

Let's Dance!

THE MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCING  JULY-AUGUST 2024



***** STATEWIDE 2024 *****

See p. 7

Photos by L. Tucker and C. Dickey.

Let's Dance!

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The Federation's Scholarship Fund provides financial assistance to dancers wishing to attend dance workshops and dance camps. Read more about this fund and download an application at www.folkdance.com under the *Services* tab.

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Household: \$45/year

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To post dance event flyers on the Federation's website, email: webmaster@folkdance.com

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The deadline for *Let's Dance!* is the first day of the month prior to the date of publication. We welcome submissions, letters and comments from our readers. Please send to Loui Tucker, Editor (editor@folkdance.com). Opinions expressed in *Let's Dance!* are not necessarily those of the Folk Dance Federation or of the Editor.

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	<u>½ page</u>	<u>full page</u>	
Member clubs	\$50	\$90	<i>All ads are in</i>
All others	\$80	\$120	COLOR

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WELCOME OUR NEW FEDERATION MEMBERS

Ruth Weisz, Fremont
Ann Granger, Fremont
Debra Dawson, Mendocino

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Ulrike Narins

Folk dancing makes my life extremely rich. Over the next few columns I want to share special moments I've had as a folk dancer, some embarrassing, some exhilarating, some memorable for other reasons. I'll start with mortifying situations.

My most embarrassing experience happened in 2017. At Ontario Folk Dance Camp in spring 2017, I had learned one version of the Greek dance Rododachtilos, so I volunteered to teach that at the Summer Camps Review in Palo Alto, and I sent in the music and dance description.

When the day of the workshop came, it was really hot. During lunchtime, when it was especially sweltering, I helped to unload Lucy and Richard's car, walking back and forth between the car and the dance hall in the blazing sun. Then the reviews started. Before it was my turn, 10 dances were taught. Having had too little sleep, suffering from the heat, and having tried to learn the 10 dances that preceded mine, I felt that my brain was saturated.

When my turn came, I started to explain the first part of Rododachtilos, a really easy section. Then, when I wanted to describe what to do in the second part, which is just a grapevine in Syrtos rhythm, I froze. Neither my brain nor my feet could remember how to do that part. Feeling deeply embarrassed, I thought that no folk dancer would ever respect me again and that I would have to give up this wonderful community.

Fortunately, Lucy Chang came to my aid, and somehow my "teaching" ended, though I don't even

remember how. Many people approached me afterward and told me that they, too, had had moments like this and not to worry. Not only was I still welcome in the folk dance family, but I even became president of the Folk Dance Federation.



Another time I almost got into a very embarrassing situation. Luckily, I did not follow my impulse. It was at a workshop with Ira Weisburd at St. Bede's in Menlo Park. The workshop part had ended, and at some time during the party Mori Shej came on. Ira was leading the line and started the dance with steps I had never seen. I was about to go to the front of the line to lead it with the "correct" steps, but then decided against it.

And I was so glad I did! It turned out that Ira was dancing the choreography by Laura Shannon for the first few times through and then switching to the version by Jimmy Drury, which was the one I knew. Ira has been teaching Mori Shej this way. Even if he had been "wrong," it would not have been a good idea to take over the lead. In the meantime, I have learned to respect any leader and to see that it is very bad form to interfere.

I am so glad the folk dance family is incredibly forgiving and supportive. Next time I'll share some more uplifting experiences.

***** SAVE THE DATE *****

- The Officers Ball -

Sunday, November 17, 2024

(We are trying out Sunday this year)

Veteran's Hall in Pleasanton

(The same as last year)

Joining Hands Across the Years



Jim Gold International Folk Tours 2024

Our trips are for folk dancers, non-dancers
and anyone with a love of travel, culture, and adventure

BULGARIA and Black Sea Coast:

July 30-August 12

Sofia, Plovdiv, Bansko, Nessebar,
Varna, Black Sea, Veliko Turnovo.

Led by Ventsi Milev

With Bulgarian folk dance teacher Niki
Enchev, and musician Ventsi Andonov

ROMANIA: Sept 29-Oct 13

Bucharest, Brasov. Sibiu, Cluj, Sighet
Marmatiei. Led by Nancy S. Hoffman
Guided by Virginia O'Neil

GREECE: Oct. 18-30

Athens, Nauplia, Sparta, Olympia,
Delphi, Meteora, Thessalonika

Led by Lee Otterholt.

Guided by Maroula Konti

SCANDINAVIA: June 18-July 1,

Oslo, Gothenburg, Helsingborg.

(Elsinore), Copenhagen

Led by Lee Otterholt

IRELAND: August 3-15

Galway, Connemara, Aran
islands, Kerry, Cork, Blarney,
Dublin. Led by Lee Friedman
and/or Kay Cleary

SPAIN: Sept 12-25

Malaga, Cadiz, Seville, Cordoba,
Granada. Led by local guides

PERU with Nazca and Peruvian Amazon:

May 22-June 3

Lima, Cusco, Machu Picchu, Puno,
Sacred Valley, Lake Titicaca,

Peruvian Amazon, Nazca

extensions. Led by local guides

and/or Martha Tavera

BRAZIL: Oct 21-Nov 1

Rio de Janeiro, Salvador,

Iguassu Falls. Led by local

guides, and/or Hilary Almeida



TOUR REGISTRATION: Reserve my place! \$200 per person deposit.
Register on line at: <https://www.jimgold.com/> Jim Gold International, Inc.
497 Cumberland Avenue, Teaneck, NJ 07666 U.S.A. (201) 836-0362
Email: jimgold@jimgold.com

Calendar of Events

We reserve the right to edit all submissions; we assume no responsibility for accuracy.
Additional events can be found at www.folkdance.com (Community tab).

- JUNE 27** **SARATOGA DANCERS' QUARTERLY PARTY.** St. Michael Serbian Orthodox Church, 18870 Allendale in Saratoga. Theme: Twins, Triplets, etc. Connect with another dancer and dress alike! 7:30-10:00 pm. Live music with Bill Cope plus recorded music. \$8-\$10 (sliding scale). Info: loui@loutucker.com.
- JULY 13** **CAFÉ SHALOM ISRAELI DANCE PARTY.** Congregation Am Tikvah, 625 Brotherhood Way, San Francisco. 7:30-11:30 pm. \$10. Info: udy@yahoo.com or 669-444-1284. [Also August 10.]
- JULY 13** **PENINSULA COUNCIL DANCE PARTY.** St. Bede's Church Hall, 2650 Sand Hill Road, Menlo Park. 7-10 pm. \$10. Info: PFDCParty@gmail.com. [Also August 10.]
- JULY 21-28** **STOCKTON FOLK DANCE CAMP.** Two weeks – pick one or stay for both. Same staff
JULY 28-AUG. 4 of six teachers both weeks, with different lectures and party themes. Live music. Tuition minimum \$600 per week; additional charges depend on housing. **See ad p. 26.**
- JULY 26** **CHANGS FAMILY NIGHT.** Miraloma Park Clubhouse, 350 O'Shaughnessy Blvd., San Francisco. 7-10 pm. First hour is designed specifically for families with children, followed by international folk dances from the club repertoire. \$8 Adults; kids are always free!
- JULY 26-AUG. 3** **LARK CAMP.** Mendocino Woodlands, 39350 Little Lake Rd, Mendocino. Price depends on housing. Experience world culture, music, song, and dance spread over three different camping areas within the Mendocino Woodlands. Complete with a kids' program, so bring the family. Info: larkcamp.org.
- AUG. 9-11** **JOHN FILCICH FOLK DANCE FESTIVAL.** Arcata, California. Celebrate classic kolos and folk dances in honor of John Filcich's 100th birthday. Dance classes, singing and instrument classes, dancing into the night to live music. FilcichFestival.org. **See ad p. 10.**
- AUG. 18-24** **MAINEWOODS DANCE CAMP.** Two weeks – pick one or stay for both. Different
AUG. 25-31 staff (three teachers) each week. Live music. Info: mainewoodsdancecamp.org.
- AUG. 31-SEPT. 2** **LAND DANCERS FOLK DANCE WEEKEND.** Santa Cruz Mountains, off Skyline Blvd. near Highway 9. It's free, but donations are welcome. Two weekends per year – Memorial Day and Labor Day; founded by Cliff Jenkins and friends in 1981. Camp for the whole weekend or come for a day. International folk dance dancing on a redwood deck, outdoors under the trees. Info: Betsy Moore, eambetsy@gmail.com to request a flyer with directions.
- SEPT. 12-15** **CAMP NIRKODA BAKEREM ISRAELI DANCE CAMP 2024,** DoubleTree Inn by Hilton, Sacramento. Housing in the hotel, dancing on a large ballroom with a sprung wood floor. Dance instruction by two teachers from Israel. Wine-tasting on Sunday night ("nirkoda bakerem" translates as "dance in the vineyard"). \$450-\$1000 depending on room choice. Info: alpert1988@gmail.com.
- OCT. 25-27** **NORTH/SOUTH FOLKDANCE TEACHERS' SEMINAR.** Monte Toyon Conference Center, Aptos. Teaching staff: France Bourque-Moreau and Michael Ginsberg. \$270-\$320 depending on accommodations. Info: folkdance.com/event/ns-seminar-2024 or northsouthfolkdance@gmail.com.

