

# Let's Dance!

THE MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCING **3** APRIL 2025



Festival of the Oaks.  
See review on p. 7.



Nirkoda Romani. See  
review on p. 8.

## FOUR FUN FESTIVALS!



Laguna Festival. More photos on p. 21.



Lunar New Year Festival. More photos on  
p. 21.

*Photos by C. Dickey and W. Chiang.*

**BAY AREA DANCE WEEK** is April 25–May 4. Is your club participating? See p. 13

**OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE FOLK DANCE FEDERATION OF CALIFORNIA, INC.**

# Let's Dance!

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Editor: Loui Tucker

Email: editor@folkdance.com

153 Race Street, San Jose, CA 95126

Assistant Editor: David Hillis

Address change and membership:

Marcia Rosenblatt, membership@folkdance.com

News from Around the Bay: Contributions from clubs

## Federation Officers, North

President: Laura Richardson, president@folkdance.com

Vice President: Clem Dickey, vicepresident@folkdance.com

Treasurer: Sabine Zappe, treasurer@folkdance.com

Recording Secretary: Betsy Moore, eambetsy@gmail.com

Editor: Loui Tucker, editor@folkdance.com

Website: www.folkdance.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/FolkDanceFed

## Federation Officers, South

President: Diane Baker

Vice President: Greg Solloway

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927 Springfield Drive, Millbrae, CA 94030

To post dance event flyers on the Federation's website,

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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.

Your advertising helps support *Let's Dance!* Please make checks payable to the **Folk Dance Federation**. Ad rates:

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**Mail checks to: Loui Tucker, Editor  
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**WELCOME NEW  
FEDERATION MEMBERS**  
Leslie Halberg – Redwood City

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Laura Richardson

Your Mom was wrong. Having fun is **not** a waste of time. The more intelligent a person is, the more they need to play. There are many excellent ways to relax and restore balance. Music, dancing, art, games, walks in nature, exercise of all kinds – these are healthy diversions that tune up our system and allow our brains to quiet down. Particularly in times of stress, we need to set aside anxiety and unwind. Give yourself permission to go have fun, in all the ways you love the best. Make time for the pleasurable activities in your life. You will be better equipped to re-engage with problem-solving, chores, and tasks after a break. Get out there and recharge your batteries!

For dancers who are fortunate enough to live near urban centers with many dance opportunities, the spring and summer bring options to enjoy dance weekends with visiting instructors. It's a great way to learn new dances from globally recognized teachers. I had the good fortune to spend a recent weekend at Aaron Alpert's Nirkoda Romani dance workshop, which included guest instructors Cristian Florescu and Sonia Dion. Aaron is a wonderful local Israeli teacher who is generous with his time and energy within the Bay Area dance community. You can find places to dance with Aaron at [nirkoda.com](http://nirkoda.com).

Cristian and Sonia live in Canada, but Cristian was born in Romania, and this power couple of positive, affable, kind-hearted teachers have impressive dance resumé's. You can find out what they are up to at [soniacristian.net](http://soniacristian.net). I am delighted that they will be coming to Stockton Folk Dance Camp this summer. We had a great time learning new dances from Aaron, Cristian and Sonia. All three instructors taught joyfully – the emphasis was on the “up” beat!

One thing that made an impression was that Cristian and Sonia were constantly urging us to step *into* the circle, to bring everyone *closer together* in the line. Most of us are not used to dancing elbow to elbow, and we all tended to drift apart in the line when left to our own devices. Learning to dance in closer proximity is a bit unsettling. For one thing, you have to trust that you are not going to step on someone (or get stepped on) when you are dancing very close – a challenge when you are learning. Also, we all have specific comfortable boundaries that feel right, and I think trying to bend these invisible boundaries can be unnerving. Romanians dance close

together, so some of us had to be reminded again and again to step *into* the circle. The connection between dancers is much better if you are dancing closer together, and I learned to appreciate that feeling during the weekend. I also really enjoyed the two evening dance parties, one emceed by Loui Tucker and the other by Adony Beniares. Both of these amazing instructors give their time and energy generously to support folk dancing. And both of them know how to put together a fast and fun lineup of dances to keep everyone on their feet.

I recommend you take advantage of the teachers travelling through your area if you can. My whole brain needs to work to learn a new dance. I need to focus and observe and remember a new set of steps to new music. This takes effort but is also very exhilarating. I feel accomplished when I get the hang of a new dance and am buoyed by the knowledge that I can still learn. Picking up new dances is a reminder of our own flexibility. We may not bend or leap as well as yesterday, but we can still figure out how to wrap a new dance around our own skin, like a comfortable jacket. We adapt the dance and make it our own, adjusted for our own capacity. Remember that you can *rely on the line* for strength and stability. This is a parable for our times, too. The more we stick together and the more we learn to communicate with each other, the better off we will all be.

By the way, check your last issue of *Let's Dance!* magazine. Do you see the date under your name? That's the date your membership in the Folk Dance Federation expires. Thank you for being part of our dance family! Your annual membership dues help our organization publish *Let's Dance!* and help put on dance events and offer scholarships for dance activities.

Marcia Rosenblatt does an incredible job maintaining our membership database, but she needs your help. If you move, *please let her know*. If your dues are due, please remit. If she emails you with a question, please try to respond. You can reach Marcia at: [membership@folkdance.com](mailto:membership@folkdance.com). *Thank you, Marcia!*

Stay healthy, happy, and moving to the beat!



Laura Richardson. Photo by E. Khuner.



# Jim Gold International Folk Tours 2025

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**BULGARIA-Koprivshitsa Festival (held every 5 years): July 29-August 11**

Led by Ventsi Milev:: Sofia, Plovdiv, Bansko, Veliko Turnovo, Koprivshitsa

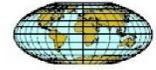
**ROMANIA: Sept 28-Oct 12** Bucharest, Brasov, Sibiu, Cluj, Sighet Marmatiei

**GREECE-GREEK ISLANDS: Oct 4-17**

Led by Lee Otterholt, Maroula Konti, guide: Athens, Nauplia, Sparta, Olympia, Delphi, Meteora, Mycenae, and Epidaurus. **Greek Island Cruise:** Mykonos, Crete, Rhodes, Patmos, Kusadasi

**TURKEY: Oct 17-31**

Led by Lee Otterholt: Istanbul, Ankara, Cappadocia, Pamukkale, Izmir, Kusadasi, Pergamon, Troy, Canakkale, and Bursa



Travel broadens one!

## Western Europe

**SCANDINAVIA: June 10-23**

Led by Lee Otterholt: Oslo, Gothenburg, Helsingborg (Elsinore), Copenhagen

**IRELAND: Aug 2-14**

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

**SPAIN: Sept 11-24** Malaga, Ronda, Cadiz, Seville, Cordoba, Granada



## South America

**PERU-Nazca and Peruvian Amazon ext: May 21-30.**

Lima, Cusco, Machu Picchu, Puno, Sacred Valley, Lake Titicaca, Peruvian Amazon, Nazca

**ARGENTINA: Chile ext: Oct 5-15** Buenos Aires, Salta, Mendoza

**BRAZIL: Nov 3-14** Rio de Janeiro, Salvador, Iguassu Falls

**ECUADOR: Galapagos ext.: Dec 1-14**



## North America

**WESTERN CANADA: April 10-22** Calgary, Banff, Vancouver

**EASTERN CANADA: June 27-July 9** Montreal, Quebec, Halifax,

New Brunswick, Peggy's Cove (Nova Scotia), Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island

## Middle East

**EGYPT: Feb 20-March 2** Cairo, Nile River cruise, Luxor, Aswan

**ISRAEL: March 2-13, November 2-13**

Led by Lee Friedman and guided by Joe Freedman: Jerusalem, Masada, Tel Aviv, Galilee, Haifa, Safed, Golan Heights

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# Calendar of Events

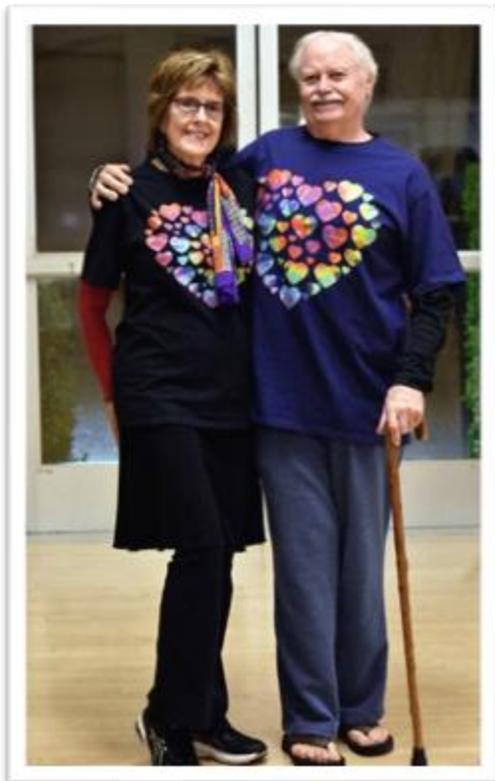
We reserve the right to edit all submissions; we assume no responsibility for accuracy.  
Additional events can be found at [folkdance.com](http://folkdance.com) (Community tab).

