

Let's Dance!

THE MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCING 03 SEPTEMBER 2025



Stockton Folk Dance
Camp Faculty 2025
Second Week

Stockton Folk Dance Camp
Second Week Under 35



Stockton Folk Dance Camp
First Week Members of Süssesfüsse
Director Heidi Vorst, far left.

More photos on p. 8.

Let's Dance!

Volume 82, No. 7

SEPTEMBER 2025

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The Federation's Promotion Fund is available to Federation members and clubs, in the form of a grant or a loan, to promote a specific dance event or folk dance in general. Read more about this fund and download an application at www.folkdance.com under the **Services** tab.

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

Donations: The Folk Dance Federation of California is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, and donations are tax deductible! Gifts and donations are always welcome.

Send to:

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153 Race Street

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Individual: \$35/year

Household: \$45/year

Students: \$25/year (26 or under and at least half time)

Group/Club: \$40/year

Mail applications, renewals & checks to:

Folk Dance Federation of California, Inc.

Marcia Rosenblatt, Membership

927 Springfield Drive, Millbrae, CA 94030

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

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

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WELCOME NEW FEDERATION MEMBERS

Santa Cruz Old Time Collective – Santa Cruz
Tom Fuller & Michelle Eaton – Chico
Alison Bridges – Chico
Susan Sarnoff – Chico
Bonnie Chiros – Chico
Rose Fong – Chico
Bruxvoort Family – Pacifica

WOW! What's happening in Chico?

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Laura Richardson

My friends, what is the future of folk dancing? I can tell you that this summer, we had a bumper crop of applications for scholarships to folk dance camps. We fielded *double* the normal number of applications. I find this encouraging! The number of new dancers interested in learning about folk dancing seems to be on the rise. It's a little early to tell if this is a long-term trend, but I'd like to start preparing for a similar response *next* year. I am requesting that you consider making a donation to the **Federation Scholarship Fund**. Any amount will help. I'd like to make sure we can enable everyone to make it to a folk dance camp, festival, or event who has a desire to attend, regardless of their circumstances. Immersion in dance can be a life-changing experience. It is certainly one way to make friends and form connections.

There are many ways you can donate easily, and they are listed on our website. Log onto folkdance.com and click "Donate" on the menu bar. You can use Paypal, a credit card, Zelle, or send a check – all methods are welcome. Specify "Scholarship Fund" with your donation. And, your donation is tax deductible!

Also, the **Officers Ball at the Veterans Memorial Hall on Saturday, October 4 in Pleasanton** will be a *fundraiser for scholarships*. Register for this event as *soon as you can*. Early registration is very helpful for the organizers.

You could also donate to this worthy cause when you renew your membership in the Federation. Every dollar donated to scholarship will enable more students to attend dance events. Let's make the circle bigger!

Have you ever danced at Changs in San Francisco? Our intrepid Vice President Clem Dickey and I headed north on the 280 freeway on a Friday in late June to check out the famous dance venue. Changs has been a folk dance hot spot since 1938. They have a parking lot! For those of you unfamiliar with San Francisco, easy parking is like finding a unicorn.

The clubhouse has a well-seasoned dance floor. The fourth Friday of each month is Family Night, with dances taught by the talented Michel Hardbarger. Kids with their adults enjoyed dances like Savila Se Bela Loza, and some I had never seen, that were geared to the youngsters, including the Shovel dance, Saint John River, Peopleton Stick Dance, Zhan Zai Gao Gang Shang, and Jungel.

After the family hour, we danced with Lothar Narins as our DJ. At about 9 pm, with an hour of dancing to go, we suffered a power failure. Our speaker died, and the lights went out. The emergency lighting kicked in to vaguely illuminate the dance hall. Lothar had a backup battery-powered speaker in the car (always have a backup plan!) and soon we were dancing by the eerie glow of the emergency lights. Peering into the world outside the front door, it seemed all the neighborhood was dark too.

