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Short in Daylight, Long in Dance

Here's some activities to warm body and soul on a cold winter's night and a few spring ones too. You'll find flyers and applications for these and other events in the lobby during a Carrillo dance, and for the real skinny, talk to people who wear those dance camp t-shirts.

Dec. 25: Our Tenth Annual Christmas Dance enters double digits with our traditional caller, native son **Erik Hoffman**, and our traditional band, **Bayou Seco (Ken Keppeler & Jeanie McLerie) & Friends** (and what friends they have!).

Dec. 31: Ojai Contra Dances celebrates



New Year's Eve at the Ojai Art Center, 8 p.m. to 1 a.m. Hearty potluck follows the midnight revelry with refreshments throughout the evening. \$10. Folk and swing dancing during the breaks. **Susan Michaels** calls to the beat of the **New Young Buzzards**. (805) 646-0832, mickelv@vcss.k12.ca.us

Dec. 31-Jan. 1: Sixth annual **New Year's Eve Dawn Dance** in the L.A. area. 8 p.m.-6 a.m., New Year's Eve to New Year's Day. \$15 includes midnight dinner. Callers include **James Hutson** and **Warren Blier**. Music by **Over the Edge**, **Hot Asphalt**, and **John Light**, **Ellen Campbell & George Lockwood**. War Memorial Hall, 435 S. Fair Oaks Ave., South Pasadena. (818) 951-8255.

Feb. 27-Mar. 1: **Fiddling Frog Dance Festival** in South Pasadena. Contras, English, Waltzes, Swing Workshops and Music Jams, \$75. Caller is **Mike Richardson**
 see STAR GAZER, next page

.....news & announcements.....

Honor Roll

As 1997 draws to a close, we pause to recognize the many dancers among us who contribute to our dance community in ways big and small. The SBCDS is a volunteer-run organization, and without these folks, to put it plainly, we wouldn't be dancing. Our thanks to (1) the people listed below, (2) those whose names were omitted or misspelled due to our own weak brain activity (sorry!), and (3) those who pitch in on the spot on a moment's notice. Be sure to show these folks your appreciation when the opportunity arises.

Joe Alecks c sb, Bernadette Bagley dr, Mary Ballard h m ml pl, Bill Bowker pl, Mi-gnon Bradley ab h t, Moira Butler g m, George Cannon e, Keith Connes ab pr, John Cookson s, Brenda Crispin R, Raymond Crispin R, Sammy Ellis ab pl, Tina Fear g, Hazel Froscher g, Dick Galway pl, Jean Galway pl, Peter Glatz b ec m p pl, Bob Hamber b, Lori Hamilton r d, Jatila Hicks g, Don Higgins ab c h m, Patricia Jessup c g, Anna Kammer pl, Donna Karpeles R, Elliott Karpeles pl ci, Michael Klein an, Jon-nie Lawhon g, David Lee c, Bob Leonard b, Jeanette Love g, Carl Magagnosc bk ml s, Tony Marzio R, Bob Mesick c, William Noack m, Jean Olson g h m, Ann Paff g m, John Redding c, Vince Semenson s, Gary Shapiro b m n w, Jonathan Southard bc, Scott Swain c, Matthew Thornley c, Jenni-fer Tom g, Joann Uhl a, Bettine Wallin b bk ins s t, Jo Wamser g, Barry White ab c m.

Codes: / a accounting & tax advice / ab attends Board meetings / a announcements / b member Board of Directors / bc band & caller booking / bk bookkeeping / C Overall dance coordinator / c dance coordination / ci city liaison / d decorations / dr dance reports / e email contact / ec special event coordination / g door greeter / h meeting host / ins insurance liaison / l legal advice / m mailing / ml mailing list / n newsletter / p post office liaison / pl pot luck / pr media liaison / R refreshments coordinator / r refreshments / s storage / sb sandwich board sign / t telephone hotline / w web site /

Oak Park Update

The Oak Park dance platform has been made smooth once more, and the Parks Department will now be repairing and

renewing it twice a year. We're looking forward to dancing there this spring and summer, beginning with the Sprung Floor Dance Festival on Memorial Day week-end.

We can also breathe a sigh of relief that the floor will be in good shape for Harvest Moon '98, featuring Wild Asparagus.

Every Sunday Update

As reported here earlier, the SBCDS Board will decide at its January meeting whether or not to continue dancing every Sunday. Some good news if the Board decides in the affirmative: We'll dance every Sunday except possibly November 8. In the summer we will relinquish the Ballroom for three Sundays and dance under the stars at Oak Park instead.