- MARCH 29** **LIVE MUSIC WITH CHUBRITZA.** Live Oak Grange, 1900 17th Avenue, Santa Cruz. 2-4:30 pm. \$15. Sponsored by the Cabrillo Folk Dancers. Most of you know that this is a great band because they've played for you at Stockton Folk Dance Camp and Statewide. Info: annienino73@gmail.com.
- MARCH 29** **RAZZMATAZZ ANNUAL RED & BLACK BALL.** Monroe Hall, 1400 W College Avenue in Santa Rosa, 7-10 pm. Info: marilynsmith@sbcglobal.net.
- MARCH 30** **KOPACHKA FOLK DANCERS 60TH ANNIVERSARY PARTY.** Strawberry Park Recreation Center. 118 E. Strawberry Drive, Mill Valley. 2-4:30 pm. \$15 (students \$7). Live Balkan dance music with Chubritza.
- APRIL 5** **BALKAN FOLK ENSEMBLE ČARDAK OPENING PARTY.** Holy Trinity Serbian Orthodox Church, 1700 School Street, Moraga. 1 pm-midnight. Info: cardakensemble@gmail.com. **See ad on p. 10.**
- APRIL 12** **PENINSULA COUNCIL FOLK DANCE PARTY.** St. Bede's Church Hall, 2650 Sand Hill Road, Menlo Park. Special session for beginning dancers 3-3:30; party: 3:30-6:30 pm. \$10. Theme: TBA. Info and requests: pfdcparty@gmail.com.
- APRIL 13** **FOLK DANCE FEDERATION BOARD MEETING.** 3-4:30 pm. Join via Zoom. Meeting ID: 813 4469 5944. Passcode: 705916. Various topics such as event planning, membership, scholarships, publicity, insurance, and budget are discussed.
- APRIL 19** **CAFÉ SHALOM MONTHLY ISRAELI DANCE PARTY.** Congregation Am Tikvah, 625 Brotherhood Way, San Francisco. 7:30-11:30 pm. \$10. Info: udy@yahoo.com; 669 444-1284.
- APRIL 19** **BLOSSOM FESTIVAL.** City College of San Francisco, 50 Frida Kahlo Way, Wellness Center, 3rd Floor, 11 am-4 pm. The first hour will be a lesson for beginning dancers. Recorded music alternating with live music by Da! Mozhem. *The Festival is free*, but on-campus parking is \$5. Use of public transit is encouraged (BART Balboa Park Station or SF Muni). Info: crb2crb@comcast.net. **See ad on p. 20.**
- APRIL 25-  
MAY 4** **BAY AREA DANCE WEEK.** It's 10 days of FREE dance events celebrating our dynamic and diverse Bay Area dance community. Your local club may be participating. If not, visit [bopsidy.com/h/badw](http://bopsidy.com/h/badw) and use the search engine to find local free dance events.
- MAY 2-4** **STATEWIDE FESTIVAL.** Portuguese Hall, 707 Huasna Road, Arroyo Grande. First session starts Friday, May 2, 1:40 pm. The Portuguese Hall has plenty of parking and is less than a mile off Hwy 101, about five miles from the ocean. There are restaurants in the village and hotels nearby. **See ad on p. 22.**



# THE FAMILY PHOTO ALBUM

Photos by L. Tucker and A. Partos.



Bonnie LeMat and Howard Young were dressed appropriately for the Saratoga Folk Dancers' Valentines Dance.



Federation President Laura Richardson (center) taught two beginning dancers some basic steps and simple dances before the recent Peninsula Council Party. Ray Sundby (far left) and Lon Radin (far right) assisted.



Ellie Wiener (left) and Denise Heenan chatted with Sonia Dion during the Nirkoda Romani weekend workshop hosted by Aaron Alpert in February. See review and more photos on p. 8.



Luiselle Yakas led the line, followed by Violet Ho and Ben Ron at Chango on a Friday evening in February.



Marina Troost and Neil Collier danced at the Festival of the Oaks. See the review and more photos on p. 7.

# A TASTE OF ESTONIA IN BERKELEY

by Alicia La Fetra

It was a beautiful day at Live Oak Park in Berkeley, perfect for this year's Festival of the Oaks, sponsored by the Berkeley Folk Dancers and the Folk Dance Federation of California. Having met and learned Estonian dances from Liina Teose at Stockton last year, I was happy to know that she was the teacher at this year's festival. Liina is warm, personable, and an excellent teacher. She taught five very accessible dances – Kungla Rahvas, Niljapuuri, Perekonnvalsid, Raditants, and Kikapuu.

The scarf dance Raditants caused much laughter as we learned and danced it. Who knew that “dip and dive” moves would cause that much hilarity? Liina was ever patient and pleased when she saw the joy on dancers' faces. Liina has played the accordion since she was 12 years old, and it was a treat that she played it during her workshop. It's always a pleasure to dance to live music.

Refreshments (pastries, breads, cookies, coffee/tea) were plentiful and sustained us throughout the day. Lunch after the workshop was delicious – salad, lentil soup, cheese, bread, crackers, and brownies were all quite tasty. A Federation Board meeting was held during the lunch hour and non-Board members were welcome to attend.

After lunch, we were treated to a performance by a Chinese Performing Arts and Culture Club. The Tibetan and Mongolian dances they presented were lively and further enhanced by their beautiful and colorful costumes.

At the back of the hall was a collection of costumes and costume parts for sale. This sale is a tradition at the Festival of the Oaks, and you could see dancers from time to time holding up garments for possible purchase.

The afternoon dance party was hosted by a rotating roster of emcees who kept the party humming. The great variety of dances ensured that the dance floor was always filled with enthusiastic dancers.



Greta Chang with a possible purchase.



Liina Teose



Raditants, the scarf dance.

It was another successful, well attended, and well organized Festival of the Oaks. Many thanks to the Berkeley Folk Dancers, the Folk Dance Federation of California, the committees, and all the helpers. And a special thanks to Liina for adding Estonian dances to our repertoire. They say it takes a village, and we dancers appreciate all the work and effort that go into hosting such an event!



The Chinese Performing Arts and Culture Club showed two dances.

Photos by A. Partos and L. Tucker.

# Nirkoda Romani

by Howard Young

Bonnie and I had the pleasure of attending the Romanian and Israeli dance workshop in February. Israeli master teacher Aaron Alpert invited Cristian Florescu and Sonia Dion to join him for a weekend of teaching and dance parties. We had not seen Cristian and Sonia for a while, so it was a pleasure to see them again. They drew a nice crowd, as one would suspect.

As usual, their teaching was enthusiastic and educational. The dances they taught were approachable, and they selected interesting music. I

especially appreciated that they used maps when introducing a dance. Sonia and Cristian do a wonderful job of providing the audience an awareness of regional differences in styling, music, and costumes. I love that they are making geography fun!

The dances Aaron taught were very nice and I appreciated the variety of music and style. His teaching is enthusiastic. It is wonderful to see the teacher having fun too!

Hats off to Aaron for organizing the event. Everything went smoothly and on schedule. Attendees appreciated the snack and beverage tables. The event also featured evening parties. Loui Tucker on Saturday night and Adony Beniares on Sunday night did a great job of keeping people dancing with a nice mix of varied dances.