I found dancing by emergency lights a delight. We really could not see each other well in the dim twilight, but we were connected by the music and the steps. We humans are mostly visual creatures – take away our vision, and the other senses have to step up. As we danced in the dark, my hearing and my sense of touch became more acute. I noticed the temperature and grip of the hands I was holding, the feel of fabric brushing my skin, the background instruments and harmony in the music. I was reminded of high school dances in the gym, when the lights were low and the air was filled with possibilities. There was a whiff of adventure in the air, and the darkness transformed the dance experience into something very special. Sure, we can choose to turn the lights low on any night we dance. However, this twilight was a gift delivered by the universe, free of charge – an opportunity to explore adaptation. I felt lucky to be there on that particular evening.

I recommend a visit to Changs. I can't guarantee there will be a power failure in the neighborhood, but you will be welcomed into the circle, no matter how much electricity is flowing. I learned that even a failed power grid can't stop the dancing at Changs, proving once again that dancers are resilient!

Stay healthy and happy and keep moving to the beat!



Laura Richardson. Photo by E. Khuner.

Don't forget to register for the
Officers Ball on October 4.
See p. 28.



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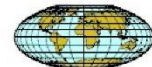
July 29-August 11 Led by Ventsi Milev
Sofia, Plovdiv, Bansko, Veliko Turnovo, Koprivshtitsa

GREECE and the GREEK ISLANDS: October 4-17

Led by Lee Otterholt, Maroula Konti, guide
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Patmos, Kusadasi

TURKEY: October 17-31

Led by Lee Otterholt
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Buenos Aires, Salta, Mendoza

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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 (Community tab).

- AUG. 24** **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. Info: president@folkdance.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. Camp for the whole weekend or come for a day. International folk 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.
- SEPT. 4** **CITRUS CELEBRATION PARTY (Orange You Glad to See Us?).** St. Archangel Michael Church in Saratoga. 7:30-10:15. All-request dance party hosted by the Saratoga Folk Dancers. Bring a snack to share for the refreshment table. Info: loui@loutitucker.com.
- SEPT. 6** **34th ANNUAL POLISH FESTIVAL.** Polish American Community Hall, 327 Main Street, Roseville. Live music, dancing, food, performances, games for children. Noon-5 pm. IT'S FREE! Info: Sacpolishclub.com.
- SEPT. 13** **PENINSULA COUNCIL FOLK DANCE PARTY.** St. Bede's Church Hall, 2650 Sand Hill Road, Menlo Park. 7-10 pm. The emcees will be Becky Beniares and Nancy Kaye. \$10. Info and requests: pfdcparty@gmail.com. Next month's party is on *Sunday*, October 12.
- SEPT. 20** **BERKELEY FOLK DANCERS INAUGURAL BALL.** Live Oak Recreation Center, 1301 Shattuck Avenue, Berkeley. 1-4 pm. \$12. Theme: Alphabet Soup. Info: berkeleyfolkdancers.org.
- SEPT. 20** **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.
- SEPT. 27** **DAVID AND MARIJA HILLIS 25th WEDDING ANNIVERSARY PARTY.** They are celebrating and you're invited! Live Oak Park. A couple of sets of English country dances with live music, then other dancing. 2:30-4:30. Info: davidhillis1@comcast.net
- OCT. 4** **THE OFFICERS BALL.** Institute with six local teachers, on-site dinner, evening all-request dance party. This is the Folk Dance Federation's annual fundraiser, and this year's fundraising focuses on the Scholarship Fund. Register early for a discounted package and to get the Federation's 2026 Calendar for only \$5. Info: folkdance.com. **See registration form on p. 28.**
- OCT. 10-12** **NORTH-SOUTH TEACHERS' SEMINAR.** Monte Toyon, 220 Cloister Lane, Aptos. \$270-\$320 depending on accommodations. Teachers: Cristian Florescu and Sonia Dion. Info: northsouthfolkdance@gmail.com.
- OCT. 18** **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.
- OCT. 19** **KOPACHKA'S BULGARIAN FOLK DANCE PARTY.** Live music with Bulgarika on their tour of the US. Strawberry Park Recreation Center, 118 E. Strawberry Drive, Mill Valley. \$15 (\$7 students, children free with supervision). Info: Kopachkadancers.com. **See ad on p. 20.**
- OCT. 24** **50th ANNIVERSARY CONCERT.** Łowiczanie Polish Folk Ensemble. Leshner Center for the Arts, Walnut Creek. **See ad on p. 19.**
- OCT. 31-NOV. 2** **FALL CAMP.** Brandeis-Bardin, 1101 Peppertree Lane, Brandeis, near Simi Valley in Southern California. \$270-\$540 depending on accommodations. Main teacher Catherine Rudin, with more to be announced. Info: DanceFallCamp@gmail.com. **See registration form on p. 26.**