THE FAMILY PHOTO ALBUM

Photos by L. Tucker, Clem Dickey, and others.



Ellen and Ben Ron dancing the Israeli Mazurka at Café Shalom in May.



Students from Alex Shadle's International Dance Arts Collective performed at their end-of-the-year Family Barn Dance in May.



Dancing on the deck at The Land on Memorial Day Weekend.



Lesley Bone made the perfect Alice at the Peninsula Folk Dance Council's Alice-in-Wonderland Tea Party in May.



Lisa Michael and Hollis Radin enjoyed the expansive array of goodies at the Tea Party.



Lisa Bell and Tom Williard hamming it up on the dance deck at The Land.

THREE STATEWIDE PERSPECTIVES

by *Christine Jensvold*

This was the very first Statewide Folk Dance Festival for me. I read the articles in *Let's Dance!* leading up to this amazing event and would now like to share my impressions.

Teachers: Cesar Garfiaz and his wife made Salsa Rueda come alive for me. Each night I could hear the calls in my mind as I drifted off to sleep – “Dame una! Echeverria! Un fly! Dile que no!”

As we circled like a wheel, I looked forward to each new partner and the personality they'd bring to the Salsa, before the next “Dame una!” was called.

Yannis Konstantinou was joined by his daughter Xenia and their vibrant personalities filled the hall. I saw the uniqueness of men's and women's footwork as they expressively placed each foot. I enjoyed viewing the large map of Greece as Yannis described the story behind the footwork and arm movements of each new dance.

Kurt Gollhardt's calling got me moving and interacting with the folks in my square dance set.

I observed the intricate weaves of the experienced 100+ dancers and appreciated the genuine warmth as they shared with me the joy of the dance.

Performances: The energy of the performers⁽¹⁾ dancing the dances of Jalisco and Sonora, Mexico was captivating, with beautiful skirts twirling and feet stomping. Seeing young people with such passion for dance is energizing and refreshing. We also saw three beautiful dresses with intricate details including Xenia's dress from her village of Florina.

Evening Parties: Orkestar Unbound made music for the evening parties lively. I enjoyed looking up at the stage to see each unique instrument. My favorite moment was hearing the lyrics of Ma Navu sung. If I didn't recognize a



song, friendly folk would whisk me up and give me clues to include me.

Meals: Mealtime allowed me to relax and put names to faces I've seen while dancing and hear each person's story. I appreciated the variety of food served, especially the dim sum lunch, as I had not experienced this Cantonese tradition before.

Thank you to all who put months of planning into creating such a memorable festival.

(1) Grupo Folklórico Los Quetzales, Grupo Santa Paula, Los Panaderos.

by *Ann Granger*

The May Statewide in Newark was the first folk dance festival I've ever attended. I expected to have fun dancing, meet friendly people, and eat good food. The live music was a wonderful bonus – not just hearing it but being able to feel the stirring vibration of the drums was very cool.

What I didn't expect was to be so moved by the sight of so many smiling people dancing in sync as the circle they made moved in and out or sometimes created a beautifully sinuous grapevine. It reminded me of Busby Berkeley dance numbers (you have to be a senior to have seen those old musicals). As I watched, I thought that if everyone could just take up folk dancing and learn to appreciate a bit of each other's culture, how much happier the world could be.

by *Billy Burke*

Registration: Very well organized and managed. Felt welcomed and efficiently checked in.

Food: Was okay; beverages a bit limited.

Schedule: A whole lot put into a tightly scheduled time. A bit more time between teaching sessions would have been nice. Mingling is one of my favorite times at this kind of festival.

Teachers: Yiannis was very knowledgeable and represented his culture well. Cesar was a breath of fresh air. He was enthusiastic and his spirit was contagious. He did a great job in a genre somewhat foreign to most of the participants.

Facility: A very nice hall.

Hotel: A little higher in price than other events I have been to, but a very nice facility.

Orkestar Unbound: Quality music with a good variety.

STATEWIDE THANK-YOUS

by Catherine Mao

About 18 months ago, after the Petaluma Statewide, the first since the pandemic, Evan Chu and Rebecca Tsai discussed the possibility of hosting the next (2024) Statewide. Coincidentally there was an article in *Let's Dance!* calling for groups to host the 2024 Statewide. The three of us took up the challenge, not knowing what was ahead of us.

With lots of guidance from the Folk Dance Federation board, and especially Loui Tucker, their unconditional support, and tolerance, and helping with so many tasks (choosing a venue/hotel, pricing, T-shirts, registration, coordinating with teachers and dance groups, tech, setup, etc.), we learned how to host a festival step by step.

The teachers we selected performed well and satisfied a wide range of dancers. With the combination of live and recorded music, there seemed to be something for everyone. Bill Cope and Orkestar Unbound really outperformed in less-than-ideal settings. We truly appreciate the outstanding talents and experience of this extraordinary group of musicians.

Thank you to Adony Beniares for the sound system. Thank you to Sabine Zappe for taking

care of registration and check-in. She was at the front door for three days! Thank you to Evan for his video editing skills. By the time you read this, Evan will have finished the editing, and the clips will be available to purchasers.

Chase Suite Hotel proved to be a good choice. People enjoyed the room, the breakfast, and the swimming pool!

Special thanks go to Kong Pak, Gay Chan-Lam, and dancers from our local classes, who managed the kitchen, served meals, and donated coffee, tea, cups, and almost everything else. This was their first festival, and they were excited to dance with all of you.

Last but not least, we want to thank those who donated to the festival. Because of your generosity, we were able to keep the festival financially accessible even though the costs almost doubled compared to two years ago. The Federation will need your on-going support to manage the ever-rising cost of workshops and festivals and allow the less-privileged to enjoy what we love so much.

Next year Statewide will be in Arroyo Grande, California (socalfolkdance.org/statewide.htm).



Lothar and Ulrike Narins (sporting new haircuts) enjoyed Statewide in Newark in May.



Tom Sha and Andy Partos were among the representatives of the Berkeley Folk Dancers at Statewide.



Diane Baker and Sherry Cochran made the trek from So. Cal to dance at Statewide.

Photos by L. Tucker.

SHE'S 90 YEARS YOUNG!

Gabriele Swanson just turned 90 and is currently teaching two classes per week in the Santa Cruz-Monterey area, one in Capitola and one in Pacific Grove. I got to meet her on a Wednesday in May and asked her to share her amazing story with Let's Dance! readers. – Editor

My parents were German and living in Germany. They decided in 1933, the year that Hitler came to power, to go to England and I was born there as Gabriele Katz. Unfortunately, in 1936, we moved to Holland. In 1940, the war broke out, Holland was invaded, and Jews were soon being rounded up and sent to concentration camps, including my family.

When the British were advancing towards our camp in 1945, the Germans evacuated the camp, and put us all on a train headed, as we found out later, to Theresienstadt, a camp near the Czech border, where gas chambers were being readied. Fortunately, my mother and I were among the prisoners liberated by the Russians. Eventually we were able to return to our home in Holland. I am a Holocaust survivor.

