

Let's Dance!

THE MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCING **63** JULY/AUGUST 2025



Sunni Bloland – 1926–2025

Memorial Service August 17 at Ashkenaz in Berkeley



Let's Dance!

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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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**WELCOME NEW
FEDERATION MEMBERS**
Christine Johnston – Berkeley
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Laura Richardson

“Mann Tracht, Un Gott Lacht” is Yiddish. It means: “Man plans, and God laughs.” You can replace ‘Man’ with ‘Mom’ in that phrase, and it’s just as true. I have often reflected on the odd twists and turns of my life, especially being dragged by friends into activities that later become very important parts of my life. Or things I was sure I really, really wanted, that turned out to be total dead ends once I got in more than ankle deep.

But the cosmic vibrations we refer to as music have always carried me along. Dance is the sister to music, the physical complement of music that uses all of what we are, to enlarge our spirits and make us more than what we were. My childhood included many wonderfully quirky and creative role models.

My hometown was filled with people who embraced diversity and the arts. Woke? Oh heck yeah, we were woke. We had several small colleges in the town, and there was always something cooking at the colleges – plays, lectures, music, dance recitals, pottery studios – so much to explore right in my backyard. My parents took advantage of all of it. We had choir and dance classes in my elementary school. We learned about Maori culture and Philippine stick dances, the hula, and native American dancing. It was a wild mixture of cultures, and I loved all of the exposure to the unfamiliar sights, sounds, and ways to move.

But not all new sensations were winners. One of the less successful ventures of my childhood was tap dancing. Tap dancing was huge in America in the 1960s, thanks to Art Linkletter and his popular, excessively wholesome TV variety show. He had dance studios all over the place so kids could learn how to tap with grace and flair. Shirley Temple movies also had a role in promoting the tap dance fad. I admit, I was not very enthusiastic about tap dancing. Mom thought it would be good for me, a way to round out my skill set. I was definitely a tomboy. Climb a tree? Oh yes. Create a new concoction in the garage/laboratory? You bet! Hold a snake? No problem. Tea party with dolls? Er... maybe later...

Believe me, I *wanted* to be the little girl on the far right in this picture, with her hand on her hip, looking straight at the camera, all sassy and filled with confidence. But I was not blessed with sass from birth. I had to earn my sass through hard

work and careful study of my sassier friends. I recall sort of dreading attending the tap class each week, because I was not a naturally gifted tap dancer, nor did I have the spunk and sass that appeared to be desirable for this art form. Starting at this age, little girls tend to compare themselves to each other obsessively. It was not lost on me that I was not the quickest in the class to pick up the routines; I was not the worst, but I was not the best. I never fell off the stage; I hardly ever tripped over my own feet. I never fainted or threw up or burst into tears (could’ve made a reality TV show about my tap class; I’m just sayin’). But some girls just had a knack for the tap thing; they were naturals.

I did enjoy some of the music, but I thought some of the costume choices were frankly hideous. For example, the tulle flowers in our hair – what were those all about? And the scratchy, puffy things on our arms? I honestly could not see how they added anything positive. I would rather not put up with the fluffy nonsense of the costumes. I was confused that most of the girls were positively in love with the sparkles and tulle and costume nonsense. To this day, I believe I am missing some of the DNA that makes clothes shopping and applying makeup bearable activities.

continued on p. 23.



Laura Richardson. *Photo by E. Khuner.*



From the Editor: Yes, one of the girls in this photo is Laura Richardson! Can you guess which one?



Jim Gold International Folk Tours 2025

Travel, adventure, folk dance, culture

Eastern Europe-The Balkans

BULGARIA-Koprivshtitsa Festival (held every 5 years):

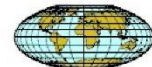
July 29-August 11 Led by Ventsi Milev
Sofia, Plovdiv, Bansko, Veliko Turnovo, Koprivshtitsa

GREECE and the GREEK ISLANDS: October 4-17

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

TURKEY: October 17-31

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



Travel
broadens
one!

Western Europe

SPAIN: September 11-24

Malaga, Ronda, Cadiz, Seville, Cordoba, Granada

South America

ARGENTINA: Chile ext: October 5-15

Buenos Aires, Salta, Mendoza

BRAZIL: November 3-14

Rio de Janeiro, Salvador, Iguassu Falls



Middle East

EGYPT: February 20-March 2, 2026

Cairo, Nile River cruise, Luxor, Aswan

ISRAEL: October 17-28

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

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(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 folkdance.com (Community tab).

- JUNE 26** **SARATOGA DANCERS QUARTERLY PARTY.** St. Archangel Michael Church in Saratoga. 7:30-10:15. All-requests dance party. Bring a snack to share for the refreshment table. Theme: Sunset Over the Ocean! Info: loui@loutucker.com.
- JULY 12** **PENINSULA COUNCIL FOLK DANCE PARTY.** St. Bede's Church Hall, 2650 Sand Hill Road, Menlo Park. 7-10 pm. The emcees will be members of Changs. \$10. Info and requests: pfdcparty@gmail.com.
- JULY 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.
- JULY 19** **CELEBRATE JOHN FILCICH'S 101st BIRTHDAY!** Podrepka Hall, 2116 N Killingsworth Street, Portland, Oregon. 7 pm. Live music with two bands. Info: FilcichFestival.com.
- JULY 20-28** **STOCKTON FOLK DANCE CAMP.** Two weeks – pick one or stay for both.
JULY 28-AUG. 4 Same staff of six teachers both weeks, with different lectures and party themes. Although registration is closed, you can attend Saturday afternoon and evening if someone who is attending signs you up as their guest.
- JULY 25** **CHANGS FAMILY NIGHT!** Miraloma Park Clubhouse, 350 O'Shaughnessy Blvd., San Francisco. 7-10 pm. The first hour is fun dance activities to music from around the world followed by two hours of international folk dances from our club's repertoire. Adults get in for free if they bring a child, and kids are always free.
- AUGUST 1-9** **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.
- AUGUST 9** **PENINSULA COUNCIL FOLK DANCE PARTY.** St. Bede's Church Hall, 2650 Sand Hill Road, Menlo Park. 7-10 pm. The emcee will be Loui Tucker. \$10. Info and requests: pfdcparty@gmail.com.
- AUGUST 16** **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.
- AUGUST 17** **CELEBRATION OF LIFE FOR SUNNI BLOLAND.** Ashkenaz, 1317 San Pablo Avenue in Berkeley. Details: markangelcreations@yahoo.com.
- AUG. 30-SEPT. 1** **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](mailto:BetsyMoore@gmail.com) to request a flyer with directions.

THE FAMILY PHOTO ALBUM

Photos by A. Partos and L. Tucker.



Sondra Reinman and Greta Chang wore their masks to the Berkeley Folk Dancers Mardi-Gras-Maypole Party in late May.



Marguerite Fishman, leader of the Monterey Folk Dancers, brought three group members to San Francisco City College to dance at the Blossom Festival. From left are Yoon Ha, Marguerite Fishman, Christine Lucas, and Michael Dickinson.



Michal Weintraub, Udy Gold, and Lyn Ayal also enjoyed dancing at the Blossom Festival in San Francisco.



Sue Williard and Patrick McEvoy were happy to be at The Land in the Santa Cruz Mountains over Memorial Day Weekend.



Margaret Harrison and Toni Denmark, long-time Kopachka Dancers, celebrated at the 60th Anniversary Party.



Sue Chen and Wen-Li Chiang posed for their photo at the Statewide Festival in Arroyo Grande.



SUNNI BLOLAND - 1926–2025
Celebration of Life
 August 17 at Ashkenaz in Berkeley
 Details: Mark Angel
markangelcreations@yahoo.com



Thanks to Hank Reekers, Marilyn Smith, Susie Shoaf, Eliot Khuner, and Ralph Gagnon for photos used in this article.

SUNNI BLOLAND – 1926–2025

An Unconventional Love Story

by Hank Reekers

It was early 1979. As we entered Sunni's clawfoot tub for the first time together, and after removing the multiple silver rings from her fingers, she said she had a simple request: "The toilet paper must always roll outward, and towels folded in thirds."