In summary, it was a great weekend. Lots of folks from all over the Bay Area came as well as a few from out-of-state. It was nice to see old friends and make some new ones. Seeing Sonia and Cristian, plus the energy of the evening parties, made me want to return to Stockton Folk Dance Camp!



The author, dancing while awaiting surgery.



# FROM THE EDITOR

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

I'm almost done with the 1960s where Marcel Vinokur has made his first appearance in *Let's Dance!* magazine (April 1967). Below are more interesting bits from the issues published from mid-1950 to mid-1960.



March 1957: \$700 was raised by Pleasant Hill Folk Dancers for the March of Dimes. **Note**: That would be worth almost \$8,000 today.

June 1957: Dodie Allen is a square dancer who likes to enter contests. She recently won a trip to Hawaii that allowed her to visit local groups, plus a \$5,000 kitchen remodel (\$58,000+ in 2025!).

October 1958: They were packed in like sardines at the Woodminster Afterparty at Eagles Hall. Sale of tickets generated \$1,160+ for the Federation (**Note**: worth \$12,000+ today). Two more weddings of East Bay dancers. A new dance club: Young Adults Dance Group – for dancers out-of-high-school to 30 years old.

December 1958: 1000 dancers attended the Treasurer's Ball and there were also hundreds of spectators. 92 prizes were given away.

March 1959: A San Francisco youth group that's been seen at local parties consists of 32 young dancers who meet *before* school, 7:50-8:40 am, at Mission High School. The Folk Dance Carousel has a beginner class of 56! The Rikudom Israeli Dance Group has moved again (seventh location in nine years).

December 1960: The beginners class for teenagers will graduate 50 dancers in December! Two weddings were announced, including that of Bruce Mitchell and Virginia Bangert.

June 1961: Fresno dancer Herman Cellarius returned from a trip to Japan and shared a memory of watching a group of Japanese dancers perform the Czech dance Beseda in December. One of the performers was missing, so the costumed Santa Claus filled in!

November 1961: Some old folk dancers resent those kolo-maniacs. "Let them dance in the basement or while we are eating!" However, young people are particularly attracted to kolos, and they need to be incorporated and welcomed. Classes that feature kolos are filled to capacity!

November 1963: A Folk Dance Calendar is born and will be available at the Fresno Festival. Thank you to Marian and Ned Gault for their research for the sketches above the grid of days. Thank you to Vi Dexheimer for originating the idea and handling all the arrangements. **Note**: The Federation Board is discussing the possibility of publishing a folk dance wall calendar for 2026. See p. 14.

February 1964: Statewide 1964 in San Jose. Folk dance parties, kolo parties, after-parties, institute, costume parade, 18 exhibition groups. All parties are free; pay only for the institute (\$1.25), the concert (\$1.25), and the installation brunch (\$2). Also, *every 50th registration* will be refunded \$5. **Note**: That would be \$55 in 2025.

April 1966: A Young Adults Group (no one over 40 admitted) meets on Thursday evenings at Madelynne Green's studio in San Francisco. Three teachers are sharing teaching duties. The young dancers refer to Madelynne's other folk dance class as "for retired people."

April 1967: Shirley Eastman and Marcel Vinokur are sponsoring a Serbian/Macedonian Dance Institute in April. The hosting group, founded by Marcel in 1957, started out as an international folk dancing group but has become focused on Balkan/Israeli, and has many young single people.



A page from the 1964 Costume Calendar.



**BE PART OF THE BEGINNING**

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**WELCOME**  
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# BE A PART OF THE BEGINNING

by Janetta Redzic

I want to say thank you again to the Folk Dance Federation and its Promotion Fund for their generous grant to help support the ethnic dance group I am launching. I hope you will all come to the opening fundraiser for Čardak Balkan Folk Ensemble. It's a free event because the funds will be raised from the sale of food and drinks – so come with an appetite!

I was asked to explain how the ensemble got the name Čardak. Čardak is loosely translated as the top of a hill. The čardak that inspired the group ensemble's name is the same čardak that looked down on my father's childhood home. He spent time with friends and cousins on that čardak throughout grade school and high school. He found himself on the čardak as a soldier during the most brutal attacks during the war. The last time he physically stood on that čardak was the day that he was in battle and lost his father, my grandfather, in the battle. In many ways, the čardak gave my father life but also took a grand portion of it as well.

My father was a very shy and reserved man. I say this because he loved folk dancing and the sight of traditional Bosnian clothing, but there was no force in the world that would make him dance. Instead, the moment my sister and I were able to walk, he rushed to sign us up for our first folk dancing class.

My father sadly left us eight years ago and has not had the privilege of seeing me dance at parties, dance events, and on grand stages with Seattle's folk dancing group RADOST. As a result, I want to be able to remember him and his love for cultural preservation every time I look at my own group of dancers and send them on stage. This way, he is still with me in all ways except physically.

On April 5, at the launch of the Balkan Folk Ensemble Čardak, along with amazing Bay Area Balkan performances, we will be selling foods that are common all throughout the Balkans. On our savory menu, we will be offering:

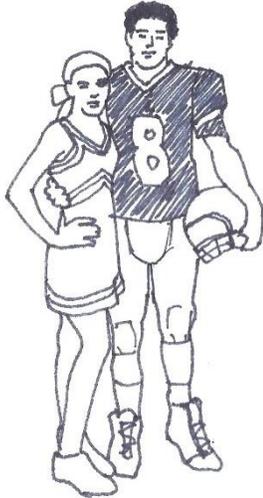
- Burekas (phyllo stuffed with beef)
- Sirnica/Tiropita (phyllo stuffed with cheese)
- Zeljanica/Spanakopita (phyllo stuffed with spinach)
- Fresh roasted lamb (roasted on site)
- Sarma (cabbage leaves stuffed with beef)
- Kotlovina (roasted chicken, sausage, veggies, and hotdogs for kids)
- Ćevapi i lepinja (beef sausages in pita)
- Oblatine (no-bake wafer cake)
- Baklava (filo pastry layered with nuts and honey)



# How I Started Folk Dancing

Illustrated by Susan Gregory

This is an occasional feature in *Let's Dance!* magazine. If you'd like to share your story, send it to [loui@loutucker.com](mailto:loui@loutucker.com) and Susan will illustrate it for an upcoming issue. No names are used, so your secret will be safe with us.



My husband and I were high school sweethearts. He was the jock, and I was the cheerleader.



Into his third glass of champagne, my athlete husband decided he could easily do the prisyadkas my sister's partner had done. Of course, he fell on his butt all three times he tried.



When we got married, my younger sister asked if she could perform a Russian folk dance at our wedding. She'd been in a performing group all through high school and, being children of Russian immigrants, I thought it was a great idea. She and her partner danced Hopak in gorgeous costumes and it was a big hit.



By the time he died, he had taught both our sons and one of our grandsons how to do them as well.

When we got back from our honeymoon, my husband signed us up for the local folk dance class. It took us almost a year of learning the basic repertoire before anyone would even consider teaching my husband prisyadkas, but he did eventually learn how to do them, along with several other Russian dance stunts. We were in the same performing group with my sister for several years. We danced with several folk dance groups over the years and, at 73, Rick could still do prisyadkas.

# FEDERATION NEWS



## LOOKING FOR A STATEWIDE 2026 COMMITTEE

The **Statewide Committee** will be in charge of organizing the Statewide Festival in May 2026. Yes, that's over a year away, but halls appropriate for dancing with nearby hotels and restaurants often need to be booked far in advance. Who will host this time?

2010 Sonoma	2016 Berkeley	2024 Newark
2012 Campbell/San Jose	2018 Sacramento	2025 Arroyo Grande
2014 Redding	2022 Petaluma	

Please contact Federation President Laura Richardson at [president@folkdance.com](mailto:president@folkdance.com) if you or your club is interested in being part of this important project.