I came to California in 1951, attended Whittier College, UCLA, and then UC Berkeley, which is where I first found folk dancing. My first folk dance teacher was Walter Grothe, who taught at the International House in Berkeley. I got a degree in Social Welfare, but never worked in that field. I worked for the Alameda County Assessor's office as a real estate appraiser.

I married in 1955, became Gabriele Ford, and we lived in San Francisco for a couple of years. My husband was from Jamaica and became a builder. I had two children and did not dance for a while when they were young. By the 1970s, however, I was very active, dancing about five nights a week at Aitos (a Greek taverna), Ashkenaz, and Hillel. By then, my husband had also become a folk dancer. When my daughter was 13, I would take her and all her friends to folk dancing on Friday nights. My husband and I divorced, but I continued to folk dance.

In 1986, my second husband (who was not a dancer) and I, now Gabriele Swanson, moved to Oroville. My children were grown by then, so it was just the two of us. I had retired and had a pension and was renting out my home in Berkeley. I started dancing in Chico with Bonnie and Ralph Gagnon. It was then that I started teaching at the Lake Orville Recreation Department, and I actually got paid for it! I also had a volunteer job at public radio station, as an announcer for a classical music segment, because I could pronounce French and German titles, words like Zigeunerweisen.



In 1988, I decided to visit Italy and a friend from Berkeley who lived there. She introduced me a friend of hers, a German industrial photographer, who happened to be from my family's hometown in Dortmund, Germany. We hit it off and he invited me to stay and live with him in Italy. I ended up staying for 12 years, traveling back and forth from Italy to California once or twice a year.

I found a folk dance group in Italy. I learned dances from them and taught them some of what I knew. Teaching in Italian was interesting because all the words like hop, stamp, and touch are monosyllabic in English, but have two syllables in Italian, and trying to say them to the beat was often quite challenging.

In 2000, I moved back to California because that relationship had cooled off. At the behest of a friend, I decided to settle in Monterey.

Soon after my return, I attended a performance of a Hungarian dance group in Carmel. I spotted a group of women who looked very

continued on p. 23





John Filcich Folk Dance Festival Aug 9-11 Arcata, CA

**A CELEBRATION OF CLASSIC
KOLOS AND FOLK DANCES
IN HONOR OF JOHN'S 100th BIRTHDAY!**

**Live music with Chubritza,
John Morovich & Talia McGill,
Steve Boyer & Friends,
Balkan Music Meetup**

FRI 8/9: *Potluck and dancing*

**SAT 8/10: *Dance classes with
John Morovich, Billy Burke, Jeff
O'Connor, singing & instrument
classes, catered dinner, and
dancing into the night!***

**SUN 8/11: *Brunch and
singalong***

**REGISTRATION and FULL DETAILS at:
www.FilcichFestival.com**

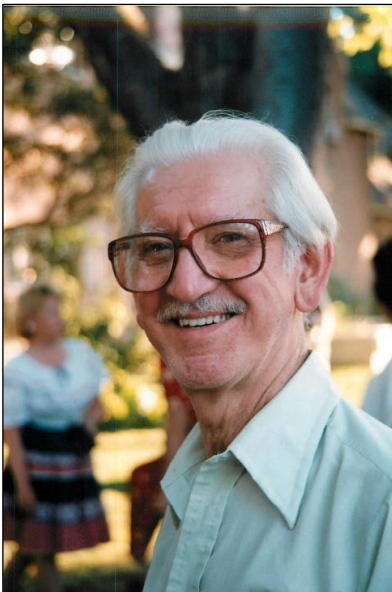
Sto Lat! 100 Years!

by Craig Kurumada

Ivan “John” Filcich turns 100 this summer. In his honor, the **Filcich Folk Dance Festival will happen August 9-11 in Arcata, California.**

John has been a folk dance icon in the United States. In 1952 he founded Kolo Festival, which still occurs annually in San Francisco. He attended Stockton Folk Dance Festival from the beginning. As Stocktonistas know, the number of festivals you attend is printed on your name tag. John’s number is always one short of the number of festivals. That’s because he was not registered for the first camp in 1948. He actually crashed that first Camp and was discovered and tossed out by Lawton Harris himself. A singular honor!

John was born June 26, 1924, in the village of Pehlin on the outskirts of Fiume, Italy (present day Rijeka, Croatia). At the age of eight, he came to the United



States, where his family lived in Gary, Indiana. Why do we sing Sto Lat for his birthday? Sto Lat is a Polish song meaning “100 years,” as in “may you live 100 years.” (Yes, I know what you’re thinking. We’ll sing “150 years” from now on!)

He actually crashed that first Camp and was discovered and tossed out by Lawton Harris himself. A singular honor!

When John was growing up in Gary, Indiana, he lived in a mostly Polish neighborhood and learned to speak Polish along with his English and Croatian.

At 17, he moved to Yuma, Arizona, on the advice of a doctor, to give him relief from a dreadful case of sinusitis. John laments, “It didn’t work.” It didn’t cure his sinusitis, but he did learn Spanish!

Now, to celebrate his 100th year, the Filcich Festival at the Arcata Veterans Hall:

Friday will kick off with a potluck dinner followed by an

evening of dance with live music provided by John Morovich and Talia McGill from Seattle, Steve Boyer & Friends from southern Oregon, and Humboldt County’s own Balkan Music Meetup and Chubritza.

Saturday features dance workshops with John Morovich, Billy Burke and Jeff O’Connor. John Morovich will also offer a singing workshop and Steve Boyer will lead an accordion session.

The dance program will be dedicated to the dozens of dances John taught as well as many classic kolos. After the catered dinner, the evening starts with a Tamburica Jam and Singalong, followed by more dancing to live music.

Sunday the festival ends with bagels and a singalong! For a complete schedule, go to www.filcichfestival.com.



FROM THE EDITOR

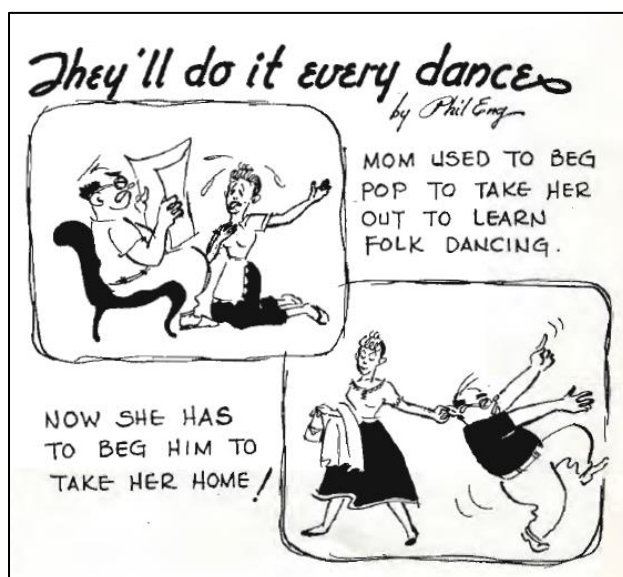
While Indexing *Let's Dance!* Magazines...