THE FAMILY PHOTO ALBUM



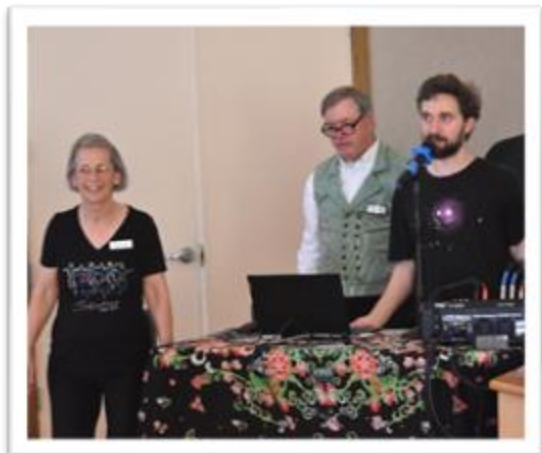
Lon and Hollis Radin flank Amy Dzhou. Amy recently started dancing in the South Bay. *Photo by L. Tucker.*



Joanna Foley and Andy Partos (above) joined many other clowns including Emily Stoper and Bruce Carter (right) at the Under the Big Top party hosted by the Berkeley Folk Dancers in July. *Photos by A. Partos and C. Ghafur.*



Birthdays were celebrated at Café Shalom in July. From left, Barry Pearl, Yoel Sberlo, Katherine and Rosanna Horton, and Ellen Ron. *Photo by L. Tucker.*



From left, Ulrike Narins, Craig Blackstone, and Lothar Narins were among the Changs members who emceed the Peninsula Council's July party. *Photo by L. Tucker.*



Razzmatazz in Santa Rosa honored Gloria Coté on her birthday! *Photo by M. Smith.*

Stockton Folk Dance Camp Observations

By Loui Tucker

Photos by L. Tucker

Stockton Folk Dance Camp this year reminded me of those last few days of high school before graduating seniors went off to jobs or college. We dropped in to see our favorite teachers one more time. We visited our favorite haunts – the backstage area of the theater, the concession stand by the football field, the grove of trees by the tennis courts. We gathered with friends to share memories of triumphs and dramas, romance, pranks, and parties. We confessed to our hopes and fears about the future.

At Camp there were daily reminders of our past at the University of the Pacific: what was happening during various decades, what dances we were learning, and what activities were popular. We had a “No Lawn-Lawn Party” while reminiscing about dancing on the lawn to music played on a record player. We dressed in clothing from the 1920s and 1970s. We shared stories of un-air-conditioned dorm rooms, midnight swimming in the University pool, and beer being sold at the Hole-in-the-Wall.

At the same time, there was much talk about next summer when we can expect to be traveling to the University of California in Santa Cruz instead of the University of the Pacific in Stockton. Temperatures in the 70s, buildings sheltered by tall pines and redwoods, and views of the Pacific Ocean were used to advertise the new venue. There were concerns: “Will the rooms be air-conditioned?” and, “Are we taking our wonderful dance floors?”