Armory, Caller's Jubilees

We'll have Caller's Jubilee dances on fifth Sundays in 1998 starting March 29.

A select group had a great time at the Caller's Jubilee held at the Armory on November 9. We're not sure why the attendance was less than usual because Caller's Jubilees have been well-attended in the past. In any case, it's a huge comfortable hall although with some acoustic challenges. It might have come in handy for some special events, but in July, 1998, it will be closed for seismic retrofit and other renovations until sometime in 2000.

SBCDS Board Meets

The SBCDS Board of Directors holds meetings about once per month and interested parties are welcome to attend. The meeting date and time is announced at the Sunday dance preceding it, or you can ask the SBCDS hotline or any board member.

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- **A FAVOR** for two friends, yourself, and the
- dance community: bring two new dancers to a
- dance (or one each to two dances) and receive
- a free dance pass. Your friends also each receive
- a pass good for their next dance evening.
-

Star Q & A

Here we print two contra dances to help answer two questions.

Q: What does a contra dance look like written out? How does it relate to the music?

A: Typical music for a typical contra dance consists of 32 bars of music, corresponding to 64 beats, or steps of the feet if you're dancing to the music. The music is arranged into an A part and a B part, like a song that has a chorus and a verse. Each part is only 16 beats, but is repeated twice, giving us $2 \times 2 \times 16 = 64$. The sequence of parts is A1, A2, B1 and B2. The whole tune in its 4-part glory is played once for each time through the dance.

Each 16-beat part is divided into 8-beat phrases and some tunes also into four 4-beat phrases. We can hear this phrasing if we're not too busy dancing to it.

A typical dance, not coincidentally, is also 64 beats long, and consists of the parts A1, A2, B1 and B2. A dance written out in a book or on a card looks something like this:

"Already Taken" by Gary Shapiro

Formation: duple improper

- A1 Long lines forward & back
Swing your neighbor
- A2 Right & Left through
Women allemande right 1-1/2 times
- B1 Balance & swing your partner
- B2 Balance the circle, circle left 1/2
Women chain

Each figure in A1 and A2 uses 8 beats. The figure in B1 consists of 4 beats for the balance and 12 beats for the swing. The figure in B2 consists of 4 beats for the balance, 4 beats for the half circle, and 8 beats for the chain. Note that the length of the figures corresponds to phrasing of the music. This helps us know when to transition from one figure to the next, even if the caller has stopped calling.

Because most dances, and the music for contra dances, is 64 beats, almost any tune in the repertoire can be used with almost any dance.

"Duple" formation means that a minor set (you, your partner and your current

neighbors) consist of two couples (hands four). Some dances (unfortunately, done rarely) are in triple formation (hands six) for three couples. "Improper" means the ones trade places with their partners when the set forms. The number one men are in the women's line and the number one women are in the men's line, hence the term "improper."

Having said all that, you don't really need to understand any of this *intellectually* to dance well.

Why Becket?

Q: When lining up for a Becket formation dance we're told to line up improper, then circle one place to the left. Frequently, the first figure in the dance is circle left 3/4, putting us right back where we started. Why bother making it a Becket dance?

A: Let's look at one example:

"Mary Cay's Reel" by David Kaynor
(printed with permission)

Formation: Becket

- A1 Circle left 3/4 & pass through
Future neighbor allemande left
- A2 Balance & swing current neighbor
- B1 Long lines forward & back
Women allemande R 3/4,
next woman allemande L 3/4
(while men slide left a little)
- B2 Balance & swing partner

Where would you start this dance as an improper dance? There is nowhere to do it without modifying the dance. You can't start with the pass through in A1 because that would have the balance & swings crossing musical phrases, which is a choreographical no-no.

To start the dance at A2, dancers would line up with the 2's crossed and not the 1's, and then progress backwards. Becket formation is much less confusing than that. In addition, the dance the way it is ends with a partner swing, and all's well that ends well.

In truth, some Becket formation dances that begin with the circle left 3/4 could be started in improper formation at a different part of the dance. However, contra dances have beginnings and ends and the choreographer has this in mind when writing a dance. Also, perhaps Becket dances have a certain mystique that puts dancers in a slightly different frame of mind.