The Early Years – Before California

Sunni was born Frances Alexandria Lober in New York City on August 20, 1926. Her mother said she was born running. Their apartment in the South Bronx was near a playing field, and on that field one could find Sunni playing and scraping her knees among the neighborhood children or jumping rope in their courtyard. She attended an all-girls high school. Sunni joined the Girl Scouts and swam, canoed, and practiced arts and crafts. Her best friend Lenore said Sunni would always sell the most Girl Scout cookies. With their Sea Scout troop, she and Lenore were visiting the Statue of Liberty on the Sunday afternoon when news of Pearl Harbor arrived.

Sunni came from an athletic family. Her mother was an avid swimmer. Her father was a tennis player, and he coached Sunni's brother, Jud, who received a tennis scholarship. An offer of tennis lessons was made to Sunni, but she chose to take ice skating lessons at Rockefeller Center. Sunni was a counselor at summer camps during World War II. Nicknames were expected of the counselors so, being a swimmer, she chose Sunni for the sunfish.

Sunni's love of movement prompted an application to Sargent College (now a part of Boston University), which offered a women's-only program focused on training physical education teachers. Her small class took all instruction together, including dance, and their camaraderie created life-long bonds. After graduating in 1948, Sunni enrolled in Hanya Holm's Summer Institute in Colorado Springs to follow her new passion, modern dance, then continued to the University of Wisconsin Dance Program.

While at Madison, she caught the eye of Harland Bloland. After graduating in 1951 and having married, they moved to Connecticut, where Harland continued

his studies and Sunni taught dance at Teachers College of Connecticut. In 1955, Harland decided to pursue a doctorate in Political Science at the University of California at Berkeley.

The Berkeley Years

Berkeley agreed with Sunni. Sunni fell in love with the then "sparse" but dynamic and growing San Francisco Bay Area. She taught modern dance at both Piedmont High School and Mission High School and filled in at

San Francisco State University. Many Saturdays she ferried across the Bay to Mill Valley (the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge didn't open until September 1956).

She connected with Anna Halprin, a fellow graduate from the Madison Dance Program. On Anna's redwood deck designed for dance, Sunni became part of a weekly corps of dancers. Frequent workshops, often during the summer, brought excitement and attracted many notable dancers from around the country. During this period Sunni and Harland divorced but maintained a positive connection throughout by cheering on the other's successes.

In 1960, Sunni launched her 30-year career teaching dance at UC Berkeley. Sunni dove deeply into international folk dance and developed a special passion for the spirited Romanian dances. She soon began her decades-long appearances at folk dance camps and festivals across the country, teaching Romanian and other dances.

A few years later, Sunni was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to the Institute of Ethnography and Folklore in Bucharest. In Romania



Sunni with Hank Reekers at the 2024 Kolo Festival in San Francisco. Photo by L. Tucker.



she conducted fieldwork primarily with ethno-choreologist Anca Giurchescu. The two ventured to remote villages to record the dance and the wealth of folklore.

Sunni eventually became tenured at Berkeley and with that came sabbaticals which allowed her more time than just summers to return to Romania. She became adept at negotiating her way through Nicolae Ceausescu's repressive regime, and her unwillingness to accept boundaries allowed her to lead folkdance tours into Romania in the late 1970s. However, Anca defected to Denmark in 1979, and Sunni never returned to the Romania of Ceausescu.

Sunni's career at Berkeley spanned many contentious years. She taught and thrived through the Civil Rights Movement, the Free Speech Movement, and the Anti-War Movement. Her connection to her students, her willingness to be available on a personal level, and the respite and joy her classes offered during these tumultuous times were priceless gifts to many. Eventually, her focus shifted from modern dance and folk dance to yoga and ballroom dance. At the end of a long day teaching, she would often come home and say to me, with mild amusement and a smile, "and they pay me to do this?"

Retirement and Beyond

Her students experienced the joy and effectiveness of her teaching, and the University noticed. In the 1989-90 academic year, the year of her retirement, Sunni received the Distinguished Teaching Award, the Campus's most prestigious award for teaching, given annually to only five recipients. In that same busy year, Sunni also served as President of the California Dance Educators Association (CDEA).

After retirement, Sunni moderated her hectic schedule, traveling instead for leisure and visiting friends throughout Europe. Her work with dance continued as she and Anca completed their book, *Romanian Traditional Dance, A Contextual and Structural Approach*, in 1995.

Sometime during the late 1990s, Sunni noticed that signals from her brain to activate movements in her legs were sometimes erratic. Eventually she was diagnosed with a variant of Parkinson's disease. Not one to be diminished, when the disease progressed so that dance had to be enjoyed in other ways, she began decorating and bringing guests to her home, localizing travels, dining out, attending dance as an observer, enjoying old friends and making new friends, reading and, as always, listening to music.

Sunni's bubbling sense of humor never waned. The teacher in her expressed her love through her desire to enable others to enjoy and embrace life on their own terms as she did so naturally throughout her long life. Sunni passed away peacefully in her home, surrounded by many friends, on April 4, 2025.

My adventure with Sunni continues. Her words, thoughts, support and love will always be with me, as well as folding towels in thirds.



Sunni on ice skates at Rockefeller Center.



More memories and photos on p. 10.

WHO IS HANK REEKERS?

Many know Hank only as “Sunni’s caregiver,” and he almost disappeared behind Sunni while he maneuvered her wheelchair. However, he was her constant and long-time companion, and he has his own story:

I attended the Berkeley public school system from first grade and continued to UC Berkeley as a freshman in 1973. During my four years in completing my minor in Applied Math and my major in Civil Engineering, I enjoyed taking PE classes and took at least one and often two each quarter. One of my friends I had known from high school knew that I would occasionally go to International House on a Friday night to take Walter Grothe’s beginning class, which were just my speed (I would vanish when the more advanced dancers arrived from Hearst Gym). Jim was taking Sunni’s folk dance classes and suggested it to me, and I eventually did attend. Then I found myself taking yoga, a class that Sunni taught. She was an absolutely marvelous Iyengar instructor!

After getting my BS, I continued at UC Berkeley for a two-year Masters in Structural Engineering and Structural Mechanics. Summers were spent backpacking or attending numerous almost-free plays at John Hinkel Park. There were pick-up basketball games, Walter Grothe’s classes, and I enjoyed my courses. I frequently took one of Sunni’s folk dance or yoga classes. What a life! I would have been happy being a student forever!

Very close to the end of my graduate program, Sunni asked for volunteers to prepare some dance notes. I was one of the volunteers. I found working with her to be very easy and fun, we complemented each other very well, and I got to know her better and liked what I discovered.

After graduating, I had a few weeks before starting a new job, and Sunni was free before leading a tour into Romania. I asked if she would join me on a trip to Italy. She agreed and then added Dubrovnik to Belgrade, where we would separate, she into Romania and me back home. When she returned from Romania, I gave up my apartment and we began decades of living together.

We never married because she said she never wanted to tie me down and wanted me to be free to go as she got older. She wanted me to be with her only because I wanted to. What I loved about living with her was that we allowed each other to be independent, yet joyfully together at the same time. We allowed each other to pursue our different interests while remaining connected, and always there for the other when needed. Unfortunately, as Sunni’s Parkinson’s progressed, the dynamics of our relationship had to change. What did not change is that I always loved being with her, and she with me.

SUNNI AND FRIENDS



MEMORIES OF SUNNI BLOLAND

David Chang

I was Sunni's assistant one year at Stockton Folk Dance Camp, and Sunni chose to teach the Romanian couple dance De-a Lungul. This was a slow, stately dance, unlike what you would normally picture a Romanian dance to be. Frankly, I thought that it was weird. Well, some years later, I found a YouTube video of some **blind** Romanian couples doing this exact same dance, just as Sunni had taught it! And, yes, you could do this dance blindfolded!

Sunni had always found Lambert Knox and his round dances very amusing. That same year, for the Saturday night talent show, she decided to do a parody of round dancing by converting De-a Lungul into a round dance. The result was hilarious.

Another time, at a wedding reception, Sunni rose from her table and toasted the newlyweds thus: "To your genitalia! May they never fail ya!"