While the general atmosphere had us with one foot in the past and one foot in the future, the teaching



staff kept us hopping in the present. Andy Taylor and Richard Powers were 11th-hour substitutions when two other teachers were not able to come, and they fit in seamlessly. Richard has practically become a fixture on the faculty, while Andy had only been on teaching staff once before (2011).

Richard’s classes continue to be popular, but his lecture on the

changes in couple dancing in the United States from the early 20th century through the teenaged dance rebellion of the 1960s to the final years of the disco era had his audience enthralled and delighted. Since many of us lived during those years, it was a sweet walk down memory lane.

On the other hand, Andy brought us something shiny new and different: Carpathian dances. These dances were from a region in the mountains west of Slovakia and Hungary and east of Ukraine, dances



with which we were largely unfamiliar. Her teaching style was clear and well-paced and we quickly fell in love with both the music and movements. Judging from the preliminary results of the survey of dances done at Camp, many of her dances will be on the teaching schedule for local classes.

Cristian Florescu and Sonia Dion (recovering from a leg injury) were the usual crowd-pleasers. They taught dances from their recently released 13th “album” and, as always, the music they selected had us bouncing in our shoes from the first measures and singing along with the “la-la-LAH!” The dances themselves provided just the right amount of entertainment and challenge.

Ed Austin, a fixture at the dance department of Brigham Young University for decades, was finally able to get away for two weeks to join the Stockton



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Folk Dance Camp Observations (continued)

Camp faculty. Ed chose a broad spectrum of international favorites from Turkish to Israeli, from Romanian to Greek. He brought Vulpiuța to a new generation of dancers and made time to teach a challenging Appalachian hambone choreography to a



willing group of young dancers who performed it at the first week Saturday Talent Show.

Roo Lester switched from her well-known expertise in the dances of Sweden to take us to the Basque country and southern France. Hegi featured some new sequences, and dancers worked to master them. It was played at almost every after-party, and dancers filled

the dance floor. Kudos to Stacy Rose, our contras/mixers/squares caller, who provided additional visuals for dancers taking Roo's classes.

Richard Schmidt's Klapok from Lowicz (lots of clapping!) produced more smiles per musical measure than any I have seen in a long time. Sobótki, which Richard also taught in 2011, was a repeat hit. He even snuck in a waltz mixer.



Stacy Rose, though she only had one official class each week (Zesty Contras!), talked us through contras, mixers and squares at the nightly Once Over Lightly. She added a bit to the experience each night by providing music for the contra that, about two minutes in, seamlessly blended a

popular song from the decade that was being focused on that night into the more traditional contra music. Can you imagine doing a right-hand star to "Play That Funky Music, White Boy?"

And the musicians and singers! Who could forget the live band with the clear new moniker, Boston Three Party? In addition to the nightly Once Over



Lightly, they played at several after-parties. They played from the stage, and they played on the dance floor. Tom Pixton accompanied Roo in her twice-daily classes, Ralph Iverson gave instrumental lessons and Brian Wilson gave singing lessons. Will Cope hosted a sing-along on Monday afternoon. Emily Saletan, Richard Powers' teaching partner, also sang for the band; she and Andy Taylor taught a yodeling class!



What more is there to say? The Talent Show displayed some extraordinary talent, along with the goofy skits. The auctions (live and silent) raised an extraordinary amount – over \$17,000 – which far exceeded past income. The Candle-Lighting Ceremony (the last one at UOP) had new campers and old-timers in tears. The Hat Kolo brought out creative spirits: a hat the size of a tangerine, a hat made from a shower cap filled with colored scarves, a hat made from a paper cup held on with string, and a hat made from a t-shirt tied on four corners. The Dances for All Ages and Camper Sharing enhanced the curriculum of dancer teachers. Friendships were made and renewed. Skills were polished, souls were replenished.