As I've been reading and indexing the oldest issues of *Let's Dance!* magazine, I've come across some gems:



- May 1944: Election of Officers is coming up and there are two candidates for every office.
- September 1945: Volume I of *Folk Dance Near and Far* is out, on a limited printing of a mere 500 copies.
- October 1946: The author noted an increasing interest in the Yugoslav "Kolo" dances.
- November 1947: Albany Folk Dancers has grown from 17 to 235 members and offers classes five nights a week.
- May 1948: Plans are being made for a one-week Folk Dance Camp at the College of the Pacific in Stockton; attendance limited to 200; \$18 room and board; \$15 tuition.
- May 1949: Federation lobbyists successfully quashed a bill in the CA legislature that would have required folk dance teachers to be licensed by the state.
- June 1949: The Monterey Bay Area now has 40 dance clubs and membership approaching 2000.
- March 1950: Have you seen John Wayne doing "La Raspa"? Believe it or not, he used the dance to teach a rookie how to handle a bayonet in "The Sands of Iwo Jima." (Go ahead and see for yourself by doing a search on YouTube!)
- March 1950: The host clubs in Monterey cannot use the ballroom at Ford Ord for their future festival because attendance has outgrown it. The hall only holds 2500!
- October 1950: The rangers and their spouses at Calaveras Big Trees State Park learned some folk dancing from visiting dancers and now they want to start their own folk dance class. They have a hall that will hold 100 dancers and just need a teacher.
- June 1950: *Let's Dance!* magazine is now available at magazine stands in San Francisco, Oakland, and Berkeley!
- June 1951: The Southern Pacific ran a special train (on which there was a special car cleared for dancing while you rode) from San Francisco to San Jose for those who attended the Spring Roundup Jamboree at San Jose Auditorium recently.
- August 1952: "...if'n your radio stops, try replacing the cold tubes. New ones will make it go."
- March 1953: "Oscar Libaw, spry as ever, on his 65th birthday was the recipient of a surprise birthday party at the Santa Monica Folk Dancers. I sure hope I can be as active at 65 as he is!"
- November 1953: Local program host will announce your dance festival on her radio program if you get her the info on time.
- Also take a look at the inside back cover of this issue for the ad that appeared in *Let's Dance!* for three months in 1949.

Cartoon from the October 1953 issue of *Let's Dance!* magazine.



Marilyn Smith is traveling in Europe. She provided these two glimpses of her time spent dancing.

Dancing at the Oldest Jazz Club in Paris

by Marilyn Smith

Whenever my husband Eric and I travel, we seek out opportunities to dance, whether it's at a weekend of dancing bourrée in the Auvergne or dancing at a small folk dance festival in the center of France. This summer we started our dance adventure at **Le Caveau de la Huchette in Paris** for swing dancing.

Since 1946, Le Caveau has best been known as a jazz club where famous musicians from France, the United States, and around the globe have performed, including Lionel Hampton and Sydney Bechet. It was the first club in Paris that played jazz. The movie *La La Land* featured a scene from Le Caveau. It's called Le Caveau because you enter the club through a staircase under the street and arrive in a cave-like room with stone walls and stone arches.

The night we were there we danced to the music of David Giorcelli's Boogie Woogie and Blues Piano. The place was packed mostly with young people in their twenties and thirties. When the music started with a fast boogie woogie number, Eric and I took to the still empty dance floor. We were the only ones dancing at that point and had plenty of room to dance.

The next thing we knew, everyone was clapping and cheering along! After that, other folks began to dance and soon the dance floor was crowded with happy dancers. After the show, as we were leaving, a group of young women all filed past us giving us thumbs up. About a block or so away from the Caveau, as we were walking to the metro to head back to our studio apartment in the Marais, a woman stopped us on the street and said: "Bravo, super, magnifique!"

If you ever get the chance, don't miss dancing at the Caveau and don't worry if you're the oldest people there.

* * * * *

Dancing the Sardana in Barcelona

by Marilyn Smith

The summer of 1963 I was an exchange student to Barcelona, Spain. This is where I first saw the Sardana danced in front of the cathedral. The plaza was filled with circles of people holding hands and dancing to the music of a live cobla band. It made an incredible impression on me because it was so passionate. This was during the time of Franco's regime and **the Catalan language was banned, as was dancing the Sardana**. But the people of Barcelona danced it anyway with the Guardia Civil and their machine guns standing by.

In 2001 I was able to dance the Sardana both in Barcelona and in the beautiful little village, Collioure, in southern France.

And now in 2024, I was dancing it again at the spot where I first saw it danced.

Whether you are dancing bourrées in small villages in France or on the banks of the Seine or dancing Sardana in Barcelona, these experiences bring you closer to the people who treasure these traditions, and you are no longer a tourist but a member of a local community of dancers.



Marilyn and Eric in the dim lighting at Le Caveau.



Dancing the Sardana in front of the Barcelona cathedral.

NEWS FROM AROUND THE BAY . . .

RAZZMATAZZ – Marilyn Smith

We enjoyed our evening Bulgarian dance workshop with Jaap Leegwater and Filip Filipov. It was so wonderful to see Jaap again and to have Filip's spirited accordion playing. Learning dances with live music is such an added joy. We especially enjoyed the fast-paced Sitno Vlaško and the lyrical Vaklaj Vaklaj along with the Pravo medley taught that night. Having Jaap playing his flute and singing along to the dance tunes added a special touch to the evening. We had a nice group of about 40 people including three Bulgarians from our Santa Rosa community.

Jaap and I have a Bulgarian connection: we both stayed with Petur Iliev's family in Bulgaria during the 1970s. We only discovered this connection many years later when Jaap came to Santa Rosa for a special workshop and taught a dance I had first seen done at Koprivshitsa in 1976 that was danced by Petur's father and uncle. Serendipity!

Our Spring folk dance classes ended May 14. **Summer drop in, all request dancing hosted by Gloria Coté** meets every Tuesday June-August from 7-9 pm at Monroe Hall in Santa Rosa. Fall classes will begin September 3.



Razzmatazz dancers with Jaap Leegwater (front row) and Filip Filipov (right, with accordion).

SAN FRANCISCO GROUPS – by Linda Milhoan

On May 10, **Changs International Folk Dancers** had a wonderful evening dancing to the music of *Da! Mozhem*. They have played for us many times and we often call them our “house band,” but this evening their music was exceptional! Over and over, we heard comments about their magnificent vocal harmonies and how much fun it was to dance to their live music!

Changs dances every Friday 7-10 p.m. at the MPIC clubhouse at 350 O'Shaughnessy Blvd. Your first time is free. Parking is onsite and free, too.

San Francisco Dance Circle has moved to our **summer venue at Upper Noe Recreation Center** on Day St. and will be meeting there on Wednesdays, 10:45 am-12:15 pm through the end of August. In September we'll return to Harvey Milk Center for the Arts in Duboce Park.

Cafe Shalom continues its weekly classes on Tuesday evenings and second-Saturday evening parties at Congregation Am Tikvah on Brotherhood Way. At the parties, we always celebrate the month's birthdays with delicious baked treats by dancer Larry Kluger. **When no one present had a birthday in May, we sang happy birthday to Israel instead.**

On April 20, San Francisco Dance Groups **hosted the Blossom Festival at City College** of San Francisco. Thanks to Changs member and CCSF dance teacher Jeanne Hughes Ph.D. for securing our event. Jeanne even invited her salsa class to come to the festival, and some of her dancers had great fun folk dancing for the first time. We had more than 100 people sign our festival attendance sheet!



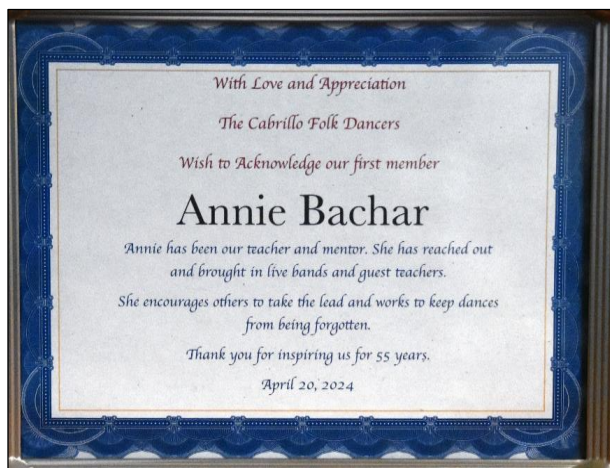
Dancers at the Blossom Festival doing D'Hammerschmiedsgsellin (introduced in 1964!).

... AND BEYOND

SANTA CRUZ – Judy Donaldson

On Saturday, May 20, Cabrillo Folkdancers Group of Santa Cruz celebrated its 55th anniversary with a dance party at the Live Oak Grange Hall. From 3:30-9:30 pm, an estimated 100+ people danced to two different live bands, Da! Mozhem and Balkanton 340. We overflowed two parking lots! The Cabrillo dancers were delighted that so many friends came to celebrate with us.

After a potluck dinner was served between the afternoon and evening dance sessions, there was a pause for sharing memories, and a **Certificate of Appreciation** was presented to long-time teacher/leader **Annie Bachar**. **Alan Rothchild** received a similar certificate on Tuesday night from the Israeli dance group.



