & Sprung Floor Weekend, Fri, May 22. Pismo Beach Vets Hall, 780 Bellow Ave., Pismo Beach. 8 - 11, Intro: 7:30. \$5. Info: (805) 541-2852.

Irish Sessions: 2nd & 4th Sundays, Irish music jams, songs & dance. Upstairs at Rusty's Pizza on Carrillo & Bath. Free!

Los Angeles Area: Contra dances every weekend and every Thursday. Call their Dance Hotline: (818) 951-2003.

Join the **Santa Barbara Country Dance Society**. Members of the **Santa Barbara Country Dance Society** receive a \$1 discount at all regular dances (generally those in the main listing). Membership is \$18 per calendar year, from January 1, to December 31. The cost is pro-rated for each calendar quarter, so, from April 1 - December 31, the cost is only \$10.50. From July, \$9. And during the last quarter starting in October it's \$4.50. To join simply send a check to:

SBCDS
PO Box 21904
Santa Barbara, CA 93121

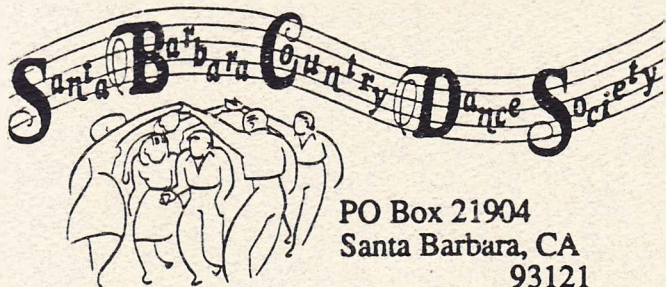
LOOKING FOR A WAY TO JOIN IN MAKING OUR DANCES HAPPEN?

SBCDS is looking for:

- Someone to greet people and help with signing in at the door at some dances.
- Someone to take and type coordinating committee minutes (this can be done with your own equipment or take advantage of training in how to use a computer's word processor.)
- Someone with a garage to store dance decorations (including the famous Harvest Moon Parachute!).

If you are one of these people, call Bob Hamber at 964-1445, or leave a message on the dance hotline, 969-1511.

Lost something??? Our lost & found is kept at the Carrillo Ballroom, ask at the front desk at one of our dances.



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93121

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You will not receive SBCDS mailings after date on label unless you sign in at a dance or notify us.