Hats off, a round of applause, and three cheers for the Board, teachers, staff, scholarship workers, and miscellaneous volunteers who made our last trip to the City of Stockton so memorable!



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FEDERATION SCHOLARSHIPS CREATE DANCE EXPERIENCES

From Anasophia and Claire Schmidlein

We received a scholarship from the Folk Dance Federation of California to support our participation in the International Children's and Youth Folkloric Ensemble Festival. **The festival took place in Vatra Dornei, Romania July 16-18.** We participated as the American Dance Arts Collective (ADAC), which is the international tour team of the International Dance Arts



Collective (IDAC) based in Rocklin, California. Our dad came with us as a chaperone and member of our folk band.

We arrived in Romania early on July 13 to allow us time to get acclimated and rehearse. We did two performances as part of the

festival, the first at the original outdoor venue and the second in an auditorium due to rain. We also were able to participate in multiple cultural exchanges with other groups participating in the festival, as well as with religious groups and folk craftspeople in Romania. Finally, we took the opportunity to visit multiple historical locations in the Transylvanian and Moldavian regions to learn more about the history of Romania.

We gained so much from our trip. We were able to develop important skills, including better personal responsibility, time management, familiarity with traveling, and team building and communication. We were able to expand our dancing abilities by observing and learning from other festival participants. We enjoyed the opportunity to share our culture with others, and we deeply appreciated the chance to learn about other cultures both from our interactions with other dancers and from all of the kind Romanian people who were tour guides, bus drivers, hotel staff, local artisans, shopkeepers, and other community members.

From Sarah Lisonbee

I was privileged to attend the Children's and Youth Folkloric Ensembles Festival in Vatra Dornei, Romania. I participated with the American Dance Arts Collective (International Dance Arts Collective while on tour) and thoroughly enjoyed



representing the United States at the festival. The CIOFF festival was made up of Romanian groups representing their region of the country, as well as groups like mine representing our various corners of the world.

The town of Vatra Dornei was a picturesque background of colorful houses, charming architecture, and vibrant greenery. The first night of the festival we sat around a huge round table with a few representatives from each team in the beautiful city capital. We learned a bit about each group, where they were from, and their goals. As you can imagine, we all shared a love of folk dance and a desire to keep folk arts alive and well.

Each night of the festival we gathered around the stage and watched some of the talented children and youth perform dances that they had practiced for weeks and months to be able to share with us. By far my favorite part of the festival was being able to meet young people from so many different backgrounds and cultures. I loved talking to them even though most of the time we were only able to use simple English or Google Translate. They loved to pull up a map on my phone and show me exactly where their family lived.

My experience taught me how much our actions can reflect on our culture or our country. I learned that true connection is possible without complicated words or actions. It just requires kindness and a true desire to learn about others. My folk dance teacher likes to say that folk dancing is a group sport.

I am so grateful to the Folk Dance Federation and the National Folk Organization that made this trip possible for me.

Note from Alex Shadle, founder and director of IDAC: Sarah was chosen to represent the United States and ADAC at the mayoral reception in Vatra Dornei at the town hall. She and Tyler Blair greeted the mayor and brought gifts from California. They also received gifts from Vatra Dornei. She and Tyler all carried our sign and flag in the opening parade of nations.



From Clarissa Miller

As the week at the West Coast Balkan Music & Dance Workshop came to a close, I found myself reflecting on the depth of connection and joy this gathering fosters. Nestled in the towering redwoods of Mendocino, the camp has become more than just a workshop for me. It felt like a living, breathing village built around shared traditions, music, and dance.