Gary Shapiro

Star Gazer from first page

of Seattle, Music by **Reckless Abandon** (Larry Unger, Carol Hamm, Nat Newitt,



Lise Brown) from New England, and **For Old Times' Sake** (Jim Mueller, Amber Rouillard Mueller, Bruce Reid, Jerry Weinert) from Arroyo Grande, Bay Area and Tucson. (818) 785-3839, ac515@lafn.org

Mar. 13-15: Bay Area **Monte Toyon Spring Dance Weekend** in the redwoods near Santa Cruz. Contrasts, squares, English and Scottish Country dancing. Callers: **Susan Kevra, Dan Pearl and Bruce Hamilton**. Music by the **Moving Cloud Orchestra** and **Evening Star**. Applications must be postmarked by Jan. 16. (650) 326-FOOL (3665), splbndr@netcom.com.

May 15-17: **May Madness** in Prescott, Arizona, a nine-hour drive from SB, a 1-1/2 hour drive from Phoenix. Music by Seattle powerhouse **KGB**, and Boston's **Dan Pearl** calling. (520) 445-8823, wmiller@northlink.com. Register by March 15 for early bird discount.

Dance Star now available electronically

The *Dance Star*, like the very one you're looking at, can now be downloaded from the Internet in Portable Document Format (pdf). Free pdf viewers for Windows (3.1, 95 or NT), Mac OS, OS/2 and several flavors of Unix are available from Adobe Systems. Just point your web browser to <http://www.rain.org/~gshapiro/sbcds/download> and follow the instructions there. Once downloaded, you can view the newsletter on your screen and/or print out any or all pages.

To receive the *DS* this way, just let me know and I'll (1) email you as soon as each new issue is available and (2) arrange for you to stop receiving copies in the mail. Advantages: you'll get it earlier than the mailed copies, the SBCDS will save a bit on postage, you can print out as many copies as you want, possibly with better resolution than the printed (xeroxed) version, and the on-line version might have a bit of color.

Gary Shapiro
garyes@iname.com



Winter 1997-98

Santa Barbara Contra Dance Calendar

plus Ojai and San Luis Obispo listings

Calendar produced by Santa Barbara Country Dance Society • P.O. Box 21904 • Santa Barbara, CA 93121-1904 • (805) 969-1511

Come enjoy a dance to the irresistible rhythms of a live old-time string band. We'll dance flowing contras of New England, a thriving North American tradition, plus other delights. All dances are taught and prompted: no experience or partner neces-

sary. Wear comfortable clothes and shoes.

Come for the **Introductory Workshop** held 30 minutes before each dance evening. Also, generally, the simpler dances are earlier in the evening.

Santa Barbara dances are sponsored by the Santa Barbara Country Dance Society and are held from 7 to 10 p.m.

Dances at the Carrillo Ballroom, one of the best dance floors anywhere, are held every Sunday, co-sponsored by the SB Parks and Recreation Department.

Call the SBCDS Dance Hotline at any time: (805) 969-1511.

San Luis Obispo dances are sponsored by the Central Coast Country Dance Society.

Dance in SLO on the second Saturday of each month (with occasional exceptions) from 8 to 11 p.m. International folk dancing precedes at 5:30.

SLO 24-hour Danceline: (805) 541-0201.

Ojai dances are sponsored by Ojai Contra Dances and are held from 7:30 to 10:30 p.m. For more information call Ginny at (805) 646-0832.

Admission for all dances is \$6 unless otherwise noted.

Key to Dance Locations

CB	Santa Barbara Carrillo Ballroom	Carrillo Recreation Center 100 E. Carrillo St
SLO	San Luis Obispo Veteran's Hall	801 Grand Ave. East of 101, Cal Poly exit
OA	Ojai Art Center	113 S. Montgomery