Denise Weiss

When I went to UC Berkeley in 1972, I took an international folk dance class with Sunni. While I had danced before, this opened the door to an amazing time in folk dance! I took her class during the day, then had to choose where to dance in Berkeley in the evening, as there were options!

I would go with friends to International House, then Ashkenaz or Aitos, and then wind down at the Albatross Bar. Those were the days, my friend! And indeed we thought they'd never end. Sunni was an amazing teacher, during an amazing time!

John Nicoara

I first met Sunni at the 1972 Berkley Folk Dance Festival where she herself was one of the teachers.

A number of the dances that she taught that year became part of the repertoire that I taught in my class for many years.

The last time I saw her was about 10 years ago when she attended an event. At this time she was already in a wheelchair, but when she saw me her face lit up. I was delighted that she still remembered me, and I went over to let her know that she and her teaching really meant a lot to me. She will be remembered by all those whose lives she touched.

Denise Heenan

My first memory of her is an assembly talk she gave at Folk Dance Camp. She was funny, outspoken, so natural and uninhibited. A breath of fresh air. It seems to me that she ruffled a lot of feathers among the establishment.

One very funny way she described how to achieve a certain style was to "imagine you are holding a dime between your cheeks."

More memories on p. 12.



Memories of Sunni -- *continued*



Vonnie Brown

Sunni's death was expected, but it still cut deep into my heart and the hearts of others. The world will not be the same without Sunni. How can we ever forget this beautiful, smart, clever, funny, dynamic, adventurous, kind, loyal, generous, and loving person that graced our lives for so many years? I have so many memories of Sunni but here are just a few random thoughts.

The Balkan dance movement within the international folk dance movement was dominated by male master teachers until Sunni broke the barrier with dances she had researched and collected in Romania. She had the moxie to achieve this feat.

I remember Sunni telling me that she knew only 12 international folk dances when she succeeded Lucile Czarnowski at the University of California, Berkeley, Lucille being a pioneer in educational and recreational folk dance. Sunni said she had a small panic attack when she opened Lucile's file cabinet which was filled with folk dance records and other materials.

You have to be old enough to remember the Friday night international folk dancing in the Hearst Gymnasium on the Berkeley campus during the 1970s and early 80s. The massive attendance, the enthusiasm, and the talent was something to behold. Sunni, of course, was a key factor in the success.

When I was visiting Sunni one time, I went with her to teach her ballroom dance class. The class was large and comprised mainly of Asian students—half male and half female, so no partner problems here. Before the class even began, I felt a buzz of enthusiasm among the students and the buzz became more intense as the class progressed. Sunni was at her best, injecting her famous humor along with a very comfortable atmosphere that reflected her warmth and affection for the students. The joy in the classroom really touched me.

Sunni and I had so many funny and happy times together, including times we met together in Europe. Sunni always made me laugh, and she was the best friend one could ever have.

Heidi Vorst

It is so sad to have lost another great teacher. What a character and what a dancer Sunni was! I enjoyed her teaching style and admired her knowledge of Romanian dance and culture. I was relatively new to international folk dance when I first experienced a teaching session with her.

Over the years, I realized she was generously sharing her love of Romanian dance with us, but what really got me were those boots, always the boots, and how well she could dance in them. They made her magical to me, as she brought the dances to life for all of us.

Frank Tripi

So many stories about Sunni! The one that has remained with me all these years is when my wife Jane and I were invited for dinner at her place in Berkeley. As I am of Italian descent, when we visit family we kiss on both cheeks. Sunni did one better. She greeted me with a big kiss directly on my lips. That was her way I suppose, and every time we visited her I always expected and got that big smacker. I must say that I do miss her great warmth.

Ralph Morewitz

I took Sunni's folk dance class at UC Berkeley around 1970. The one dance I remember that she taught me and danced it as my partner was Vossarull. I don't think many folks knew she even taught a Norwegian dance.

Diane Baker

It was 1974 or early 1975, and Sunni was in Southern California. After an evening dance session, a group of us dancers reconvened in a swimming pool in Garden Grove for a late night swim and chat. Mischievously, Sunni snuck up behind me under water and pulled the tie holding up my bikini top. Flash! Then a quick dunk for me to re-tie. Meanwhile she got away before I could return the favor.

Susie Shoaf

In my life I had two dance teachers who inspired me. The first was my tap dance teacher, a true teacher of teachers. Then I met Sunni Bloland when I was at UC Berkeley in 1968 in a PE class and immediately fell in love with Balkan music and folk dances, inspired by Sunni's style. She was a Romanian specialist after a year on a Fulbright scholarship collecting dances and so much more.

I remember Sunni the first day of class in a Romanian peasant blouse and a short leather mini skirt, with knee socks and opanci. This was pretty much her outfit for years and I remember we were all mimicking her style, without the leather skirt.

One of the first things she told everyone was to not hold onto the hands of those next to you as if you were lifting a sack of potatoes!

Sunni's joy of dance was invasive. Her classes filled Hearst Gym. I started with International Folk Dance, then Couple Dance when I helped as her teaching assistant, and, my favorite, Advanced Balkan in 1970. We also danced Monday, Wednesday and Friday evenings in the gym, then International House

after Friday dancing, Friday noon on the grass outside Hearst Gym and Sunday at Cragmont Park. We danced on Thursday evenings at O'Aitos Taverna. When our dancing friend David Nadel started Ashkenaz in 1973, we were dancing there too.

Almost all my friends were folk dancers, and still are, thanks to Sunni's classes and teaching. We loved her and will miss her greatly and will always remember her vitality, big smile and flirty style. Just watch Trei Pazeste de la Goicea Mare to enjoy the little toe wiggle... so Sunni!



Billy Burke

I first met Sunni Bloland at the first full week Mendocino Folklore Camp in 1963. I was a very young teenager at that time. Sunni was a friend of Madelynn Greene, the founder of the camp, and Sunni was asked to teach a class. At that time Sunni really didn't know much about folk dancing, so she gave a modern dance class. I remember the lesson was to pick a series of five or six numbers from one to 10 and then come up with five or six dance movements, like walk, skip, hop, slide, etc. You then put the two together and you had a choreography.

Camp was held in the gym at the high school in the town of Mendocino that first year, and it was pretty warm. Sunni had on her usual short skirt and a white t-shirt. In the middle of the class, she took her t-shirt and tucked it up inside the bottom of her bra. I was a wide-eyed and pretty innocent kid at the time and was a bit shocked. I shared this story with her years later, and we both had a good laugh at it.

Sunni was a tremendous asset at subsequent Folklore Camps. She was a driving force, along with Honorah Clark, in coming up with hilarious skits and party themes for Happy Hour. She pursued her love of Romanian dance and shared her knowledge with us for several years.

continued on p. 22

FROM THE *LET'S DANCE!* PHOTO ARCHIVES



Above are two women from Southern California and one from the Bay Area. Can you name **all three**? Send your answer to editor@folkdance.com or loui@loutucker.com. The reader who submits the **THIRD** correct answer wins a \$25 gift card.



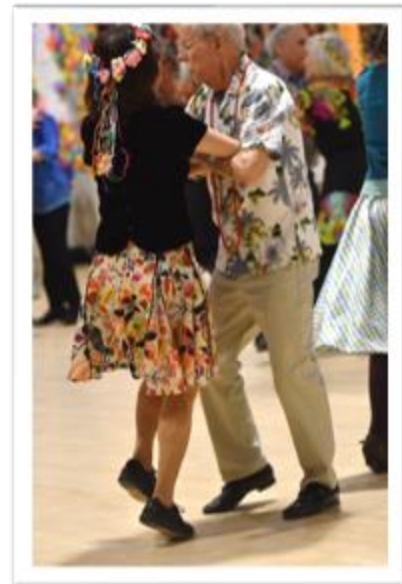
WE HAVE A WINNER!

I was fortunate enough to find international folk dance when I was in high school – six weeks during a Physical Education class, only for girls, and only in 12th grade. Those were the only six weeks of the year I was not truant for a single day. College offered folk dance also, but theater and modern dance consumed most of my time.