## SCHOLARSHIPS ARE AVAILABLE

The Federation Scholarship Committee has funds available to help dancers attend folk dance workshops and camps that they might not otherwise be able to afford. Although most scholarships have been used for **Stockton Folk Dance Camp** ([folkdancecamp.org](http://folkdancecamp.org)) in the past, scholarships are available for *any* camp or workshop, including

- ✓ **Statewide** (May, [folkdance.com/event/statewide-2025](http://folkdance.com/event/statewide-2025))
- ✓ **June Camp** in the Midwest ([sites.google.com/site/junecampifd](https://sites.google.com/site/junecampifd))
- ✓ **Mainwoods** (August, [mainwoodsdancecamp.org](http://mainwoodsdancecamp.org))
- ✓ **East European Folklife Center Balkan music and dance camps** ([eefc.org](http://eefc.org))
- ✓ **Ti Ti Tabor Hungarian Folk Camp** ([tititabor.org](http://tititabor.org))
- ✓ **Lark Camp** (July, [larkcamp.org](http://larkcamp.org))
- ✓ **Bay Area Country Dance Society camps** ([bacds.org/camps](http://bacds.org/camps))
- ✓ **Kolo Festival** (Thanksgiving weekend, [kolofestival.org](http://kolofestival.org))



Also check out the listing on the **National Folk Organization** website for more ideas ([nfo-usa.com/camps-and-workshops](http://nfo-usa.com/camps-and-workshops)). To apply, fill out the form at [folkdance.com/services/scholarship-fund](http://folkdance.com/services/scholarship-fund) at least 45 days before the start of your event.

### ➡ APPLYING FOR A SCHOLARSHIP FOR STOCKTON FOLK DANCE CAMP? ⬅

Because the deadline for full payment for Stockton Camp is May 31, applications for a scholarship must be received by **May 20**.



## BAY AREA DANCE WEEK

This is our folk dance community's opportunity to open our doors to the general public to give our favorite activity a try – for free.

Visit [bopsidy.com/h/badw](http://bopsidy.com/h/badw) to sign up. It's free to dance groups to register their event or class, and it's free to the public.

While you're at the website, click on "Full Calendar" and browse the listings. There may be some events listed that you will want to attend.

# A Folk Dance Wall Calendar?

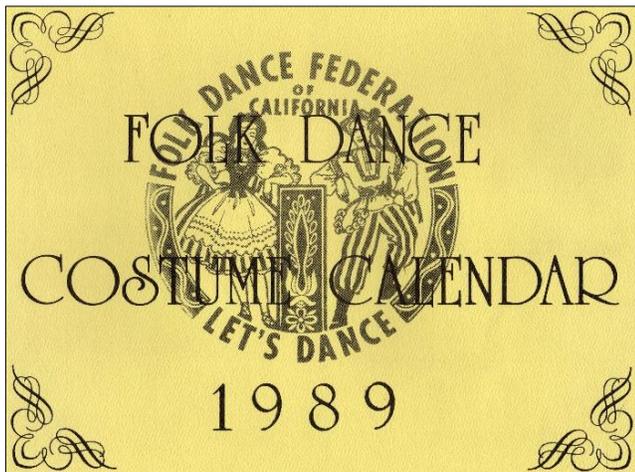
I suspect most people keep track of appointments and events on their phone or computer, but isn't there also a wall calendar somewhere in your home? Perhaps it's in the kitchen or a room you use as an office. You may rarely, if ever, write a date on it, but you refer to it when someone asks, "What day does next month start on?" or, "Does next month have five Fridays?"

Sometime in October or November, do you find yourself browsing the collection of wall calendars at a local bookstore or stationery store? There is such a wide range of choices – puppies and kittens, owls and lions, woods and beaches, flowers and sunsets, Norman Rockwell prints and scenes from Star Wars – that range in price from \$6-25. You can even upload a dozen photos to a website, and they will produce and mail you a wall calendar with your photos.

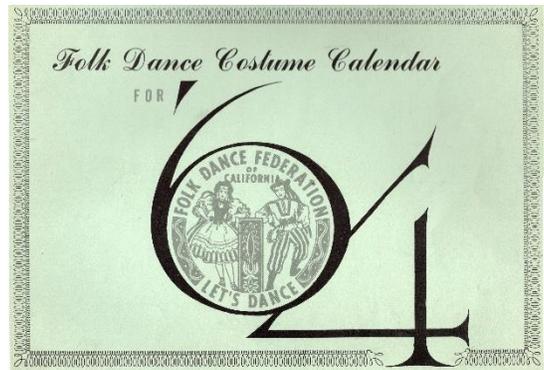
The Folk Dance Federation produced wall calendars for many years starting in 1964. They were referred to as Costume Calendars because they featured one national or regional costume per month. For a few years in the 1970s, each page included a recipe for a food associated with that country or region.

The last few years, the calendars featured photos of dancers in costume instead of drawings. The last one was printed in 1989.

Would you buy a calendar featuring photos of your favorite folk dance teachers? Or ones taken at local dance events? The Folk Dance Federation is considering taking on this project. Watch for details in future issues of *Let's Dance!*



This is the cover of the last calendar that was printed.



**KONYAKSKRANSAR (Brandy Rings)**

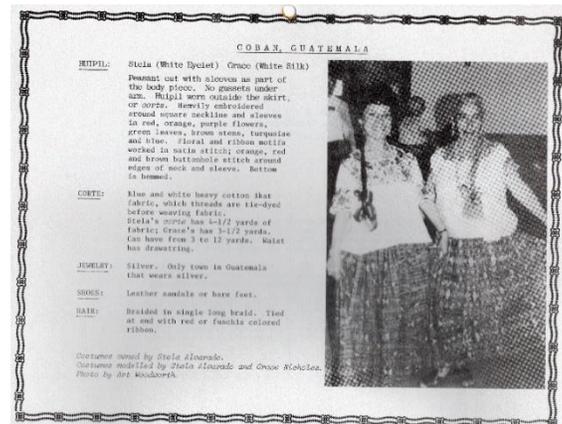
1-3/4 cup butter (soft) 1/2 cup egg yolks  
 1/4 cup sugar 1 egg yolk  
 1/4 cup nutmeg 1/4 cup brandy  
 1/2 cup sour cream 1/4 cup flour

Cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Blend in nutmeg and salt. Beat in egg yolks and brandy. Gradually blend in flour until smooth. Shape dough into three portions. Wrap each well and chill 1 to 2 hours. Remove and work with one portion of dough. Roll out into a rope about 1/4" long and 1/4" thick, curve and pinch together to form a ring; for cookies in center of ball and place a walnut, an almond, or small chocolate bits, for 10 to 12 minutes.

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	
<b>S E P T E M B E R</b>		Notes:						
		5	6	7	8	9	10	11
			6	7	8	9	10	11
		12	13	14	15	16	17	18
		19	20	21	22	23	24	25
		26	27	28	29	30	Notes:	
	Hilaga Festival Sonoma (CA)			Yom Kippur				

**1971**

This 1971 calendar had a short recipe on each page along with the drawing of the costume. This one was a recipe for Konyakskransar (Brandy Rings).



# SPEAKING OF DANCING

by Gigi Jensen

## Listening to Our Elders

At the beginning of February I lost a dear friend, Amanda Almonte. You might not recognize her name but if you ever attended the San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival or its auditions, you experienced her handiwork. Amanda was one of the announcers at the auditions at McKenna Theater at San Francisco State University. She was on the board of directors for San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival, and she was a founder of Ensembles Ballet Folklorico de San Francisco. She also danced flamenco. Ms. Almonte was a contemporary of Susie Cashion, and they knew each other.



This year at Stockton Folk Dance Camp's Winter Weekend there were two wonderful roundtable discussions about folk dance's glory days in the 1970s. Sherry Cochran assembled two groups – one of West Coast's Intersection movers and doers, and the other of East Coast notables. All the participants had been dancing for at least 45 years.

I listened to our dance elders talk about their folk dance journey, the one that paved the way for ours. What struck me was that they talked about the same issues faced by organizers and dancers now. They need space, publicity, music, dancers, musicians, and someone who will bring the snacks. Things haven't changed all that much – only what methods are effective now. Remember that they had their challenges, too. It's easy to forget those when in the throes of remembering "the good old days."



Amanda Almonte

Let's recognize our dance elders for what they are: rich storehouses of knowledge. They have walked the walk we're walking. Actually, many of them are still active. Ask them for their ideas, experiences, concerns, solutions. Ask them to listen and advise you. They may know how to do things a bit smarter, a bit easier. They are the perfect people to help connect the lessons of the past with the future successes to come.