Each day began with the lively sounds of drums, brass, and voices echoing through the trees, drawing us to morning classes where master teachers passed down centuries-old songs, rhythms, and dances from Bulgaria, Macedonia, Serbia, Greece, and beyond. Afternoons were filled with informal gatherings, instrument jams under the shade, and impromptu dance circles in the meadow. Evenings brought spirited kafanas, where music and dance carried on into the early hours, uniting people of all ages and skill levels in a communal celebration of Balkan culture.

As we gathered for the final night's student concert and farewell party, as always I was struck by how amazing the week always ends up being and how close you can become with people in this environment. Yet we left with our hearts full and a collective promise to carry these traditions forward into our own communities. The opportunity to go to camp this year has meant a great deal to me. It has not been an easy year for my family, and every moment that takes me away from some of reality's harsh truths has been cherished and lived to the fullest.

I plan to introduce new rhythms and instruments to our local folk music gatherings and specifically bridge the gap between this community and the Polish community. Beyond just the steps and melodies, I hope to pass along the deeper values that Balkan Camp embodies: the importance of intergenerational connection, cultural preservation, and creating spaces where people from all backgrounds can come together in celebration. My goal is to help keep these living traditions alive while fostering community through music, dance, and shared experience.

Thank you to the Folk Dance Federation of California for making that possible for me this year.



From May McKee Kreusser

My experience at Stockton this year was unmatched. I remember I could not stop smiling during the first Romanian class I took, which felt like a good omen for the week to come.

Two special moments for me were the Wednesday night 50s sock hop-themed party and taking part in a special hambone dance skit at the Talent Show which was taught to us by our classic dance teacher, Ed Austin.

My main job assignment for the Camp scholarship was at the scholarship bazaar led by Donna Frankel, but I also helped with at least two other jobs every day, which only strengthened my feeling of being a part of a team with the rest of the people on scholarship. Needless to say, it was a lot of fun even while I was working.

I feel so lucky to be in the Süssesfüsse performance troupe. Without it I would not know that a place like Stockton Folk Dance Camp existed. I also feel extremely lucky to know Heidi Vorst, the leader and founder of Süssesfüsse, because she is the one working so hard to keep our troupe experiencing this Camp and keep folk dance alive in the modern world. It is because of Süssesfüsse and Heidi and the Stockton Folk Dance Camp that I understand the importance of folk dance and how it creates a bond unlike one that words could ever form.

This year was my third consecutive year at Stockton Folk Dance Camp, my second year on the work scholarship provided by the Camp, and my first year on a scholarship provided by the Folk Dance Federation of California. I'd like to extend a huge thank you to all those who made my camp experience possible this year.

From Eva McKee Kreusser

This year at Stockton was just the simultaneously restorative and depletive chaos that I was hoping for. By the end of the week, both my heart and my head were full of dances, music, stories, and ponderings of what it means to be dancing international dances. I pondered how I'm embodying people from incomprehensibly far away who have never known



continued on p. 12

me, echoing their steps out of their original context. I find this topic to be very interesting, overwhelming, and hard to wrap my head around, but the immediate kindness and enthusiasm of those around me made it make sense in its own way.

Beyond getting a week with incredible teachers and campers, I got even more than what was promised. For example, I attended hambone dance rehearsals, led by Ed Austin, in preparation for the talent show. Rapidly slapping myself in sync with a half-circle of other people was a great time.

After such rich and exhausting days, something about the after-parties lent me infinite energy for dancing. No matter how late I stayed up, I woke at 5:30 am. I'm happy to say I made the most of my week.

Thank you so much to the Folk Dance Federation of California and the people who gave me the opportunity to return this year and be part of the Camp on scholarship.

I miss it already, and I hope to be dancing with everyone in Santa Cruz next year.

From Mason Embree

This year my friend Gracella and I decided to drive down to Stockton Camp. There were 14 Süssesfüsse dancers who attended this year. There were six different classes you could take. I took each of the teachers' classes at least once, but I will confess I didn't stay in the Basque dance class because it was very complicated, and I couldn't go to every teacher's class anyway. I took notes for 18 out of 25 of the dances I did, which isn't too shabby.