DATE	LOC	CALLER • BAND • Etc.
Dec 7	Sun CB	Jeff Spero • Kitchen Junket
Dec 13	Sat SLO	Erik Hoffman • Jump Fingers
Dec 14	Sun CB	Gary Shapiro • Michael's Mixed Nuts
Dec 21	Sun CB	Jonathan Southard • Growling Old Geezers
Dec 25	Thur CB	Erik Hoffman • Bayou Seco (Ken Keppeler, Jeannie McLerie) & Friends (\$7) Our traditional Christmas Day night dance, now in its tenth year. Dancing till 10:30 p.m. is a possibility; start at the usual time.
Dec 28	Sun CB	TBA • TBA • Both band and caller come highly recommended.
Dec 31	Wed OA	Susan Michaels • New Young Buzzards (\$10) Celebrate New Year's Eve in Ojai, 8 p.m. to 1 a.m. Potluck follows the midnight revelry. During band breaks, enjoy folk and swing dancing. Refreshments provided.
Jan 4	Sun CB	Don Ward • Spin Cycle
Jan 10	Sat SLO	Susan Michaels • Growling Old Geezers
Jan 11	Sun CB	Carl Magagnosc • Chameleons
Jan 18	Sun CB	TBA • Kitchen Junket • See note for Dec. 28.
Jan 25	Sun CB	Carl Magagnosc • Sliding Scale The band consisting of Michael Mendelson, Suzie Richmond, Mike Mullins & Tom Lee gets a name, not to mention ovations.
Feb 1	Sun CB	Gary Shapiro • Hot Flashes
Feb 8	Sun CB	Jonathan Southard • Michael's Mixed Nuts
Feb 14	Sat OA	Susan Michaels ♥ Growling Old Geezers
Feb 14	Sat SLO	Erik Hoffman ♥ Hot Flashes
Feb 15	Sun CB	Carl Magagnosc ♥ Growling Old Geezers
Feb 22	Sun CB	Susan Michaels • Sliding Scale

December 1997

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7	8	9	10	11	12	13
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28	29	30	31			

January 1998

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February 1998

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
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22	23	24	25	26	27	28

..... comments & opinion

Everyone Can Dance! Or We Are Siamese If You Please

I have just re-read Gary's comments about skills and the May Madness Weekend in particular.

Several of the Santa Barbara community and "hangers-on" such as myself went to Prescott. It was well worth the expenditure, particularly as some of us tacked on extra days to see a little of Arizona.

One of the best experiences that Feathers and I had there was to dance with Charlie, a local fellow who just happens to be blind. Nobody minded helping Charlie, so why is it that some people will not help newcomers at our dances? They don't have leprosy and deserve help too. One of the local band members who played is in a wheelchair and also is quite a character. Music and dance can and should be for everyone.

A month or so ago a Spanish speaking gentleman was obviously having trouble in a set so I took it upon myself to ask him for the next dance. He was so relieved that I explained what was supposed to happen next whereas some others had treated him as if he was a little slow minded. You really don't have to speak the language as gestures will do just fine too but give the gestures a name. How would you fare if the calling was in Chinese, or Russian?

A few years ago I went to Lark in the Morning camp where there was a musician from Brazil who just stood at the side during an evening of contra and I could see her feet tapping but she said no to every invitation to dance. I remembered having danced several years ago Siamese twin style with Cara Moore. I coerced a male to the idea of dancing as a couple (threesome) with me and her. I translated the moves into Spanish which *más o menos* is similar to Portuguese. I was the right hand and she was the left and we were linked in the middle with our other arm around the other's waist. We had a wonderful time and at the end she gave me the biggest hug and effusively thanked us both in Portuguese (or at least I think she did).

Nobody likes to sit out at a dance because we go to dance and also enjoy the music (plus sweat or glow a little). Have a try at helping a newcomer by being a

Siamese twin. Perhaps we could have a contra dance called "We Are Siamese If You Please!"

Sue Michiels

(Not Susan Michaels the caller.)

(818) 347-6728

3476728@earthlink.net

For Whom Do You Dance?

When you dance, do you believe that because you pay your money you can do whatever you want and resent it when the caller or others suggest that you dance in certain lines or with certain people? Do you want to meet your soul-mate through dancing whose appearance is extremely important to you so you choose to dance only with newcomers who fit that image? Do you have your own style and try to dance only with people who know that style and enhance it and get frustrated when your partner or someone in the line does not conform? Are you dancing only for yourself?

Do you learn something from each person with whom you dance? Do you attend the dances for fun and not competition and welcome whatever happens in that spirit (including smiling)? Do you really want to connect with others and make people feel welcome and encourage them to keep dancing and get better and better? Do you value your ability to keep the lines flowing because you intersperse yourself throughout the evening within various lines with many partners both ex-

perienced and beginners? Do you believe that you, though a unique individual and a damn good dancer, are important to the group as a whole and that by sharing yourself and your talents with others you contribute much more than the entrance fee to the entire experience? Do you recognize that in return you gain the gratitude and warm loving feelings from the group? Do you acknowledge that your presence adds to creating and perpetuating the atmosphere which nurtures the spirit of contra dancing? I hope so. Because of you, everyone, especially yourself, is energized to keep on dancing. Thank you.

Margot Eiser

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The SBCDS welcomes articles, letters, illustrations, comments and suggestions.

Opinions expressed are those of the individual authors.



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