MONTEREY FOLK DANCERS – Marguerite Fishman

Springtime brings more daylight, less rain, and a new home for our weekly folk dance class. Yes, we have moved! Goodbye hard, linoleum-over-concrete floor. Hello resilient, engineered-wood laminate. **Our new space is in The Center for Spiritual Awakening** at the corner of Central and Fountain in Pacific Grove. A welcoming staff, lovely building, springier floor, and downtown location suit us well. Our first class was a celebration – favorite dances, birthday cake, and the honor of a visit from Loui Tucker and Sabine Zappe.

Plan your next vacation here! Join our Wednesday afternoon class, 4:30-6 pm.



VILLAGE DANCERS OF TURLOCK – Judy Kropp

The Village Dancers hosted about 50 people at a special night celebrating **International Dance Day**. Stephanie, a lovely belly dancer, performed for us, her students, friends, and family. The Village Dancers taught easy dances to start the evening. There were smiles and laughter from the new dancers. Stephanie performed her beautiful moves to exciting music, then pulled in her students in groups of two or three to join her. She even had a small children's group. There were plenty of snacks and treats to finish up the evening.

The Village Dancers will take a break from June to mid-September, when classes start again at the Carnegie Arts Center in Turlock.



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MY FIRST DANCE

Once again, *Let's Dance!* readers responded to a request for contributions. Readers were asked to submit their recollection of the first folk dance they learned, along with details about the teacher and circumstances. Below are the best of the bunch. – Editor

From Betsy Moore

The first folk dance I learned was Ali Paşa, taught by Dick Rawson at the Sierra Singles group in the multi-purpose room of Fairmeadow School in Palo Alto in 1995. Of course, as a beginner I was learning lots of dances at once, but I definitely remember that Ali Paşa was the first one I could say I knew. Unless you count the Virginia Reel at a picnic at my high school (in Virginia!) around 1977. I remember it was a beautiful spring day and I thought the dance was really fun. Then there was square dancing in P.E. class in fourth or fifth grade in Chicago.

Ali Paşa!

From John Nicoara

My introduction to folk dancing was actually in multiple parts. I had just turned 16 when, on a Saturday morning in the winter of 1950, my father told me to go to a small Romanian church down by the Detroit River. Romanian teenagers were to meet there that morning and begin learning two Romanian dances, one of which was Alunelul, the other a Căluşerul. We rehearsed the couples dancing onto the stage (right hop, left hop, cross, apart, together), separating to face the audience and dancing several in-place figures, then reassembling as couples as we danced off the stage. Our parents made costumes for us, and on July 4 that year we danced on stage during the annual Ethnic Celebration Event at the Concert Shell on Belle Isle with bells on our legs, red, yellow, and blue ribbons around our waists, and our professional Romanian musician playing his clarinet for us.

Dospatsko Horo!

Years later, around 1968, I recall reading an article in the Parade section of a San Francisco Sunday Newspaper. It was all about the Mandala dance center in San Francisco and what a success it had become. I loved reading every bit of that article about folk dancing and Mandala's owner, but gave it no further thought.

More years passed, and I noticed an item in the "Things to Do" section of the Palo Alto Times: *Balkan/Israeli folk dance class, Foothill College, Mondays 7:00 pm, Marcel Vinokur*. At that time, I was working at Lockheed Missiles & Space Co, and

one Monday in November 1971 we were scheduled to work overtime well into the evening. At the last minute, that planned overtime was cancelled. "Well," I thought, "I'm not expected at home; I think I'll look into that folk dance class at Foothill College."

Walking up to the gymnasium, I met Marcel. While helping him with his cases full of records, I told him about my Romanian background. When the class began I found that I readily picked up the dances. The one I most remember was Dospatsko Horo. Marcel observed the ease with which I caught on and suggested that I come to his Tuesday class in Menlo Park the next evening, which I did. He then suggested I come to his advanced class the following evening. Three nights in a row, and I was in heaven! I knew I had found something that was so right for me, and I have never stopped dancing.

Mayim

From Karen Burtness Prak

My college had an enormous patio just outside the building where we ate our meals. Just beyond that was an equally enormous grassy area. At the beginning of my sophomore year, the new class would plug their record player into the outlet on the outside of the dining hall and begin dancing. Mayim was the first band on the record. I liked the music and studied the steps the dancers took.

One of the dancers invited me to join, saying "It's not hard." I knew the order of the steps from watching and got through it without stumbling. My new friend said, "This one's easy, too," so I did Hineh Ma Tov and Harmonica, and have simply never stopped dancing. It didn't hurt that, not long after I'd begun dancing, a new young traveling teacher arrived in Chicago, and I drove one of two packed cars to learn Yves Moreau's Red Album from Yves himself!

Neda Grivne!

From Beth Berezovsky

Neda Grivne was the first dance I learned in 1966 when Linnea Mandell's parents, Marion and Joe Mandell, started a children's folk dance group at our elementary school. I have been dancing ever since.

From Susan Gregory

My first folk dance was something Turkish with wooden spoons! A friend from work was looking for volunteers to help out at a folk dance performance she was in. I volunteered and somehow got the job (without any preparations or assistance!) of running the sound system. The director/leader of the

performance gave me a quick five-minute rundown of what the order of the music was, how to switch from tape to cassette, how to balance the sound, etc. before he literally ran off to get changed into his costume. After he found out from my friend that I had NO experience doing that job, he was profuse in his apologies and his praise, since the whole performance went off with just one small sound-related hitch.

I think because he felt guilty for throwing me to the sound wolves, he fussed over me at the backstage reception after the performance and went out of his way to include me in all the dancing the group was doing at the reception – including one involving spoons! He got me hooked on folk dancing because I had such a good time that evening.

Soon after that I asked my friend from work all about folk dancing, and that eventually led me to the Saratoga Dancers.

Seven Jumps!

From Marian Snyder

I do remember the very first folk dances I learned when I was 6 years old with the Westchester Lariats. They were Seven Jumps and The Bunny Hop. In that same Friday afternoon 3:30 pm class with Dr. Hall, I learned Sellinger's Round. I remember loving those dances!

When I became a teacher in my twenties, I taught those dances to my elementary school students. I taught them again when I went back to teaching in my forties. I even did them with my daughter when she was little. So long ago!

From Paul Sheldon

It was at Pasadena, California's Annual Art Fair on the streets around City Hall every year on Labor Day Weekend. Hundreds of local artists display their work, while performers and musicians gather audiences on the street corners. In the 1950s, my parents knew that, from the time I could walk, they did not have to worry about my getting bored or lost at the Art Fair. They found they could park my three-year-old body by the folk dancers, and I would sit happily for hours under a tree, alone or with my sister, watching the colorfully-costumed dancers celebrate the folk traditions of Bulgaria, Greece, Japan, Russia, Sweden, Brazil, Appalachia, and other cultures from around the world.

When I was six years old, one of these dancers, Mary Zondler, invited me to join in a traditional Bulgarian line dance known as Eleno Mome. I eagerly clasped her outstretched fingers with my little hand and jumped into the syncopated 7/8

rhythm with all the dancers. It seemed to me that I recognized both the traditional brass band music and the steps.

Eleno Mome!

From Luiselle Yakas

I can't say exactly what the name of the dances were, but I was one of those kids that had been fortunate to have folk dancing in school and I always enjoyed it. In sixth grade, my student teacher arranged for us to present to the school a play called *Mother America*. I have since tried to find it, but I really think she made it up.

One of our classmates sat between us lined up on the stage. Each of us had been assigned a country and presented *Mother America* with a gift that we brought from our homeland. Some were dances, some were songs. We did German dances, Mexican dances, and more than I can remember. I was Canada and presented her with the song *Freres Jacques*. "Mother America," I said, "I come from Canada, and I bring you this song." Then we all sang it for her. When we all completed the presentation of our gifts, our last classmate came running from behind, dressed in blue jeans and plaid shirt, sliding into the front. He invited us all to gather and we finished the show doing an American square dance! I would love to resurrect this play one of these days!