I bid on an item in the live auction for the first time! I don't normally bid because everybody bids so high to support the scholarship fund, but there were some earrings that were going to be sold for \$25. I liked them so I bid on them for \$30 and I won!

It was a lot of fun watching the auction. One of the male teachers was a model for a skirt that someone made. He put on a wig and danced around. I think people just kept bidding so they could keep watching him be silly. Someone bought the skirt for \$500. Gracella walked around the hall showing off many of the auction items, and people donated a few hundred dollars in her name because she was such a good presenter for the items at the auction.

I got to teach a dance I choreographed at the Camper Sharing presentation on Wednesday. People



seemed to like it, perhaps because the dance was to the song Jump in The Line by Harry Belafonte.

I also performed a dance that Gracella and I choreographed together. We made almost no mistakes during our performance, and we got a lot of compliments after the talent show.

This is probably my favorite year at Camp so far. I made a lot of new friends. I'm very grateful to all the organizations and programs that made it possible for me to go: the SFDC Work Scholarship, Folk Dance Federation Scholarship, and National Folk Organization's Discovery Grant.

I can't wait to go next year and be at the university campus in Santa Cruz!

By Fiona Farrell

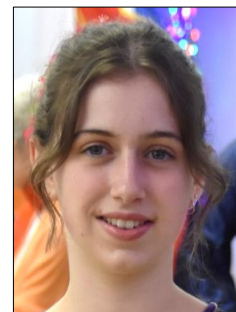
I am 15 years old, and I have been a part of the Süssesfüsse International Folk Dance troupe in Portland, Oregon, and led by Heidi Vorst for about seven years. Dancing has always been something I enjoy. This was my second year at Stockton Folk Dance Camp and, just like the year before, I was blown away by the excitement and activity.

Two classes that really stood out to me were Romanian dance with Sonia Dion and Cristian Florescu, and dances of the Carpathian region with Andy Taylor. The dances Sonia and Cristian taught were fun to do and perfect to take back to my dance troupe in Oregon. Sonia and Cristian's enthusiasm and love for dancing and sharing really lights up the class.

I had never seen any dances from the Carpathian region, so it was interesting to hear Andy talk about them during classes, and I learned so much. What really drew me in was the music for the dance. I fell in love with one dance in particular on my first day. The music was enchanting, the kind you can get lost in.

This year I helped in many areas, such as setting up for the auctions and the parties. It helped me understand what goes into the Camp experience and what people do behind the scenes. I was also able to connect and talk to people I would usually not talk to.

Every year there is a talent show on Saturday, a perfect time for participants to showcase their talent. This year, I decided to play my violin. I have been playing for about 10 years, and I really enjoy it. Many people told me they liked my performance, and I was very glad.



Would I recommend Folk Dance Camp to others? Absolutely! I want to thank the Folk Dance Federation of California for the scholarship I received which made it possible for me to attend.

By Sriparna Majumdar

I am a member of Changs International Folk Dancers based in San Francisco. I like to think of myself as a dance student, a teacher, a wannabe dance leader and, most importantly, a social dancer.



It was my immense pleasure to be back at Stockton Folk Dance Camp after a two-year hiatus. A camp work scholarship and California Folk Dance Federation's dance scholarship made this possible. I am extremely

thankful for their generous support that provided this wonderful opportunity.

Stockton Folk Dance Camp is my favorite place to not only to learn a new world of dancing and music but also to meet interesting new people from around the world. Staff members Sarah Clark, Suzanne Wall, and Greg Smith made my scholarship work time enjoyable. My roommate Kristen McKee was attending the camp for the first time. She and her daughters, Mae and Eva, were excellent dancers and beautiful people. The student group from Portland, to which Mae and Eva belonged, was full of energy and enthusiasm.