Decades later I found a folk dance home with the Pasadena Folk Dance Co-op, but I go wherever there is dancing. Chances are pretty good that I will show up in a folk dance group near you!

I found out that my grandparents also did some folk dancing in their young days. I came across a photo of them dancing that appeared in a local newspaper. Unfortunately, we never danced together. Years ago when I led a dance group at Leisure Village, I would feel the ache over missed opportunities to spend joyful time on a dance floor with them.

In the last issue



Eight people correctly identified the Irish couple dance Siamsa Beirta with its distinctive arm hold. It was first introduced at Folk Dance Camp in 1954 by Sean and Una O'Farrell. The third person to provide the correct identification was **Valerie Daley** of Ventura, California (photo at left).

International Dance Arts Collective Barn Dance 2025

Attendance?
Over 300!



Their next concert is *America the Beautiful – A Celebration of Dance and Music from the USA*. Wednesday, July 9, at 7 pm. Whitney High School Theater in Rocklin. \$10.



At the end of the concert, audience members were invited up onto the stage to dance with the performers.

All photos by Piccolini Photography.

NEWS FROM AROUND THE BAY...

MONTEREY FOLK DANCERS –

Marguerite Fishman

This May marked one year of dancing at our new location at the Center for Spiritual Awakening in Pacific Grove. In appreciation for this comfortable space and our friendly, enthusiastic group, we held a party! With an ocean (“Happy to Sea You!”) theme, potluck, time to socialize, and our favorite dances, a fine time was had by all. We look forward to continuing weekly classes on Wednesdays, 4:30-6 pm.

Asked by **Monterey Bay Charter School** to participate in their annual May Spring Faire, our group decided to give a short demonstration followed by audience participation. On a raised stage, in the fog, under a canopy of coastal oaks, four of us began with the performance of a choreographed medley of waltzes, and circle dances. Then, more dancers and audience members were invited onstage to learn Chilili and Zemer Atik. We enjoyed sharing dances and the collective energy of our folk dance class to the school community.

RAZZMATAZZ – *Marilyn Smith*

After taking a few weeks off in May for our Spring Break, summer all-request folk dancing started in June and continues through July and August. We meet Tuesdays from 7-9 pm at our beautiful dance space at Monroe Hall in Santa Rosa. **Gloria Coté handles the DJ duties** during the summer and is wonderful at putting together a balanced program each week of beginner, intermediate, and advanced dances from the request list.

July 22 we’ll celebrate Gloria’s birthday, always a fun occasion when we dance to Van Morrison’s G-L-O-R-I-A and enjoy chocolate cake in the dining room. **Fall classes are scheduled to begin Tuesday, September 2.**



Monterey Folk Dancers clearly display their “Happy to Sea You!” theme. *Photo by M. Fishman.*



The Monterey Folk Dancers were joined by audience members for Chilili. *Photo by S. Lucas.*

CHICO WORLD DANCERS – *Memo Keswick*

Here in Chico we call ourselves **Chico World Dancers**. Our name can be a good conversation-starter when new folks inquire! We often need to explain that we do international folk dances – plus. In other words, we do any type of dance we want. We talk about movies with folk dance scenes, or talk about their ancestor’s dancing, or ask them if they have done square or line dancing in school. With younger folks we might mention party dances like the Cupid Shuffle.

We announce events on Facebook, our e-mail list, word of mouth, and teaching through the local Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. Fortunately, all this advertisement and discussion has led to new dancers joining us. Some folks are older and want to stay active or have moved to town having done folk dancing before. Some have been in Chico for a while before discovering us. Some are younger.

... AND BEYOND

Some younger dancers joined us because their group wanted to do something fun together. One of them mentioned that her mother-in-law taught folk dances and she agreed to teach them. They decided they liked it. A few of them are even attending Stockton Folk Dance Camp this year. All our efforts seem to be paying off!

Additionally, we have a group of singers and musicians that learn the music for dances to play for parties, which is often a challenge! When we have a dance party with live music, the donated food and drink is often enough to qualify as dinner. Our dance parties are typically on Sundays from 4-7:30 pm, which allows older folks who need sleep and non-retired folks who have to get up the next day for work to get home at a reasonable time.

To finish, a few years back a group of contra dancers disbanded their operations. **This year CWD brought contra dance back to Chico and our first parties were a great success.**

This summer we are hosting our **first-ever live music night at Allie's, a local English/Irish pub.** This pub has become a non-profit community pub, asking patrons to help make decisions about what happens there. This past year we have brought in many types of music and there are now regular Irish and Sea Shanty nights.

See you at the second week of Folk Dance Camp. At last count, **there are *nine* Chicanos attending!**

BERKELEY FOLK DANCERS – Carol Hayden Berkeley Folk Dancers enjoyed a well-attended **Mardi-Gras-Maypole Party** hosted by the Intermediate dance class. Every few years, we set up our three maypoles with 12 ribbons each and marvel at the beautiful pattern created simply by weaving the ribbons.

Getting a round of applause was **the return of Art Woodworth**, who returned to dancing after illness. Art joined BFD in 1969 and is now 90 years old. It was wonderful to see him enjoying folk dancing with us again!

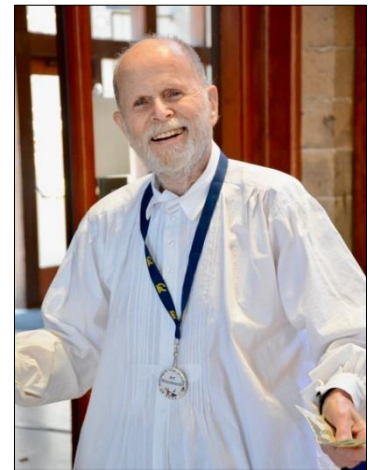
On **Saturday, July 19, 2-5 pm**, BFD's Beginner's class will host a dance party "Under the Big Top" at Live Oak Park. Expect amazing acts and feats as you step right up!



Members of Chico World Dancers danced to live music at Allie's in June. *Photo by B. Chiros.*

In August, BFD officially takes a break. Our teachers, who lead classes the rest of the year, get five nights and two afternoons off for the month. Official break or not, in years past, a few enthusiastic members sometimes offer some classes during the break.

Please see p. 28 for an article about Marija Hillis, one of BFD's teachers.



Long-time BFD member Art Woodworth.



Photos by A. Partos.

continued on p. 18

News From Around The Bay – *continued*

NORTH BAY – *Carol Friedman*

Our fall session in Petaluma at Hermann Sons Hall starts up again on **September 1** and runs through December 15 on Mondays 7-9 p.m. As always, we will be dancing old favorites and requests plus bringing dances back that we haven't done in a while, including Malhão to go with Repasseado, both from Portugal.

Come join us at any time; newcomers and drop-ins are always welcome.

SAN FRANCISCO GROUPS – *Linda Milhoan*

Changs International Folk Dancers hosted the Blossom Festival on April 19 at City College of San Francisco. About 130 people attended and danced to live music by Da! Mozhem and recorded music. Dancers were invited to shop from costumes created for and worn over the years in CCSF's many dance performances and made available by Dr. Jeanne Hughes. Remaining costumes will be donated locally and to Stockton Folk Dance Camp.



Changs members posed for a group photo at the end of the Blossom Festival. *Photo by V. Milhoan.*

Many thanks to Jeanne Hughes and Marguerite Fishman for teaching the beginners' session, and to Kathe Burick for sponsoring the event. It was heartwarming yet bittersweet to be with our former teachers and dance friends. Sadly, City College will no longer offer social and folk dance in its curriculum.

Changs continues to grow and now has 45 members. We'll have both new and returning officers beginning July 1. New officers are Cindy Blackstone, president, and Libby Smith, vice president. Wendy Brown has served as president for four years, and we greatly appreciate her leadership throughout the pandemic and our move to our present home, the

Miraloma Park Clubhouse in San Francisco. Join us on Friday nights 7-10 pm. Your first time is free.