In the 22 years that I knew Amanda, I had the good sense to do just that. She contributed to the success of my dance production company and my own development as a dance artist. I will miss her suggestions, her occasional swift kick in my pants, and her ever-available soft shoulder. I will miss her greatly.

I love talking about dance. If you do too, drop me a hello at [gigi@tangoandmoredance.com](mailto:gigi@tangoandmoredance.com).

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## HAVE YOU VISITED THE FOLK DANCE FEDERATION'S WEBSITE LATELY?

Planning a trip for business or pleasure? Want to know if there is folk dancing on a convenient night where you are going? Go to [folkdance.com](http://folkdance.com), where you will find two important links under COMMUNITY - WHERE TO DANCE:

- South CA (California Folk Dance Federation South)
- US (National Folk Organization)

[And don't forget to pack your dance shoes!]



# NEWS FROM AROUND THE BAY...

## RAZZMATAZZ – Marilyn Smith

Every year we celebrate **Mardi Gras at our Tuesday night folk dance class**. I bring my collection of Mardi Gras beads and feather masks, and we dance to a recording of Mardi Gras Fever by local Sonoma County band Gator Beat.

This year Mardi Gras was also close to Baba Marta day, which is celebrated on March 1 in Bulgaria. **Steve Ayala made the evening special by bringing a Happy Baba Marta sheet cake** for all of us to enjoy and a branch of cherry blossoms to mark the end of winter and beginning of spring. Some of us also sported *martenitsas*, red and white yarn wrist bands or tassels.



In Bulgaria, *martenitsas* are worn throughout March until a stork or a swallow is seen, symbolizing the coming of spring, warmer weather and well-being. Once the stork or a swallow appears, the *martenitsa* is



taken off and hung on a blooming tree. It is common in the spring to see trees festooned with *martenitsas*.

A few years ago on March 1, as I was walking on the Bay Trail near where I live, I suddenly spotted something red and white hanging from a tree. I had to get a closer look. It was a *martenitsa*!

## BERKELEY FOLK DANCERS – Carol Hayden

**The Festival of the Oaks** was a big success and Berkeley Folk Dancers thanks the many dancers who came to enjoy Liina, the luncheon, and the dance party.

Mark your calendar for our next afternoon dance party, which will be hosted by the intermediate class on **Saturday, May 24**, 2-5 pm, at Live Oak Hall at Shattuck and Berryman in Berkeley. There isn't a theme yet, but you can find out in the next issue of *Let's Dance!*

BFD recently said good-bye to our faithful office attendant, Nailah. She was there almost every night we danced since coming back from the COVID pandemic. She was laid off because of budget cuts and we will miss her cheerful and supportive presence.

We'd also like to share these brief bits of poetry:

Roses are red, violets are blue,  
BFD smiles are many, frowns are few!

Roses are red, daisies are yellow,  
I love dancing with a handsome fellow!

Bananas are yellow, so is a mango,  
Enjoy them both with El Gaucho Tango!

## THE ANNUAL OFFICERS BALL MARK YOUR CALENDAR!



### Saturday, October 4

is the date set for the **annual Officers Ball**. Please mark your calendar and plan to attend. This is a fundraiser for the Folk Dance Federation, and your support is appreciated. The Institute Committee will be contacting local teachers about presenting dances at this event. **If you are a teacher and would like to be considered**, or you are a dancer who'd like to **suggest a teacher**, please contact Lon Radin at [lonradin@gmail.com](mailto:lonradin@gmail.com).

If you'd like to assist with the planning and setup (advertising, decoration, meal planning and preparation, planning the afternoon institute, etc.), another hand is always welcome. Please contact Federation President Laura Richardson at [president@folkdance.com](mailto:president@folkdance.com) if you are interested.

# ... AND BEYOND

## SAN FRANCISCO GROUPS – Linda Milhoan

We hope to have a good turnout on **April 19 for this year's Blossom Festival** at City College of San Francisco. Because the date of the festival falls outside the dates of Bay Area Dance Week, we are not official participants this year. However, **there is still no admission charge!** We have arranged for Da! Mozhem to play for us, and Craig Blackstone will be emceeding the recorded music program. The first hour will be easy dances for beginners.

**Note the new time: 11 am-4 pm.** See the ad on p. 20 for further details.

Did you know that, although the San Francisco Council held a festival every April for many years, **the name Blossom Festival was not used until 1965?** In 1964 it was called the Spring Festival, and in 1963 it was called California First. When the San Francisco Council dissolved, Changs assumed hosting the Blossom Festival in 2000. So, counting from 1965, **this is the 60th Anniversary of the Blossom Festival!**

## PENINSULA FOLK DANCE COUNCIL

*Clem Dickey*

**Palomanians** have learned the dance Ara Homecoming (Steve Kotansky, music by Ara Dinkjian) and are reviewing Syrtyos Serifos.

**SAVE THE DATE:  
INTERNATIONAL DANCE  
ARTS COLLECTIVE  
Spring Showcase and Family Dance  
Thursday, May 1, 7 pm.  
Venue in Rocklin to be announced.**



Farther south, the Saratoga Folk Dancers have been using the last part of the dance session – 9:30 on – to check our collective memories of some dances we have not done for a while: Trei Păzeste Bătrânesc, Trei Pazeste de la Bistret, Gypsy Wine, Mishol Hapere, Takanata, even Swing. Alan Rothchild taught Hora Vrânceană, a Sonia and Cristian dance from Aaron Alpert's recent Nirkoda Romani workshop. And our Salsa Rueda repertoire is slowly improving.

**Parties coming up:** (1) Saratoga Folk Dancers "Seeing Spots" Party Thursday, March 27, and (2) the Peninsula Council's monthly party Saturday, April 12 emceed by our Federation President, Laura Richardson.



Above is a photo of **Adony Beniares teaching a dance to the Palomanians on a Tuesday night in February.** It recently occurred to me that, in all the years since 2017, when I became the editor of *Let's Dance!* magazine, I have never included a photo of the Palomanians. I have printed photos of dance groups in Turlock, Monterey, Garden Valley, Roseville, Chico, Santa Rosa, Petaluma, and many more distant locales, but not a single photo of dancing at the Palomanians – and they dance a mere 30 minutes from my home. My excuse? I teach a class on Tuesday nights and, when I get an occasional night off, I stay home and relax. In February I ended the photo drought.

Fun fact: When the Folk Dance Federation was formed in May of 1942, the Palomanians was one of the first 10 clubs to join. Two others were Changs and Berkeley Folk Dancers, and those three are the only clubs from the original 10 that still exist today.

~ Loui Tucker, Editor

# A Small Record Player Story

by Kevin Greek

Ever since the first folk dance record needle hit the groove in the late 1800s, dancers have been delighted to practice their art at any time convenient to them instead of waiting for too-often-unavailable musicians. At the dawn of recorded folk dance music, dancers loved the independence of dancing when they wanted to, but the record engineering and distribution system had not yet developed for easy selection. It would take 70-80 years of development for thousands of different recordings of dances by various artists to be available, and by then the use of easily recorded tape cassettes brought on the decline of the record.

A record, in case the reader is under the age of 30, is a disk with a narrow groove spiral that is placed on a turntable and played with a stylus. The stylus starts at the edge and travels to the inside. Flip the disk over and you could play music on other side. Before 1955 they were fragile 78 rpm (revolutions per minute) records, but then in the late 40s the “unbreakable” LP (long-play record) was introduced. LPs played at either 45 or 33 rpm and often came in a cardboard sleeve that had an attractive image like a book on one side, and the other side had notes in print large enough for most people to read with details such as track titles, instruments played, musicians, and lyrics, along with commentary, history, or culture notes. Usually known as albums, people would actually travel to record stores to browse these items for hours with a dreamy look on their face.

The 45 rpm record, a 7” diameter record with a 1½” diameter hole, was easy for a DJ to grab and quickly cue for a single dance per side. The format was also too tempting for mischievous teens to kneel down and throw, challenging how far the record could skim across the dance floor. The 33 rpm record was usually a 12” diameter disk that played up to 20 minutes per side, but the dance DJ had to squint and position the stylus carefully to start the play at the beginning of a track.

Records took some care to maintain. A poorly handled but well-loved and used record was liable to collect dust and scratches which would detrimentally affect the quality of the music but never the dancing. Sometimes when dancers jumped and stamped in unison, the phonograph needle would also jump, leading to some confusion.