From Barbara Bevan

In the early years of my career as an elementary school teacher, we could take weekend classes for salary points. Having a minor in music, I took several music classes. One class was International Songs & Dances and included a live band. Long story short, I went for the songs and fell in love with the dances! I think they included Šetnja and Miserlou.

I asked the teacher where I could learn more folk dances. She referred me to Bruce Mitchell. He led classes at a local park during the summer and in local schools the rest of the year. I attended all that summer of 1977 and continue to dance to the present day.

Road to the Isles!

From Carol Friedman

I learned my very first folk dance in elementary school in Rye, New York. We had a wonderful, creative Physical Education teacher who included folk dance as part of the sixth grade curriculum. He had us dancing Road to the Isles, Miserlou, and Zemer Atik.

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SPEAKING OF DANCING

by Gigi Jensen



Gigi's 2024 Summer Dance To Do List

Check in with my feet

- Do I need new dance shoes? If they're broken down, too small, or stinky... yes!
- Find a foot scrub - something minty. Pinterest recipes?
- See my podiatrist about new orthotics.
- I need a foot massage. Should I get a mani-pedi first?

Where to dance

- Do Parks & Recreation or the library have any dance classes this summer?
- Check the First Fridays schedule. Maybe there's a free dance class in the park.
- As much as I want to go to folk dance summer camps, I maybe can't swing it this year. Are any doing hybrid events? I sure do miss seeing my dance friends.

Watch dance in person

- Are there any dance shows coming to town?
- Check the county & state fair schedules. Maybe some of my friends will be on stage & I can cheer them on. Drag along my friends & family. HA!
- There used to be street festivals & craft fairs pre-Covid. I even performed at one. Did any come back?

Dance music clean up

- Organize my dance music in my computer FINALLY.
- Upload favorites from my CDs.
- Make a music playlist for my phone for when I go walking.

Dance binge watching

- Binge-watch dance movies (I can fast-forward to all the dance scenes.) Check Netflix, Amazon Prime, and YouTube for dance videos & movies. Don't forget PBS archives. Jammies & snacks.
- Invite a few friends to watch with me. Maybe it has to be over Zoom. Is "smell-o-vision popcorn" a thing yet? What new ice cream flavors should I try?
- Use those dance videos from folk dance camp. Where did I put those syllabi? It would be fun to learn a few new dances & remember others.
- Where'd I put those old VHS tapes, *That's Entertainment*, and all those dance performances I taped from PBS. How do I hook up my VCR?

So much to do!

Your feedback is always interesting to me. Write me at gigi@tangoandmoredance.com

NEWS FROM AROUND THE BAY –
continued from p. 15

PENINSULA FOLK DANCE COUNCIL –
Clem Dickey

The summer sessions continue at the Arrillaga Family Recreation Center in Menlo Park, the Palomanians on Tuesdays and Mostly Balkan on Thursdays.

The Palomanians have recently learned Adir Adirim (Israel, Gadi Bitton) and Selsko Šopsko Horo (Ginsburg/Kotansky/Angelova, Bulgaria).

The Saratoga Folk Dancers recently taught Alouette and Le Maitre de la Maison (France), Zile (Roma, Maurits van Geel) and Ki Hivshilu Eshkolot (Israel, Moshiko).

The Palomanians and the Saratoga Dancers are considering **adding Salsa Rueda to their respective repertoires, encouraged by Cesar Garfiaz’s sessions at Statewide 2024.** It’s likely that one or both will try it out this summer.

Thanks to all who created and attended the Tea in Wonderland party. Myrna Ehrlich constructed an **“Infinity Room”** for the entrance, evoking Alice’s entrance to the Looking-Glass House in “Through The Looking-Glass.” Lesley Bone added two rooms to the dance hall. The first, past some unusually tasty mushrooms labeled **“EAT ME,”** caused one to grow abnormally large, at least relative to the room furnishings. The second room, past vials imploring **“DRINK ME,”** shrunk you down to the height of a pencil. Past the growing and shrinking rooms, the courtyard featured flamingos and hedgehogs from The Queen’s Croquet Ground.

Inside, the tea and goodies tables included numerous allusions to Wonderland themes: animate playing cards, the Caterpillar, and the Mad Hatter. **Stan Isaacs provided a display of Alice books and figurines.** And with help from Hollis Radin we learned and danced The Lobster Quadrille – with real plush-toy lobsters.

Our next two parties are both at St. Bede’s Church Hall in Menlo Park **in the evening –** 7-10 pm – the better to avoid the summer heat: Saturdays, July 13 and August 10.

NORTH BAY – *Carol Friedman*

We’re taking our summer break in Petaluma. Our fall session will start on Monday, September 9.

And I’ll be dancing with friends again at The Land over Labor Day Weekend. It’s big fun, and an opportunity to learn some new dances from various dance teachers including Udy Gold, Craig Blackstone, and Loui Tucker.

KOPACHKA ADDS AED AND CPR TRAINING

By Susie Shoaf

Kopachka Folk Dancers in Mill Valley made a big decision for its membership recently. We fundraised amongst our members and friends and were able to purchase an AED, an automated external defibrillator. Funds we raised included training for both the AED and CPR. Since our dancers are aging, we felt it was a good move. On April 20, 10 members took the three-hour training to get certified for both the AED and CPR.



AED is a medical device designed to analyze the heart rhythm and deliver an electric shock to victims of ventricular fibrillation to restore the heart rhythm to normal. Ventricular fibrillation is the uncoordinated heart rhythm most often responsible for sudden cardiac arrest.

CPR stands for cardiopulmonary resuscitation. It can help save a life during cardiac arrest, when the heart stops beating or beats too ineffectively to circulate blood to the brain and other vital organs. It can be of great benefit even without use of an AED.

We hope we’ll never have to use it but, if the circumstances present themselves, many of us are now ready to step in and provide assistance until emergency medical professional help arrives. It may mean being able to help save a life.

MY FIRST DANCE – *continued from p. 17*

Later on in life, I left the East Coast, landed in Point Reyes Station, and ended up founding and running the local community center in town. We hosted square dances, ballroom dancing, and Cajun/Zydeco. During our summer camp, I took time out to teach what I called “world music and dance” to the campers. I also performed with a modern dance group in Petaluma.

I got married, had kids, got divorced, and ended up with full-time custody of the kids – which didn’t leave much time for any kind of dancing. Then I saw a notice in our local newspaper advertising a folk dance class in Petaluma at Hermann Sons Hall. My two boys refused to have a babysitter, so I let them stay home alone with the caveat that if either of them complained the deal was off. Amazingly, this actually worked.

The class was on Monday nights from 7 to 9 pm at Hermann Sons Hall in Petaluma. Carol Hirsch was the teacher. I simply fell in love with folk dancing. My very first dance that night was Šetnja. To this day, it’s the dance that starts our evenings. When Carol retired I took over the class for her. Many of the people I danced with early on became dear friends and are still dancing today in Petaluma. For me, there continues to be something incredibly special about holding hands in a circle and coming together through folk dancing.

Zemer Atik!

From Diane Baker

I had returned to college to become a physical education teacher and was enrolled in an undergraduate class, Dance & Rhythms for the Elementary Child. The teacher had announced that students who need to make up a class could attend a folk dance session at a local club.

I hadn’t missed any classes, but my husband was out of town for the weekend and going folk dancing sounded like more fun than playing Scrabble with my mother, so I went to the Veselo Selo dance group in Anaheim.

I was the only person who showed up at 7 pm for the class that preceded the general dancing. The visiting teacher said, “What do you want to learn?” I recalled seeing dancers on the lawn Fridays at noon outside Hearst gymnasium in 1964 and was intrigued by the scissors step. I said, “the dance that goes like this” and moved my feet back and forth. He chose Jove Malaj Mome!

Jove Malaj Mome!

From Rena Leibovitch

The first dance I learned was at an all-girls school in a suburb of London. I was about 11 years old, and the dance was Road to the Isles. I don’t think it was during class time, but probably some after-school dance. We had dances on special occasions during which we could wear dresses that were not the school uniform.