Don't forget that the **San Francisco Dance Circle** meets at the Upper Noe Recreation Center on **Wednesdays now through August 13**, 10:45 am-12:15 pm. Our team of five volunteers teaches international folk dances from around the world. We return to Harvey Milk Center for the Arts, at 50 Scott Street in September.

Also remember that **Café Shalom**, led by Udy Gold, meets on Tuesday evenings at Congregation Am Tikvah, 625 Brotherhood Way in San Francisco, and hosts an all-request Israeli dance party on the third Saturday.

TURLOCK VILLAGE DANCERS – *Judy Kropp*

The Turlock Village Dancers celebrated a wonderful year of friendship, music, and dance with a "Wear Something From Another Country" Party. We have traditionally taken a break during the summer both because of frequent vacations and to avoid the heat. We will resume dancing at Carnegie Arts Center in Turlock in September.

If you're driving north or south on Highway 5 for a weekend away, take a break on Friday and dance with us in Turlock! We dance on Friday nights at the Carnegie Arts Center, 7:30-9:30, and we love to have visitors.



Photo by B. Benjamin.

PENINSULA COUNCIL – *Clem Dickey*

How to follow last year's Wonderland Tea Party? The Peninsula toned things down this year with simply tea, sweets, savories and dances. And decorations, of course! A dark library motif inside and a garden-themed windbreak for the patio. Sixty-three people – one short of a chessboard – signed in, including three first-timers.

The Palomanians have recently been working on mastering Chilly Cha Cha, Hora Călărăși, Sara asta mă petrec, Dayagim, Mindrele, and Reziĵankas I and II. Chilly Cha Cha is a one-wall line dance; its tune bears an uncanny resemblance to that which we use for Ba La, albeit with different lyrics.

The Saratoga Folk Dancers have been learning or reviewing Hora Vrânceană, Te Aven Baxtale, and Veliko Kolo. Veliko Kolo, parts of which Dick Oakes describes as “impossible to reduce to written description,” appears in six Stockton syllabi. That may be a record. The Israeli dance Beleitlot Hakayitz Hachayim, which translates from Hebrew to Hot Summer Nights, was also taught, just in time for, well, hot summer nights.

In May, Alan Rothchild was honored for his 40 years of leadership of the Santa Cruz Israeli Folk Dancers. Congratulations, Alan!



Celebrants at the Santa Cruz Israeli Dance class. *Photo by H. Young.*

The Peninsula Folk Dance Council is switching its monthly parties to evenings July through October, hoping to escape the heat and to enjoy the low sun angles. The next four parties will be 7-10 pm at St. Bede’s Church Hall in Menlo Park. In July, the emcees will be a team of Changs Dancers. Loui Tucker will emcee the August party. See the Calendar of Events on p. 5 for further details.



KAUAI, HAWAII – *Luane McGowan*

Luane lived and danced in the South Bay for many years but now lives – and teaches an international folk dance class – in Hawaii. She often visits her daughter in San Jose and takes time to dance with local dance groups. She shared the photo above showing recent activity of her group:

“We recently had the pleasure of dancing to the live music of Balkan Soul Band. Dad and the kids make up the band, while Mom Mina sometimes leads us in the dances. They are Bulgarian but live in Maryland. Two of our group members are also Bulgarian. We just had a young woman from Montana join us who teaches international folk dance as well as ballet.”

LOCAL SCOTTISH DANCERS WED

In May, two long-time members of the Dunsmuir Scottish Dancer performing group were (finally) married. Tim Wilson and Sylvain Pelletier have been a couple (in dancing and in life) since 1998, but only recently decided to make it official. The wedding, attended by over 150 friends, family, and co-workers, including many members of Scottish dance

community. The reception featured a Scottish set dance choreographed for Tim and Sylvain, which they performed. The movements represented the stages of their courtship, from introduction, through dating, to meeting family and dancing together, and to finally proposing marriage (left).

And they lived happily ever after.

ARE YOU A DANCE-AHOLIC?

by *Loui Tucker*

This quiz appeared originally in the August 1997 issue of *The Grapevine*. It has appeared in many publications and website since that time. It has been translated into several languages, modified for use with other dance forms, and was even abbreviated and printed on a t-shirt. Enjoy!

Is dancing taking over our life? Have you heard whispers that you're becoming addicted to dance? Are you afraid that you or a loved one is becoming a dance-aholic? Take this simple test or take it on behalf of someone you care about. However painful it might be, it's time you faced the truth. Count 1 point for every YES answer.

1. You listen to dance music at times when you cannot possibly dance – i.e., on your car stereo, with headphones while taking public transportation, on airplanes. Give yourself an additional point if you have actually taken your hands off the steering wheel while driving in order to clap your hands or snap your fingers at the spot in the music where you would clap if you were dancing. And give yourself another point if this activity has ever caused you to miss a freeway exit.

2. More than 50% of the t-shirts in your wardrobe are dance-related. Give yourself an extra point if any of them are no longer the right size or are too worn to wear, but you keep them anyway for sentimental reasons because they remind you of a special dance event.

3. When you are debating whether or not to buy a new article of clothing, a chief factor in the decision is whether or not you can wear it dancing.

4. You go to non-dance social functions with other dancers, but you cannot carry on a conversation for longer than 15 minutes without talking about dance. (This includes gossiping about people at dance class.)

5. You have to explain at least once a week that you missed some over-hyped television program, a business function or social event because it conflicted with dance class.

6. Your dinner menu is influenced by whether or not you're dancing afterwards (nothing too heavy, no garlic or onions).

7. Even though you are an advanced dancer, you drop in on beginners' classes at least once a month just in case they are doing a beginner dance you've never learned.

8. At least once a month you phone or e-mail another dancer to find out whether he/she is going to a dance class. Give yourself another point if, when you find out he/she is not going dancing, you go anyway.

9. You subscribe to more than one dance-related magazine or newsletter – *Let's Dance!*, *The Scene*, *Rokdim*, *The Grapevine*, etc.

10. At least two gifts per year (received or given) are dance-related – clothing, music, video, money for dance camp, etc.

11. The photos on your desk (at work or home) include at least one of you at a dance-related event.

12. You plan business trips and vacations so as to avoid missing your favorite local dance classes, leaving the morning after the class and/or arriving the afternoon before the class.

13. You get information about dancing in the area of your vacation or business trip, and pack dance clothing so you can dance while you're there. Two extra points if you pack extra dance gear on trips just in case your returning afternoon flight is delayed, and you have to drive from the airport directly to class instead of going home to change clothes.

14. You passed up a promotion because one of the job duties involved a meeting that conflicted with your favorite night of dancing.

15. Your company offered you a promotion in another city, and you checked out the folk dancing scene before deciding whether or not to accept the position.

16. Your car is adorned with (1 point for each)

- a. Dance-related personalized license plate.
- b. Dance-related license plate holder.
- c. Dance-related bumpersticker.



17. You use your computer for dance-related activities. (1 point for each)
- You have e-mail relationships with other dancers in which you write about dance-related activities.
 - You have bookmarked websites that provide news of dance events.
 - You subscribe to a mailing list organized around dance-related topics.
 - You use internet search engines to find dance-related websites.
 - You maintain a dance-related website.
- Give yourself an extra point if your e-mail address is dance-related!
18. If you have pets, at least one of them has a dance-related name – a cat named Debka, a dog named Tango, a bird named Polka.
19. You don't know the last name of at least five dancers but refer to them descriptively instead as something like "David, You know, the Guy Who Dances with Tammy," or, "Hannah, The Tall Blond Who Wears Leggings and Long T-shirts."
20. You have, at least once in the past year, spent more time driving to a dance event than you knew you would actually spend dancing, i.e. one hour each way commuting to dance less than two hours.
21. It took you two extra semesters to get through college or graduate school because one of the required courses was offered on the same night as your favorite night of dancing.
22. Was a celebration of a significant life event – wedding, house-warming, graduation, etc. – a folk dance party?
23. Have you left instructions in your will to have folk dancing at your wake/funeral/memorial service?

SCORING:

15 POINTS OR MORE

Mayday, Mayday, Mayday. Houston, we have a serious dance problem. Don't be surprised if your friends organize an intervention to confront you with your addiction. You can deal with the problem directly by checking your phone book for the local 12-step-hop program in your area.