The remedy for dancers skipping requires negotiation and acceptance, so it was easier to prevent the needle skipping. A weight such as a nickel or penny would often be taped to the top of the needle case. If you want to know more about dancing with records, ask any dancer over 60.



The first folk dance recording collections began about 1910, if not a bit earlier. The British folk dance scholar Cecil Sharp (1859-1924) supervised recording sessions of English Country and Morris dances. Cecil lived at a time when documenting dance tunes meant transcribing them or learning to play and sing them from those who knew them.

In the 1940s, Michael Herman opened a folk dance center in New York which grew to host frequent dance classes, workshops, teacher training, and festivals. The Michael Herman Folk Dance Orchestra would eventually produce several hundred excellent folk and contra dance recordings under his Folk Dancer label.

Interest in folk dance grew in the post-war period when soldiers returned with a new-found interest in overseas cultures, and as programs to educate and integrate people among cultures developed. With this growing popularity, record stores and record sales peaked. A substantial number of record labels emerged to supply international folk dance music. Michael Herman and his Folk Dancer record label allegedly had a stock of 50,000 records, a stock that he refused to sell during the last 20 years of his life, even after cassette tape sales became more popular. Michael Herman died in 1996.

The California Folk Dance Federation has a small but diverse collection of donated folk dance 78s, 45s, and LPs in its archive, carefully sorted and boxed. If cared for properly, vinyl records can last well over 100 years. Although many folk dance music recordings on disk were re-released on CD for a time, there is a large number that still have not. These records are available for researchers, scholars, or anyone with a bit of nostalgia.

Because what would music on a record be without a way to play the record, we have a small



portable record player in the archives in Santa Clara. A little larger than the size of a ream of paper, the player is capable of playing LPs, 45s and, equipped with a suitable needle, even 78 rpm records. It has two tiny built-in stereo speakers, stereo output connections, and a means to convert records to audio files on a USB flash drive or SD card so tracks from the record can be stored, played, and processed on modern audio equipment. Finally, it has a sturdy case with a carrying handle, a colorful orange bottom, and a mosaic of colors on its top.

Even today, vinyl is valued and played by a steadfast group of audiophiles and collectors. Used records can be searched for and purchased online. There has also been a surprising comeback for LPs. Since 2016, vinyl album sales have increased from 13.1 million to 49.6 million in 2023. Although the heyday of the folk dance record is long past, appreciation for the memories they evoke and the joy of dance to their music is still strong.

**ORIENTAL TURKEY May 6<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> 2026 (tentative)**  
with **TINEKE & MAURITS van Geel** and **AHMET DEMIRBAGH**



Ahmet Demirbagh is THE researcher of dance, known all over Turkey and founder of the folklore teacher education in Turkey. His former students with their roots in local folklore are ready to teach us Turkish, Kurdish, Arabic, Yezidi and Turkmen dances and we include an interesting sightseeing program.

A detailed tour program and option to register will be announced autumn 2025 on [www.tinekevangeel.nl](http://www.tinekevangeel.nl)

**Note: this tour is in 2026 – so plan ahead!**

# Blossom International Folk Dance Festival

NOTE NEW TIME AND DATE!

Sat., April 19, 2025!  
Free admission!

## Location:

CCSF Wellness Center  
50 Frida Kahlo Way  
San Francisco, CA

(enter at Ocean Ave & Howth St)

## Schedule:

11:00 – noon: Dancing for All Ages  
Noon – 4:00pm: General Dancing



With Live Music  
from Special Guest  
**DA!**  
**MOZHEM**

Because of parking limitations, you may want to consider carpooling or public transportation. On-campus parking is available for a fee. For campus parking, see:

<https://www.ccsf.edu/campus-police/parking-information>

Questions? Contact us at [changsdancers@aol.com](mailto:changsdancers@aol.com)

*Changs Int'l Folk Dancers, City College of San Francisco & Folk Dance Federation of CA*

# What's Up Down South?

– News from Southern California –

Absent a written review of the latest festivals in southern California – Laguna Festival and the Lunar New Year Festival – below are photos of both events. *Photos by W. Chiang and M. Rayman*



Lee Otterholt (third from left) was the other teacher at the Lunar New Year Festival.

Rebecca Tsai (right) taught several Chinese dances at the Lunar New Year Festival, including this one using scarves.



The Laguna Clubhouse was beautifully decorated and full of happy dancers.

Tineke and Maurits van Geel were the featured teachers at the Laguna Festival.

The Laguna Festival participants were treated to performances by three local groups, including a group of children.



On a much sadder note, Valerie Daley shared this photo she took of the ruins of the Altadena Community Church, the Pasadena Co-op's dance venue. All of the club's equipment was wiped out in the fire. "I'm so wonderfully impressed by what love and solace we have felt from our northern siblings."



YOU'LL BE THERE, WON'T YOU?

PREREGISTER BY APRIL 5!

# 2025 Statewide Dance Festival

## May Day in the Village

### May 2 to 4, 2025



At the Portuguese Hall, 707 Huasna Rd. in the Village of Arroyo Grande, five miles from the beach



### Two Master Teachers:



**Željko Jergan**  
Croatian dances



**Billy Burke**  
No. Macedonian dances & more



Live Music by Chubritza

More info to follow at [www.statewide.folkdance.com](http://www.statewide.folkdance.com)



# Statewide 2025 in Arroyo Grande – May Day in the Village

by Margaret Lange

The Statewide 2025 dance festival, May 2- 4, is in Arroyo Grande, California. Two master teachers, Željko Jergan and William (Billy) C. Burke, will bring a wealth of knowledge, each with over 50 years of experience, to their workshops.

A native of Varaždin, Croatia, **Željko Jergan** is a renowned choreographer and teacher of Croatian dance. He was a leading performer with the Croatian National Folk Ensemble LADO and performed with the Zagreb National Ballet and modern dance companies. Since moving to the United States in 1986, Željko has created hundreds of original choreographies for amateur and professional ensembles worldwide. Željko has shared his knowledge and stylings of Croatian folk dance through seminars and workshops in the United States, Canada, Europe, Japan, and Taiwan.



**Billy Burke**, a native of California, was introduced to folk dance at an early age by his mother, who studied the field of folk dance. Billy became a professional dancer at 19 and toured the United States and Canada with the Don Cossack Choir. In 1970, he moved to Los Angeles and joined the AMAN Folk Ensemble. He was also the original director of the Chamber Ensemble, which toured schools in the Los Angeles area. Moving from the stage to the classroom, he taught traditional and traditional/recreational dance in Los Angeles public schools for 37 years. He parlayed his experience in dance education into his book *A Celebration of Diversity: The Introduction of Traditional/Recreational Dance into the Primary and Secondary Classroom*, which was published in 2024. At Statewide, Billy will be presenting dances from Northern Macedonia, plus some from other areas.

To enhance the experience of learning challenging new dances, the festival will include **two dance parties with international dance music** by the multi-instrumental band Chubritza, plus **a cultural talk by the president of Nipomo’s historic DANA Adobe**, **a performance by the Solvang dancers**, a happy hour featuring **the music of Big Rock Balalaika**, puzzles and crafts, and **a free community dance on Sunday afternoon** that will include the Maypole dance.

As if two master teachers, parties, and enhancements weren’t enough reason to attend the Statewide festival, the California Central Coast area is **rich with natural beauty and cultural significance** and offers much to see and do for those who can extend their stay or for anyone bringing a partner less inclined to dance.

The **Village of Arroyo Grande** features historical buildings and museums, antique stores, boutique shops, a music store, and restaurants and cafes. The **Pacific Ocean is a five-mile drive away**. Five beach cities line the coast, each with unique charm: Grover Beach, Oceano, Pismo Beach, Shell Beach, and Avila Beach.



Venture farther north to Highway 1 and explore the beach cities of Los Osos, Morro Bay, Cayucos, and Cambria.

About 15 miles up Highway 101 from Arroyo Grande sits **San Luis Obispo, a vibrant college town** with many shops and eateries. The **Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa**, founded in 1772, is in the heart of downtown, near the SLO Museum of Art and the historical museum housed in a Carnegie Library built in 1905.