After we moved to California, I went for one week in the summer of 1960 to Camp Ramah and learned my first Israeli dance. It was Friday night after dinner. We wore our white dresses, and the boys wore black pants and white shirts. I remember doing Ma Navu on the grass in the dark. I don’t remember how we had music – probably just our own singing or humming. I loved being part of the community with everyone holding hands.

Syrtos!

From Rick Henderson

Back in 1974, in Peoria, Illinois, my mother mentioned that a doctor she knew had started a folk dance class and urged me and my sister Lois to go. I didn’t know it then, but our mother had enjoyed the Appalachian dances done in Pine Mountain, Kentucky, when she was recently out of medical school.

I had never heard of folk dancing but had the time, so I went to the class. The teacher was Martha Willi, an ophthalmologist who had returned to her hometown after medical school in San Francisco. She started a folk dance class because there wasn’t one in Peoria. I think the first dance we learned was the Syrtos. I liked that the rhythm was different.

A year or so later, when I was about to move to San Francisco, Martha gave me some cassette tapes with folk dance music and told me the address of Festival Records in San Francisco, where she assured me I would find flyers for places to dance.

Miserlou!

From Eileen Kopec

I have two distinct memories of learning folk dances when I was young, probably 9 or 10 years old. The first was when I was at a Jewish wedding in New York City. Aside from the hora, I saw another dance being done. I joined the line immediately and it captured me completely – it was Miserlou. I couldn’t wait to go to another wedding to do it again. They danced it at every Jewish wedding and at some bar mitzvahs, so I got the chance to dance it many times. Total love.

The second memory was probably a year or two later. I was at a friend’s house. My friend’s mother did Israeli dancing. After hearing our

constant complaining about having nothing to do, my friend's mother had us follow her into the living room, and she taught us Mayim. Another revelation! We taught it to all our friends.

At the time, I was taking ballet and did social dancing, but from those early encounters, folk dancing always hovered in my psyche until I had the chance to join a group later in life.

From Emily Stoper

I'm pretty sure the first folk dance I ever learned was Miserlou, at about age 12 or 13. I don't remember the details, but I'll never forget the thrill of doing something so cool and complex (though I must admit my jaded older self sees Miserlou as ordinary and simple). I think I also loved dancing as part of a line instead of with some pimply-faced boy. Clearly, a seed had been planted.

That seed got dribs and drabs of watering over the next few decades, as I learned dances like Mayim and Troika and square dancing with a live caller, but the seed didn't sprout, shoot up, and blossom until I was in my late 30s and discovered Ashkenaz and then Berkeley Folk Dancers. After all these years, I still think folk dancing is incredibly cool.

From Ellen Ron

Hora Bialik!

I began dancing in 1975, and the first dance I ever learned was Hora Bialik taught by my first and best teacher, Ruth Browns (Gundelfinger), on either Tuesday or Wednesday nights at Ner Tamid in San Francisco. Not only would she call the steps, she would sing them. I can still hear, "Debka, debka, step and brush, and step and leap and 1, 2, 3" in my head when I do Hora Chemed. She was also great at watching the students and figuring out where they were having trouble. She stood right in front of me chanting, "Ye-me-nite, ye-me-nite" as she demonstrated the step I was having trouble with. When I went home, I was able to practice the step and master it, because of her voice in my head.

So, thank you, Ruth, for giving me such a great start to a hobby that has given me so much joy (and my husband, Ben) for the last 49 years!

From Gabriele Swanson

I don't remember the first folk dance I learned, but it was in the International House in Berkeley in 1954. One of the first dances that I remember was Hora Agadati. The teacher was Walter Grothe. He taught every Friday from 7 or 8 until 10, after which we all

trooped down to Hearst gym and danced until midnight. Going folk dancing was sort of the thing to do on a Friday night.

I remember Walter coming into the hall with cases full of 78 records. The last dances were always a waltz and the hambo, and all the girls wanted to dance them with Walter! Eventually the 78s were replaced by reel-to-reel tapes. Great fun trying to locate a particular dance!

Tino Mori!

From Mark Kaminsky

I'm not sure which was the absolute first, but Tino Mori was certainly among the first, and it was at an afternoon class with Miriam Lidster.

My girlfriend at the time had introduced me to folk dancing via the Friday evening folk dance parties in Roble Gym at Stanford. She had me try to dance behind the lines to learn the dances, but I just got more and more confused. She told me there were classes where I could learn the dances and, as a grad student, I could register for a class. I registered for beginning folk dancing starting in January 1972. Some of us in the class went to the Friday night dancing every week. It felt good to finally be able to do a dance where I knew what was coming. I've never been any good at picking up a dance by just trying to follow someone else.

From Ralph Gagnon

How am I supposed to remember which was the *first* dance? I don't even remember *any* of the dances taught at that first session. I do remember the teacher, Walter Grothe. He was truly excellent.

I had just arrived at Cal Berkeley, and my roommate was a folk dancer. He said he was going to San Francisco to folk dance and asked if I wanted to join him. Why not? So I went, and I decided I liked it.

Walter was very systematic in his teaching. He had these signs showing the names of the dances, all in order, with the newest on top. Each week the signs would be placed in the same order, and as new dances were added on the top, old ones would fall off the bottom. That way, we would repeat a dance we had learned for several weeks before it dropped off the list, displaced by the newer dances. At my first folk dance, I was very impressed by the fact that my teacher could keep all those details straight in his head!

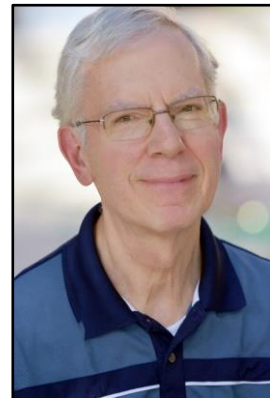
Hora Agadati!

TONY PARKES (1949–2024)

Local dancers met Tony Parkes when he joined the staff of Stockton Folk Dance Camp in 2017 as the squares and contra dance teacher and caller. He was so well received that he was invited back every year after that.

Tony studied contra and square calling with several well-known callers including Ralph Page. He wrote more than 90 dances, with many published in the compilations *Shadrack's Delight* and *Son of Shadrack*. He also taught at dance events such as Pinewoods Camp, Ontario Folk Dance Camp, and the John C. Campbell Folk School and called at the New England Folk Festival every year from 1969 until 2023.

In 1973, Tony moved to the Boston area, where he lived with his wife Beth Parkes, who is also a square and contra dance caller. Tony survived colon cancer in 2018 but was diagnosed with a brain tumor in November 2023. He died on May 6, 2024.



SANDRA BIROC (1947–2024)

by Dan Unger



Sandra with Dan in 2018.

Sandra Biroc grew up in the San Fernando Valley and graduated from San Fernando Valley State college (now CSU Northridge). She attended Johns Hopkins University and earned her doctorate in molecular and cellular biology. While searching for something new to do, she found folk dancing in 1971. After graduating, she took a postdoctoral research position at UC Davis in 1975. I met her there, having moved to Davis in 1973. Both of us enjoyed Balkan dances.

When Sandra's postdoc ended, she found part-time teaching positions at CSU-Sacramento, Sacramento City college, and Travis Air Force Base. Sandra began teaching dances and ended up in charge of the group.

Looking for full-time work, she found it at CU Boulder teaching the upper division biology labs. She was kind enough to briefly return to Davis for our wedding in 1982.

Sandra was able to manage full-time work, raising two children, and running the Boulder International Folk Dance group, where she was president for six years. We took our children dancing, at first in the carry cradle. The local Balkan singing group Planina often met at our house, and Sandra loved learning to sing hard voice. Before Planina put out their first album we moved to Alameda, so Sandra didn't make it onto their first album.

When Sandra found research work at UCSF, her boss said he planned to start his own company so, in 1982, she moved from academia to biotechnology, where she remained until retirement in 2017. She also took a break from dancing to focus on family and work. When that job ended, Sandra found work first in Boulder, then Sacramento, and returned to dancing. Her next job took her to San Diego, and she moved there while I remained working in Berkeley. Sandra was in San Diego long enough that some people doubted that I had a real (not imaginary) wife.