11-14 POINTS

You're a borderline dance-aholic. With some effort on your part you can take back control of your life without outside help. It may be enough to cut out dancing between dance classes.

6-10 POINTS

Not to worry. You're one of those social dancers. You can take it or leave it. You can walk off the dance floor anytime. Dance-aholics view you with suspicion.

1-5 POINTS

Are you kidding? Are you taking this test as a joke? You probably don't know a step-hop from a pivot. Get outta here! You wouldn't even watch dance-related television programs!



**SEND A COMPLIMENTARY COPY OF
LET'S DANCE! MAGAZINE**

If you think that receiving a complimentary copy of *Let's Dance!* magazine will encourage a new dancer to become a member of the Folk Dance Federation, send their name and address to loui@louisutucker.com and she will arrange to have a free copy mailed to them.

MEMORIES OF SUNNI – *continued from p. 13*

Marilyn Smith

I can still see it today: Sunni walking into Hearst Gym to teach her folk dance class. She had a presence that filled the room unlike any teacher I ever had. Then she began to teach with all that energy, joy, and passion that made our feet dance complicated steps we didn't know we were capable of. It wasn't just about the steps of the dance; it was about dancing with joy in total harmony with the hundreds of us who took her classes over the years.

I wouldn't be a folk dance teacher today without Sunni. She encouraged me to teach and gave me a blueprint of how to do it.

Over the last several years, I would visit Sunni every week. We mostly talked about dance. She always wanted to know what dances I was teaching, and I would show her what I planned to teach that week. Sometimes we were silent, just sitting there holding hands.

One year I made a slideshow for Sunni's birthday with photos from her many photo albums. It was a wonderful experience sitting side by side with her as we went through the photos. Sunni would reminisce and tell stories of her early childhood and adult years, her time in Romania and all the wonderful people who were so dear to her. All of us who learned dances from Sunni know how blessed we are to have experienced her dynamic presence, her love of the dance and her joy of teaching.

Jeff Clarke

During the spring of my first year at U.C. Berkeley, I realized I was not meeting many people in the computer center in the basement of Evans Hall, so I signed up for a social dance class.

The teacher was Sunni Bloland, and she gave a sales pitch for another course she was teaching, international folk dance. I had never heard about folk dance, but her description made it sound so interesting and so exciting I felt that I had to take this class also.

Sunni was an extremely good teacher, the dances were interesting, and she was a lot of fun. Her trademark short skirts were very helpful in understanding the dance movements.

I took her course several times during my time at Berkeley and learned a lot. I was amazed at the different music, different dance styles from countries all over. We learned such dances as Mairi's Wedding, Vulpiuța, Hambo, Alunelul, Erev Ba, a Csardas, U Šest, and more. I was hooked! Some of the teaching assistants for the class later became dancers in Westwind International Folk Ensemble. Berkeley was rich in folk dance opportunities.

Ralph Gagnon

Sunni once came to Chico, California, to give us a workshop. We invited her and she stayed at our home, which cemented our long friendship. Since our group was a mix of beginners and experienced dancers, she couldn't go overboard with the razzle-dazzle. I no longer remember what she taught, but I remember she "assigned" one of the dances to each of us for the purpose of memorizing it and leading it after she was gone. After that we would refer to the dance as "Philip's dance" or "Bonnie's dance."

I also remember complimenting her on using the phrase "*GET your PAPers HERE*" to describe the rhythm of a dance, and her reply of, "Oh, I didn't invent that. I stole it from Dick Crum!"

The photo below of my wife Bonnie and Sunni is pinned to the bulletin board in my office.



Joan Grauman Morse

I met Sunni in August of 1973 at an international folk dance camp in Connecticut. It was held at Camp Leonard-Leonore, on a gorgeous lake overlooking beautiful mountains. Many of the most celebrated folk dance teachers were there: Sunni, Bob Wetter, Moshe Eskayo, Morley Leyton, Glenn Bannerman, George Tomov and Sandy Faxon.

I was 19 years old and had been dancing since the age of 14. I was in Heaven that week at that camp!

Sunni was the most memorable teacher for me. First, she was loving and full of excitement. Second, she taught difficult dances which I loved, including Învârtita din Luna Turda.

One evening the teachers entertained us. Sunni and Sandy performed with percussive spoons. They were fantastic – hitting each other’s heads, backsides. It was delightful. Then Sunni sang a great song with Glenn Bannerman: There’s a Hole in the Bucket, Dear Henry. It was hysterical!

I am not sure why I clearly remember all of this 52 years later, but I do.

Sally Kaye

When I first walked into Sunni’s folk dance class at Hearst Gym in early 1970, little did I know what was in store for me. Being someone who is not the least interested in sports, yet one who does love to dance, enrolling in this class to fulfill my otherwise dreaded PE requirement was a no-brainer. There she was in her leather miniskirt; her effervescent joy, humor and energy drew us in. Her class was a joy. I was addicted.

It was a magical time and place to be. Sunni’s influence quickly spread among so many of us during this youthful phase of our lives. Local folk dance opportunities were abundant, and we’d dance several nights a week, late into the night. It was natural that we quickly became a close-knit group.

Sunni was a gem. I am so grateful for the positive impacts she had on my life. I know that others feel the same, and I hope Sunni knew that.

President’s Message – *continued from p. 3*

As I recall, graduating from this class was a big deal – we all got little trophies for participating (surviving) our final recital. My Mom said, “You were great! Do you want to sign up for the next class?” And I said, “NO THANK YOU, Mom!” She kindly let me tap my way off that particular stage. I never became a tap sensation, but I like to think this experience helped me veer away from bubble machines and steer me toward the music and dancing that I still enjoy today. Mom may have failed to turn me into Shirley Temple, but she did help me gain a bit more sass. And who doesn’t need more sass?

YOU CAN BE THAT FRIEND WHO DRAGS A FRIEND TO FOLK DANCING, SO THEY CAN DISCOVER THEIR OWN INNER, SASSY DANCER. All it takes is a little nudge, and some of us wallflowers start to bloom.

Stay healthy and happy and keep moving to the beat!

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.



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

Save the date!

March 6-8, 2026

Laguna Folk Dance Festival

We are planning another
FUN-FILLED FESTIVAL



Featuring Anna Angelova
teaching Bulgarian dances

and Daniel Sandu teaching
Romanian and Rom dances

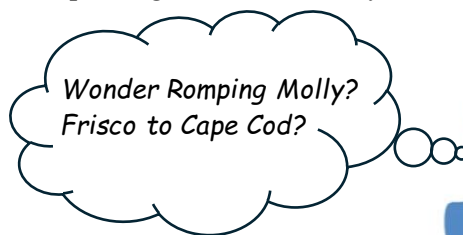


78 RPM RECORD COLLECTION

David Raube of Ceres, California, is finally parting with his collection of 78 RPM folk dance records. These are truly collectors' items. He's happy to accept payment but will also donate the records to an interested organization or individual. David has been dancing in the Central Valley since the 1950s, including appearing with performing groups, and still attends the Village Dancers in Turlock every Friday. Below is a list of the titles.

1. Marklander and Zigeuner Polka
2. Laces & Graces and Blackhawk Waltz
3. Little Man in a Fix and Napoleon
4. Frisco to Cape Cod and Submarine Waltz
5. Ranchera and Cielito Lindo
6. Miserlou and Hora Staccato
7. To-Tur and Sudmalinas
8. Honest John and Wonder Romping Molly
9. Fado Blanquita and Chamarita
10. Too-Ra-Loo and Third Man Theme
11. Glory, Glory Hallelujah and Buttons & Bows
12. Swing in the Center and Varsouvienne
13. Dan Tucker Waltz and Underneath the Chestnut Tree
14. Cruising Down the River and Chiapanecas
15. Glowworm and Rye Waltz
16. Milanovo Kolo and O D Dana
17. Marimba and Cielo Guatemala
18. Schottische and Sally Gooden Square
19. Macedonka Kolo and Čuvam Ovce
20. Sallarello Romano and Tarantella Napoletan
21. Stacks of Barley and Irish Washerwoman
22. Korobushka and Hopak
23. Spinning Waltz and Merry Widow Waltz

Contact David at 209-537-9491 and make a deal!