Over **400 vineyards and wineries** are sprinkled throughout Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties. Over **15 golf courses** from Nipomo to Paso Robles feature differing geography and style. For nature immersion and spectacular ocean and bay views, there are hiking and walking trails for every level.

**For a detailed list of places and activities**, Statewide website ([socalfolkdance.org/statewide.htm](http://socalfolkdance.org/statewide.htm)) has a list prepared by the host dance club, BayOsos Folk Dancers from Los Osos, of some of their personal favorites. On the website, you’ll also find a **link to the host hotel**, details on dining during the festival, directions, and a link to submit requests for the dance parties. **Early registration ends April 5th**. Registration is available online through Ticket Tailor (a \$6 fee added) or by check via USPS to registrar (download registration form from website).

On behalf of the BayOsos Folk Dancers and the Folk Dance Federation of California South, we hope to see you on the dance floor in Arroyo Grande in May.

# STATEWIDE 2025 FOLK DANCE FESTIVAL

May 2-4

Portuguese Hall, 707 Huasna Road, Arroyo Grande

(Please register individually, one form per person)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Street address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Group, if any: \_\_\_\_\_



**FESTIVAL PACKAGE** (Includes ALL workshops and parties EXCEPT Saturday Dinner and Sunday Box lunch – see below)  
 **\$170 when payment is received by April 5**

**Daily Events ONLY for early registration received by March 31**

- \$65 Friday afternoon dance workshop and evening dance.
- \$90 All day Saturday, AM and PM workshops and evening dance.
- \$30 Sunday morning workshop, Sunday afternoon no charge.

**Subtotal Festival Package and Events: \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

## AT THE DOOR

<b>Friday</b>	
<b>Classes</b>	<b>\$35</b>
<b>Party</b>	<b>\$40</b>
<b>Saturday</b>	
<b>AM Classes</b>	<b>\$35</b>
<b>PM Classes</b>	<b>\$35</b>
<b>Party</b>	<b>\$40</b>
<b>Sunday</b>	
<b>Reviews</b>	<b>\$35</b>
<b>Afternoon</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$220</b>

## Additional offerings:

(Meals available ONLY with pre-registration)

- \$43 Saturday Happy Hour and Catered Dinner.  
Mediterranean meal, vegetarian/vegan option. Happy Hour.  
Big Rock Balalaikas will serenade. BYOB basis for wine and beer.
- \$19 box lunch with water bottle  
Sandwiches, vegetarian & chicken option.
- Consider making a donation. Thank you!

**Total enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

## Host hotel: Hampton Inn and Suites

1400 W Branch St, Arroyo Grande.

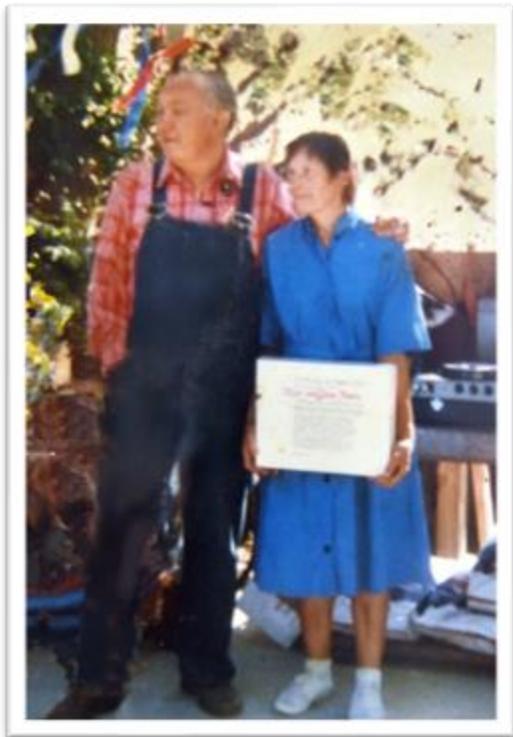
Group rates are available; see link on Statewide website.

Ample onsite parking. Generous snacks will be provided. The Arroyo Grande Village is close by and provides a wide variety of dining opportunities.

**To register with this mail-in form:** Send form with your check (**made payable to Folk Dance Federation of CA, South**) to: Statewide registrar, c/o M. Lange, 421 N Las Flores Dr, Nipomo, CA 93444. Please write one check for registration and additional offerings. **Online Registration: [Statewide.folkdance.com](http://Statewide.folkdance.com). Visit the Statewide 2025 webpage [statewide.folkdance.com](http://statewide.folkdance.com)** for the latest information about schedules, teachers, hotels, restaurants, parking, directions, etc.

**Masks are optional; proof of vaccination requirements will follow CDC, State, and County COVID regulations at the time of the event. Statewide 2025 is sponsored by the Folk Dance Federation of California, South, a non-profit organization.**

## FROM THE *LET'S DANCE!* PHOTO ARCHIVES



Can you identify these two people? The **THIRD** person to provide the correct answer will win a \$25 gift card. Send your answer to [editor@folkdance.com](mailto:editor@folkdance.com) or [loui@loutitucker.com](mailto:loui@loutitucker.com).

I know the quality is not great, but the original was in poor condition. The two people contributed a great deal to the dance community 1980-2000.

## *In the last issue*



The dance is **Dobrujanska Reka** (there are alternate spellings). Yes, Laura's left foot is a twisted, but the rest of the dancers are clear.

In addition to the 11 correct answers, several wrong guesses focused only the arm position and thought might be Gorani, Nazeli Bar, Heyamoli, or Ooska Gookas.

## **WE HAVE A WINNER!**

The winner this month was **Marilyn Smith**, the long-time leader of the Razzmatazz group that meets in Santa Rosa. Marilyn started teaching folk dance in 1970 and continues teaching to this day. Marina Troost is working on a full dance bio of Marilyn. Watch for that in a future issue of *Let's Dance!*

## **Cynthia C. Jergan, 1962-2025**



Cindy Jergan, wife of master teacher Željko Jergan, recently lost her four-and-a-half-year battle with pancreatic cancer.

Cindy was also an accomplished dancer and a featured performer with the Tamburitians. She traveled to Croatia and became the first American to perform with the National State Ensemble, LADO. Cindy and Željko met while she was traveling in Croatia in the 1980s, and they returned to the United States together. They were married 38 years.

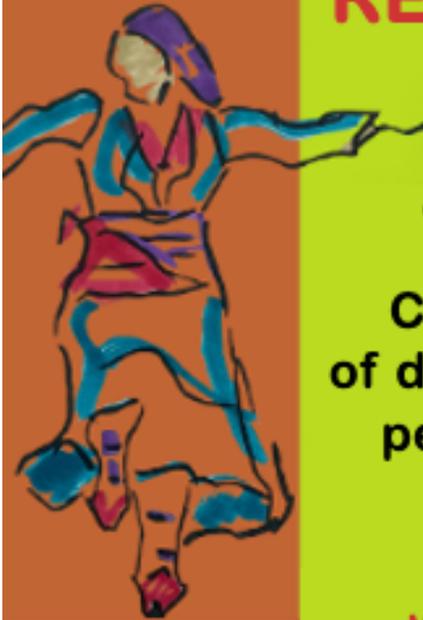


The family welcomes donations in Cindy's name to Croatian National Hall Javor, 805 East Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15212.

# STOCKTON

FOLK DANCE CAMP

**REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!**



**July 20 – July 27, 2025**  
**July 27 – August 3, 2025**

Come join us for one or both weeks of dancing, friendship, and fun at our in-person camp in Stockton, California

Check out

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**Gabriel Frontera – Spanish Couple**

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**Ed Austin – Classic Dances**

**Stacy Rose – Contrás**

**and our amazing band**

**Tom Pixton, Ralph Iverson, and Brian Wilson**

<https://stocktonfolkdancecamp.org>



# WE'RE STILL DANCING IN CHICO

by Memo Keswick

World Dance (aka folk dance) is alive and well in Chico, California. Our local community has an active non-profit organization, Chico World Dancers (CWD), that sponsors weekly club dancing (Sundays 2-4pm) and mostly monthly parties (Sundays 4:30-7:30 pm), which are a mixture of live music and recordings. More recently, the group has decided to slowly support contra dancing too!

Besides club dancing and parties, CWD has a history of supporting visiting artists. Most recently, are our fond memories of the Chico workshops held with Jaap Leegwater and Filip Filipov. We've also hosted through the years professional Bulgarian musicians led by the Kolevi or Dragnevi families.