Sandra helped revitalize a San Diego dance group by bringing homemade food weekly and teaching dances. Although she could dance complex dances, she loved teaching the simpler ones. Sandra returned to the Bay Area and danced in the East Bay and on the San Francisco Peninsula. She took a hand in running the Piedmont group. She danced on Zoom during the start of the lockdown, but then stopped to focus on political causes.

She said she'd retire at 60 yet continued working until nearly 70. After retiring, she dove into politics. She went from writing letters/postcards to becoming a local hub for the postcards; people came to our house to pick up postcards and drop off finished ones. She canvassed in the Central Valley and learned Spanish to become more



effective. She researched the races/issues thoroughly and knew the details of races throughout California, as well as at least a dozen other states. She also began attending political meetings and rallies.

In 2021, our grandson was born, and Sandra babysat him weekly. She continued to do this after surgery on her cancerous thyroid damaged her vocal cords (this was her fourth battle with a serious cancer). Unfortunately, six months later a much more aggressive form of thyroid cancer started to take hold. She fought it until the end and remarked during that fight, "I had a good life." She died April 26, 2024, in her sleep in the hospital.

ELSA BACHER (1933–2024)

Elsa Bacher led the Petaluma/Novato and Santa Rosa Folk Dancers for many years and died recently in her home in Fulton. She attended Stockton Folk Dance Camp from 1978 to 2015. She and her husband Frank (1921-2007) met and fell in love at Camp in 1978 and they were married in 1982. Frank and Elsa were truly a folk dance power couple. They were tireless participants in the folk dance community, teaching dance groups, leading the Redwood Council, serving in various positions and committees in the Folk Dance Federation, and working on multiple festivals – for decades.

There is a **memorial service planned for Elsa on Saturday, July 13, 10-1:30**, at one of her family's farms (grapes) at 20755 Burndale Road in Sonoma.



Elsa Bacher in 2016

SHE'S 90 YEARS YOUNG! *continued from p. 9.*

"folksy," and asked them whether they were folk dancers. One was Mia Canavarro, Tony Canavarro's sister. As a result, I started dancing in Monterey, where Mary Hancock was the teacher. When Mary left, Tony took over for a while, but it was just too far for him and Lynn to drive, so I inherited the group.

I had also found my way to Capitola, where Bev Wilder was the teacher. When he retired, Norma Jamieson and I took over and taught together until about 2021. I still teach there on Thursday mornings at the Mid-County Senior Center.

So here I am, the lone survivor trying to hold it together at 90. Thankfully, in Monterey, I now have Marguerite Fishman, who came along in the last year. Annie Bachar has recently joined the group in Capitola, and I hope that when I can't do it anymore, she'll take over.

What's Up Down South?

– News from Southern California –



Genci Kastrati

PUT FALL CAMP ON YOUR CALENDAR! Fall Camp is even more than great dancing. It's a place where you can be yourself, relax and be happy. There are many other optional activities you can participate in, such as crafts, star-gazing, nature walks, folk band practice and performance, and more. Spend time with some very nice people. Featured teachers this year are Genci Kastrati (Albanian) and Ira Weisburd (International).



Ira Weisburd



We hope you will attend Fall Camp November 22-24, 2024. Please check the Camp's website (fallcamp.org) as details are being added constantly.

FROM THE *LET'S DANCE!* PHOTO ARCHIVES



Can you identify the man in this photo?
The **THIRD** person who correctly identifies him wins a \$25 gift card. Send your answers to editor@folkdance.com or loui@louitucker.com.

Last Month's Photo



That's Greg Lund, who has been to Folk Dance Camp in Stockton, which he has attended almost every year since 1979. He was on the grounds crew for many years – hence the reference to the clipboard on his t-shirt – and more recently has been in charge of the sound equipment. He has also been on the staff as a clogging teacher. He recently joined the Camp Board of Directors. He and his wife Taunya live in Eaton, Indiana, where he recently retired from Ball State University.

The winner of the photo contest is Barbara Bevan of Sacramento. Barbara was also the winner of the December photo contest, and her contribution to "My First Dance" in this month's issue can be found on p. 17.

There were 10 guesses, three of them correct and seven incorrect. Most of the incorrect ones thought it was a photo of Jeff O'Connor and two thought it was Craig Blackstone.



Contributed by Diane Baker from the *Los Angeles Times*, May 18, 2024.

Ach Eléni

(Greek style)

Ach Eléni (AHK eh-LEH-nee) means “Ah, Helen.” This dance was choreographed by Tineke and Maurits van Geel using traditional motifs to a Greek song by Dímos Anastasiádis.

- Music: 4/4 meter Available for purchase at tinekevangeel.nl.
An internet search for “Ach Eleni mp3” yields several sites.
- Video: Available for purchase at tinekevangeel.nl. A search on YouTube for “Ach Eleni” yields multiple results.
- Formation: Open mixed circle, hands joined in W-pos, facing CCW.

Meas	4/4 meter	PATTERN
4 meas		INTRODUCTION. No action.
1		Bounce on L and lift R knee (ct 1); beg R, three steps fwd (cts 2-4).
2		Repeat meas 1 with opp ftwk.
3		Turning to face ctr, step R to R (ct 1); hold (ct 2); step L behind R, leaving R in place (ct 3); step R in place, in front of L (ct 4).
4		Step L to L (ct 1); hold (ct 2); step R in front of L, leaving L in place (ct 3); step back onto L (ct 4).
5		Touch R to R (ct 1); hold (ct 2); touch R fwd (ct 3); touch R to R (ct 4).
6		Step R in front of L, leaving L in place (ct 1); step back onto L (ct 2); step R to R (ct 3); turning to face CCW, step L fwd (ct 4).

Sequence: Repeat dance as noted above until the music ends.

Lyrics

Eleni, I can't raise my eyes up high,
My little and jealous one.
And give comfort to my poor heart.
You've driven me crazy, poor one.

I saw all the world from your lips.
You've taken my heart,
And you don't hurt for me.

Ah, be sorry for me and stop
Tyrannizing me.

It was you who said,
If I don't see you, I am dying,
My small and jealous one.

But now you walk and say,
Where did I see you, where do I know you?
Ah, what bad thing will happen?

From John Pappas, the translator:

Songs are actually poems with melodies and rhythms. As such, there can be different ways of translating songs from Greek to English. This song, “Ah, Eleni” was originally sung by famous Greek Thracian singer Hronis Aidonidis. His organization of the lyrics is a little different, but it is basically the same.

In Greek folk songs there are often what I call filler words, formulaic phrases that don't necessarily add to the story. Such filler words are present in this song; for example: “my small and jealous one.”

Finally, there are some phrases and words that are idiomatic and not easily translated into English. I have tried here to translate in a way that keeps the Greek meaning without slavishly following the original syntax, which might make the English version more awkward.

Stockton

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Our Band; TOM PIXTON

RALPH IVERSON

BRIAN WILSON



A BLAST FROM THE PAST

In the 1940s, folk dancing was such a popular activity, and *Let's Dance!* magazine had a large enough distribution that many companies paid for advertising. Can you believe an airline would want to attract folk dancers? The ad below appeared on the back cover of the March, April, and May issues of *Let's Dance!* magazine in 1949!



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COMPARE YOUR CALIFORNIA FOLK CALENDAR OF EVENTS WITH SOUTHWEST'S ROUTE MAP AND DAILY SCHEDULES . . . MAKE YOUR CALENDAR AN ITINERARY.

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- **BARGAIN FARES**—A Southwest ticket represents the lowest cost certificated air travel in the West.
- **FAMILY PLAN**—With one full fare ticket the entire rest of your family group can travel half fare on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Ask for details.
- **ROUND TRIP DISCOUNT**—Always ask for round trip tickets and save 10% on your return ticket.
- **SPECIAL FLIGHTS**—If your group numbers 24, you can arrange for a special flight to any California city and effect a savings as high as 30%, and a group numbering less may still save in this manner. You will want to consider the special flight offer in thinking of the annual state-wide festival at Santa Barbara.





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This (almost) monthly publication has folk dance events in California and elsewhere, folk lore articles, ethnic recipes and lots of good reading. To get a **free** copy, just call Sandy: (310) 391-7382, or Email: circulation@FolkDanceScene.org

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