FROM THE EDITOR

While Indexing *Let's Dance!* Magazines

I'm working my way through the early 1970s, the decade when I started dancing. It's fun to read about people I knew and danced with and the events I attended and failed to attend. There are still bits that I marked from earlier years that I have been meaning to include. I hope you are enjoying these gems as much as I am!



February 1944: Three members of the Berkeley Folk Dancers were invited on the Russian refrigerator ship *Industria* for an evening of dancing. "Naturally we accepted eagerly. We were most amazed to find the Russians really do Russian folk dances, although they are fond of the Fox Trot, Tango, and anything with rhythm. They used records and we noticed they are quite up-to-date. The routines varied on all the dances we do. However, the most similar was the Tziganochka, which was identical to ours except for the two balances at the end. Instead, they finish it with four two-steps.... The men had to be coaxed into the Hopak. Personally you couldn't blame them since the floor was at a terrific angle due to the listing of the ship."

November 1947: The Albany Folk Dancers reported that one of their five classes offered each week is a group for teenagers. The teenaged group average 75 dancers and 35 of them are boys.

February 1948: The Fun Club of San Francisco started a class for beginners. It has 150 dancers enrolled.

August 1954: San Diego Dancers had 118 at their beginners class in June. The intermediate class doubled in size the second week and may outgrow its hall.

March 1959: From 200 dancers, we have grown to 20,000 statewide. We need a stronger union, especially between dance clubs and the councils, and the councils and the Federation.

November 1961: The Hollywood Peasants dance group hosted a pool party for two busloads of touring members of the Moiseyev Russian Dance Troupe when they were in Los Angeles.

January 1969: In 1949, following a folk dance festival at the San Jose Civic Auditorium, a group of teachers and leaders decided to form the Peninsula Folk Dance Council. In early 1950, invitations were sent to 75 (!) folk dance groups, inviting them to the first meeting. About half of them sent delegates. The Council hosted its first Statewide in 1961.

February 1971: Sunni Bloland is the featured teacher at the two-day Laguna Festival February 13-14. Also, there is a list of 120 dances, compiled by Stan Valentine based on frequency of dances on the printed programs from state and regional festivals. The Hambo is listed as #1, followed by Corrido, Couple Hasapiko, White Heather Jig, and Somewhere My Love.

October 1971: This year's Folk Dance Camp was the biggest ever. Twenty-two American states and four foreign countries were represented. The silver anniversary is next year, and 150 dancers have already put down deposits. Also, the Fresno Recreation Department is offering free folk dance classes five nights a week!

April 1972: Kathy Vinokur, with many of her "folk dance" recipes, was on the front page of the Palo Alto Times weekly food section. She's the wife of Marcel Vinokur who's been teaching on the Peninsula for 15 years. He's currently teaching at the Menlo Park Recreation Center, Foothill College, and U.C. Santa Cruz.

May 1972: An article laments the wearing of jeans and shorts because they don't allow a girl to swish her skirts where appropriate. Also, even if natives dance barefoot in their homeland, we should all wear shoes!

Based on the number of times it appeared on printed dance programs, the Hambo was the most popular dance in the international folk dance repertoire. However, the real reason is not so obvious: at any two-day festival, the Hambo would be done *both* days. If there were Friday night, Saturday night and Sunday afternoon dance parties, the Hambo would appear *three* times on the program. It is the only dance in the repertoire so favored.

What's Up Down South?

– News from Southern California –

Statewide was held in Arroyo Grande this year, which some might point out is closer to the Bay Area than Southern California. However, the California Folk Dance Federation South was the official sponsor, and the review was written by its current president, Diane Baker.

Photos by L. Tucker and C. Dickey.

Statewide 2025 and a May Day Festival in Arroyo Grande

by Diane Baker

A standing ovation is due for **Margaret Lange** and **Billy Burke** for producing a splendid and satisfying experience for all Statewide festival goers! Every detail was imagined, planned, coordinated and successfully carried out!

Eighteen months ago, Billy and Margaret canvassed the central coast to find the ideal venue – Portuguese Hall in Arroyo Grande. In quick succession they arranged for master teacher **Željko Jergan**, who brought his talented assistant **Arrianna Ordway**. They complemented the instructional program of lively Croatian dances by engaging **Billy** himself to teach iconic Macedonian dances.

The first volunteer was **Toti O'Brien** who offered her artistic talent for decorating the hall. She also designed and assembled the origami craft project. Billy called in favors from his network of colleagues to engage **Chubritza** to play for dancing, and **Big Rock Balalaika** to entertain festival goers during Happy Hour. He prevailed upon **Sherry Cochran** to serve as DJ throughout the weekend and arranged for **Jean Gorrindo** of the Central Coast Country Dance Society to call contras at evening parties. **David Heald and the Solvang Village Dancers** signed on to perform an ambitious program of Scandinavian set dances.

Margaret took on the task of registration as well as designing artwork for flyers, writing promotional articles, and contracting with the host hotel, Hampton Inn. Additionally, she prepared detailed descriptions of nearby restaurants, cafés and shops, and researched and wrote a travel guide to recreational opportunities on the Central Coast. Further, she invited **Jim Corridan** to share the history and significance of the nearby Dana Adobe (built in 1839 on a Mexican Land Grant) to add a cultural experience to the festival. Margaret also designed the colorful souvenir buttons and ordered “keep cool” bandanas plus handy note booklets to fill the souvenir goody bags. **Megan Zottarelli**, Margaret’s daughter, designed the



floral name tags. Arranging for caterers (scrumptious meals!) was delegated to **Shelley Lawrence**, a Bay Osos dancer. Members of the host club, **Bay Osos Dancers**, volunteered to decorate, make coffee, bake, set out refreshments, clean up, and much more. Margaret called in favors from local merchants and neighbors to contribute wine, carafes for serving beverages and tasty snacks. She arranged for her friend **Phil Hamer** to close the festival with a bagpipe tune. Billy flew a friend's



wife (a professional videographer) from Hawaii to record dance instruction. Together Billy and Margaret planned and publicized a free Community Dance Party with Maypole Dancing led by **Marc Rayman** for Sunday afternoon.

With such thorough planning, what could go wrong?

Water! The local water district announced possible contamination of regional drinking water a few hours before attendees began arriving! The directors met the emergency with cool efficiency. Bottled water was brought to the Hall, and signs were posted. Fortunately, on Friday afternoon, an alert sounded to reassure all that the tap water was now safe for drinking!

Following the Saturday morning workshop dancers hustled off to the nearby village for lunch and returned to enjoy the Solvang Danish Dancers. Everyone was ready for Happy Hour when afternoon workshops concluded. Volunteers set up tables for a festive Mediterranean meal, and quickly cleared the hall for the evening dance party.

John Filcich led his signature dances, Veliko Kolo and Kokonješte, and waltzed with daughter Jana. Participants commented on how delighted they were to be in friendly Arroyo Grande for the weekend. It felt like a big family reunion with dancers from Northern and Southern California equal in attendance!

Billy and Margaret, you and your dedicated team provided the recreational folk dance community with a heartwarming experience at Statewide 2025! But, wait, there's more...

Sunday morning featured dance reviews. While dancers ate tasty box lunches, two Maypoles were set up in the hall. Doors were opened for a **free community dance party**. Marc Rayman patiently guided 32 ribbon-holders to weave out and in, over and under. The traditional tune was nearly drowned out by laughter.

Billy invited everyone to join him on the dance floor for Ve David and similar easy-to-follow dances. **The local NPR TV station, KSBY, arrived to document the occasion.** As the afternoon wound down, folks asked when the next community dance would take place. Margaret and Billy provided a gift to the local community as well as to the visiting folk dancers!

It took a village to produce such an amazing and successful festival. Three cheers for the 2025 Statewide Festival Chairs (Margaret and Billy) and the Bay Osos team!