Dancing in Chico has changed in form and substance over the years. For example, initial local leadership was by folks from the larger folk dancing movement that flourished after World War II (1960s-1970s). Then there was the folk dancing led by students at California State University Chico (1970s-1980s). When those students graduated, the folk dancing moved to rented space in dance halls.

During this period, Bonnie and Ralph Gagnon moved to Chico and became strong leaders of our weekly club dancing (1980s-2020s). They held regular dance planning meetings at their home, contributed to teaching dances, and managed all the music for the club dancing. They also brought back many dances from their annual attendance at Stockton Folk Dance Camp. Simultaneously, Memo and Judy Keswick became the principal organizers for live music parties.

To support these parties, Memo formed and led many different musician configurations over these years. Also, during these periods, World Dance (which it was now being called) was often taught through the local recreation district and the Osher Lifelong Learning Chico chapter. In 2018, the CWD nonprofit organization was formed, and in 2019 Bonnie Gagnon passed. These events led to our current dance organization.

Currently, local dancing is a blend of Ralph Gagnon's and CWD. Dancers are a mixture of folks who have danced in Chico since the 1970s, taken classes offered in the community over the years, together with folks who have danced elsewhere and moved to Chico. Chico dancing has truly benefited from these relocations!

Live music continues by musicians who have played at the monthly CWD parties over the years. More recently, weekly music classes have recruited new musicians to sing and play for dancers. It recently has become more of a problem to find space/time for all to perform!

World Dance has been much alive in Chico over the decades. We hope to remain sustainable through club dancing, teaching dances, singing, and music. The CWD also hopes that branching out to contra dance will not only help contra dance enthusiasts but increase the overall awareness of available social dancing opportunities. We look forward to what 2025 brings us!



Ralph and Bonnie Gagnon at Stockton Folk Dance Camp in 2008. *Photo by G. Milton.*



The Chico group and their hall at the Chico Women's Club during a recent party with live music.

## Oige ja Vasemba

(Estonia)

Oige ja Vasemba (OH-ii-geh yah VAH-sehm-bah) means “right and left.” This dance was presented by Liina Teose at the 2024 Stockton Folk Dance Camp held at the University of the Pacific. Ullo Toomi, the father of Estonian folk dance, took the folkloric Oige ja Vasemba dance, in which dancers are moving in one direction only, and added steps to each section so that the dancers would return to their partners.

The dance was introduced by Walter Grothe at the 1957 Stockton Folk Dance Camp. It was also taught by Heidi Vorst at the 1992 Stockton Folk Dance Camp at an afternoon workshop.

**Music:** 2/4 meter Many versions of this popular Estonian song are available for download on the internet, including the recording made by Michael Herman’s Folk Orchestra in 1956.

**Video:** An internet search for ‘Oige ja Vasemba’ will yield multiple videos, including one of a mass dance at a stadium.

**Formation:** Circle of couples, W on M’s L, hands joined in V-pos.

**Steps & Styling:** A simple walking step, one step per count, two steps per measure.

Grand Right and Left: M face CCW, W face CW, each extending and joining R hands. Beg L, walk fwd two steps (cts 1, 2), passing R shldr while pulling gently with R hand. Extend L hand to next person. Repeat cts 1 and 2 with same ftwk in same direction, pulling gently with L hand. Can be repeated until next movement is required.

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Meas	2/4 meter	PATTERN
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INTRODUCTION. No action. Length of introduction will depend on the recording, but it is typically 2 measures.

I. CIRCLE LEFT AND RIGHT.

1-8 Beg L, walk 16 steps CW, one step per ct. Optional: Swing joined hands in on ct 1 and out on ct 2.

9-16 Repeat meas 1-8 with the same ftwk in the opp. direction.

II. INSIDE CIRCLE OF WOMEN, OUTSIDE CIRCLE OF MEN.

1-8 Beg L, W walk 2 steps twd ctr, forming an inner circle, hands in W-pos, palms to palm, continue walking 14 more steps CW, one step per ct. Simultaneously, M walk 16 steps CCW, beg L, while gradually joining hands with other M to form one circle outside the circle of W.

9-14 Both circles reverse direction (M walking CW, W walking CCW) ending with M on ptr’s L. Maintain handhold.

15-16 M step L, R slightly fwd while lifting joined hands over W and lower arms in front of W while W bend fwd slightly and step L, R bkwd under M’s arms. This forms a front basket hold, W’s arms under the M’s arms.



### III. WALKING IN BASKET HOLD.

- 1-16 Repeat footwork of Fig I, in front basket hold formation. During the last meas, release the basket hold formation and use the two remaining steps for M to face CCW and W to face CW joining R hands.

### IV. GRAND RIGHT AND LEFT.

- 1-8 Beg L, Grand Right and Left 14 steps. With R hands joined with the 7th person, walk two steps to rotate CW half way as a couple. M are now facing CW, W facing CCW, R hands still joined.
- 9-16 Beg L, Grand Right and Left 14 steps. Use the last two steps to face ctr and join hands in V-pos.

Sequence: Dance as described above, repeating until the music ends. Bow to partner.

Note: This dance can be done as a mixer by eliminating the half-turn at the end of Fig IV, meas 1-8, and instead continuing the Grand Right and Left in the same direction through ct 16.

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## STOCKTON FOLK DANCE CAMP OFFERS BEGINNERS TRACK

by Loui Tucker

Is there someone in your life who has expressed an interest in learning some folk dances, who can't seem to find a class at a convenient location, on the right day and time? Perhaps you can encourage them to attend Stockton Folk Dance Camp with you this summer.

**This year Stockton Folk Dance Camp has allowed me to offer special classes designed specifically for beginning dancers.** I plan to offer two classes per day, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. Those who are interested can take either or both, in addition to the Dances for All Ages workshop. **The ideal participant should be someone with less than a year of folk dance exposure.**

The classes will be very small, perhaps only five or six people, and will be built around the ability level and goals of the dancers. Besides teaching specific dances, there will be instruction and practice of basic steps that are used in multiple genres, and tips for learning dances behind the line by watching experienced dancers.

I plan to coordinate the curriculum with Tom Pixton, the leader of the Stockton band, so that the dances taught will be ones that the band can play at the evening parties. The beginners will have the experience of dancing with a larger group to live music.

To sweeten the deal, the **Stockton Board has agreed to discount the tuition** for these beginning dancers who sign up for these classes **by \$200**. Anyone interested in taking advantage of this opportunity should **email me at [loui@louisutucker.com](mailto:loui@louisutucker.com)** to discuss.

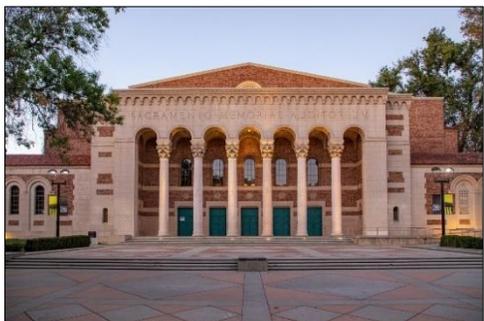


Teaching at Statewide 2017. Photo by M. Rayman.

# A BLAST FROM THE PAST

Below are photos of facilities where we used to dance. In the 1960s, Statewide Festivals attracted thousands, and the monthly regional festivals attracted 600+ dancers. There were often as many as a thousand spectators for the public dance performances. The local Chamber of Commerce frequently paid the rent for these facilities because the influx of folk dancers was such a boost to the local economy. Most of the buildings still exist but are now, sadly, far too spacious for our events.

There were also outdoor pavilions at public parks in Marin, Fresno, and Sacramento where dancing was held during the summer months when schools (used for many folk dance classes) were closed.



Sacramento  
Memorial  
Auditorium



Salinas  
National  
Guard  
Armory



San Jose  
Civic  
Auditorium



Santa Rosa  
Veterans  
Hall



Fresno  
Memorial  
Auditorium



San  
Francisco's  
Kezar  
Pavilion



Auditorium at the  
College of Marin  
(burned in 1963).



Oakland  
Civic  
Auditorium

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Dancing with the feet is one thing; dancing with the heart is another.

~ Unknown

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