MARVELOUS MARIJA

by Carol Hayden

I would like to introduce you to one of Berkeley Folk Dancers' excellent teachers, Marija Hillis. She currently teaches the Intermediate class on Thursday afternoons and co-teaches the Advanced Intermediate class on Wednesday evenings with Luoping Zhang.



Marija dancing with David in 2024.

Marija was born in 1949 in the green hills of Slovenia. She was six when she came to the United States, and spent her childhood in Queens and Brooklyn, New York. She graduated from New York University with a BS in Dance Education and earned a teaching credential in Physical Education.

In 1972, she moved to San Francisco and then to Berkeley in 1973. She taught in the San Lorenzo Unified School District middle and elementary levels. She performed with Westwind International Folk Ensemble from 1995 to 2001 and later with Jubilee American Dance.

She is married to David Hillis and introduced him to folk dancing. He embraced her enthusiasm for dancing and now also co-teaches the Tuesday evening Intermediate class with Marian Snyder.

In Marija's words, "I guess you could say that I've been dancing all my life. My mom told me that whenever music was playing, I rocked to the beat, holding onto the railing of my crib. I'm lucky that social dancing was part of my cultural heritage. I learned the waltz, polka, and foxtrot with my father leading. I took ballet and tap dance lessons. Today I enjoy contra dancing, English, Country, Cajun, Scottish – you name it, I'll try it! I enjoy Berkeley Folk Dancers just because there is such a variety of dances every evening."

With her very strong background in dance and as a teacher, she teaches us folk dance with ease, patience, and a high level of skill. I am very grateful she is a member of Berkeley Folk Dancers and is sharing her enthusiasm and dancing skills with us all.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



We opened your latest edition of *Let's Dance!* and saw the photo of Max and June Horn of Martinez. What a great couple!

Max and June put on great dance parties at their farm in Martinez. They had a big slab dance floor outside, benches around the sides, balloons and streamers in the breeze, and a music system in one corner with a big sunshade over the whole caboodle. Max had a great selection of music, and these parties were all requests with a few dances taught. You could sip some of Max's homemade elderberry wine (wow, that was some good stuff!) and June would make her world-famous sticky buns which were incredibly tasty and didn't last long on the platters.

Get tired? Take a break to wander around the farm and find a shady spot in the grass to kick back

while listening to the music and laughter. In their house, June had a wonderful collection of costumed dolls from around the world in some in very attractive glass display cases.

There was a Fourth of July party, a Labor Day party and some Friday night Israeli dances in summer. They had a picnic area with big tables, always covered with plenty of food because everybody contributed to the feast. Some people would bring their dogs, as we did, while some would bring kids and both added to the whole festive atmosphere. These parties were well attended, sometimes requiring us to park on Alhambra Avenue itself after their driveway gridlocked.

The parties would happen no matter the weather. One Labor Day, it was over 100 degrees and that didn't diminish the crowd! Sweaty palms? Oh boy!

Some great memories! Thanks for all your hard work keeping the magazine fun to read!

~ Brian and Joyce Bender

Veleshko

(Bulgaria-Macedonia)

Veleshko (veh-LESH-koh) is a dance from Veles in North Macedonia but is danced by Bulgarian performing groups and taught by Bulgarian dance teachers. This dance was presented by Anna Angelova at the 2024 Kolo Festival held in San Francisco. It is danced to the song “Mare Mori Mare” sung in Macedonian by Duško Georgievski.

Music: 2/4 meter “Mare Mori Mare” sung by Duško Georgievski. An internet search for the song title yields websites where the music available to download.

Video: An internet search for “Veleshko Horo” will yield several videos. If you can search in Bulgarian (Велешко хоро), there are more videos.

Formation: Open circle; hands joined in W-position.

Steps & Styling: Kerplunk-step: Beg R, three small steps on the balls of the feet, moving along the line of the dance in QSS rhythm. The first step is a light step without full weight on the upbeat (cts 1-2). Can be done with opp ftwk and can also move bkwd.

Triple-step: Beg R, three small steps on the balls of the feet, moving along the line of the dance (cts 1-&-2). Can be done with opp ftwk and can also move bkwd.

Note: Kerplunk-step and Triple-step can both be seen on videos, each done by some dancers.

Meas	2/4 meter	PATTERN
32		INTRODUCTION. No action. Start with the vocals.
1		Facing CCW, bounce on both ft with R crossed slightly in front of L (ct 1); step R in place lifting L up slightly in back (ct 2), before bringing it fwd (ct &).
2		Repeat meas 1 with opp ftwk in the same direction.
3		Beg R, Kerplunk-step or Triple-step.
4		Hop on R and lift L while making a half-turn L to end facing CW (ct 1); step bkwd on L (ct 2).
5-6		Facing CW, beg R, two Kerplunk-steps or Triple-steps bkwd.
7		Hop on L while kicking R fwd (ct 1), long step R fwd (ct 2) and make a half-turn R to face CCW (ct &).
8		Face CCW, beg L, Triple-step in place.

Sequence: Repeat as set forth above until the end of the music.

Lyrics transliterated:

Mare mori Mare, po sokatsi odish, po sokatsi odish, Mare, se za mene zborish ne sŭm bil za tebe,
Dyavol da me vzeme pred pari ne vredam, Mare, az govorya po tebe
Daŭ mi, daŭ, az da te imam, daŭ mi, daŭ, az da te ľubam
Daŭ mi, daŭ snaga da ti kŭrsha, pa da vidish lichno, Mare, kolko pari vredam

Mara, hey Mara, you walk the streets, walk the streets. Mara, you talk to your friends, say I am not for you,
Damn me, I'm not worth it. Mara, I'm talking about you.

Give me, give me, let me have you. Give me, give me, let me love you.

Give me, give me the strength to break you, so you can see for yourself, Mara, how much money I'm worth.



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A BLAST FROM THE PAST

Although Stockton Folk Dance Camp has been held during the last two weeks of July each year for many decades, and sometimes extending into the first week of August, the *first* Folk Dance Camp at the College of the Pacific in Stockton was just six days long, August 2-7, 1948. The following announcement appeared in the May 1948 issue of *Let's Dance!* magazine a mere two months before the first day, and there is no mention of the teaching staff.

SUMMER CAMP

Plans have been completed with the College of the Pacific at Stockton to hold a Folk Dance Camp, from August 2 to August 7, 1948, on the grounds of the College for the members of the Folk Dance Federation of California.

Roughly, plans are as follows:

The camp will begin Monday, August 2, at 8 a.m., with a registration period, general session and organization

With the exception of the first morning, the day will be divided into the following periods:

8 a.m. to 10 a.m. Teaching periods, divided into three groups: 1. New and advanced dances, 2. General Federation Dances, as published in "Folk Dances From Near and Far." 3. Square dances, long-ways dances, and running sets.

10:15 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. General Sessions, which will include folk singing, costumes, folk lore, discussions, and many other topics.

11:15 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Free time to be used for any purpose such as siesta, swimming, library time (a special library of about two hundred books on folk dances will be arranged) dancing, (a studio will be provided with a public address system which can be used by any one for dancing or practice).

There will be another teaching period from 3 to 5 p.m., divided into the same three types of sessions as the morning period and some of the same dances will be taught in the afternoon so that dancers who attend the one section in the morning have an opportunity to attend another section in the afternoon.

5 p.m. to 6 p.m., swimming.

A twilight period is planned for immediately after the dinner for dancing on a lawn with leadership in English dances. Palestinian dances and play-party games.

Meal hours are: breakfast, 7:15 a.m.; lunch, 12 noon; dinner, 6:15 p.m.

A party is planned for every evening.

Cost of the institute will be as follows: Room and board, \$18.00—including the use of the swimming pool and all facilities of the Campus; Registration Fee, \$15.00—this includes all activities.

Attendance will be limited to 200. The first 200 reservations received will be booked. Send reservation, with \$5 deposit, to Lawton Harris, College of the Pacific, Stockton, California.

All reservations must be received by July 15 and no refunds can be made after that date.

The registration fee of \$15 would be about \$200 today, while room and board (\$18) would be about \$240. The majority of the teaching staff lived in California so travel costs were minimal, and many teachers may have donated their time in exchange for free attendance.

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