The primary focus for me was, of course, dancing, which I greatly missed in the last year, being busy at a new job at Stanford University. I focused on partner dances with Richard Powers, Spanish Basque dances with Roo Lester, Polish dances with Richard Schmidt, and Carpathian dances with Andy Taylor. Each of the dances was dramatically different.

The Maxixe taught by Richard Powers was both challenging and refreshing, as was the Blues One-step.

Roo's Basque dancing featured live accordion music that brought an authentic touch. The dances required good balance and body alignment. Each time I was in Roo's class I got something new to work on.

Richard Schmidt's Polish dances were so elegant that I fell in love with his material almost immediately. His polished, disciplined way of conducting the class made me understand Polish dancing techniques better.

Andy is an amazing and versatile social dancer, besides being a stellar teacher. She brought the catchiest music from the lands at the border of Ukraine, Romania, Hungary and Slovakia.

I had unfortunately missed out on Christian and Sonia's Romanian dances and Ed Austin's energetic dances because of the class timings. There isn't enough time to take classes from all the teachers.

I had a fleeting sad feeling to learn that this was the last time we would use the UOP. I might not be in the majority in my feelings but, in the past I enjoyed the summer heat in Stockton, a great retreat from the summer fog and cold of my Inner Sunset neighborhood of San Francisco. I enjoyed the lush green lawns against the backdrop of red brick buildings and a beautiful tower with a bell that tolled every hour. The Stockton Folk Dance Camp staff cheered me up talking about the new venue for 2026, which will be University of California at Santa Cruz. I am keeping my hopes high for experiencing the first SFDC at Santa Cruz next summer.

MORE SCHOLARSHIP ESSAYS COMING NEXT MONTH!



Roberto Bagnoli was only in the Bay Area area long enough to give one dance workshop in early August, but it was very successful – lots of happy dancers!
Photos by L. Tucker.

Celebrating Music and Dance in Estonia

by Craig Blackstone

In July, Cindy and I experienced a dance event unlike anything else in our lives – the 21st Estonian National Dance Celebration, held in Tallinn, Estonia. For those of you not familiar with Estonia, it is the northernmost of three nations nestled between Russia and Poland along the Baltic Sea just south of Finland. In size, it is a little smaller than San Bernardino County in southern California, and it has a total population of around 1.3 million people. Over a third of the population resides in Tallinn, the nation’s capital.

Back in 2022, Cindy and I befriended and became a second family to Jane, a young Estonian woman, when we were her hosts and guides during her first visit to California. When she learned of our interest in folk dancing, she invited us to join her in Estonia for her country’s national festival of dance, which is held every five years. As a further inducement, Jane offered to be our hostess for the trip, plan a weeklong tour of Estonia for us, and get the tickets and reservations we would need during our stay. We gladly accepted the offer. The next the festival was scheduled to be held was 2025, and by then Cindy and I would both be retired and free to travel.

The Dance Celebration brings together dance groups from throughout Estonia, joined by performers from a few other countries as well. All told, there were representatives from more than 550 dance groups, with close to 11,000 performers participating in the celebration. The majority of the performers were dancers, but there were some 500 gymnasts who also performed.

The Dance Celebration is held at the Kalev Stadium in Tallinn, which holds a capacity crowd of 12,000. Because of the limited seating, the dance celebration is repeated three times over a two-day period. Every show is sold out almost immediately after the tickets go on sale, so having a local Tallinn resident arrange to get them is a practical necessity.

Jane had procured wonderful seats in the center of the packed stadium, so we were perfectly placed to watch the final performance of 35 dances, with performing groups ranging in size from 266 to 1,111 members merging from formation to formation in a seamless flow. Watching the formations change was reminiscent of the movements of college marching bands putting on a halftime show, with costumes from the various regions of Estonia being worn by all of the performers. There were several dances in which the men wore tall stovepipe-like hats, and during one of those dances, a man’s hat came off and was blown around the stadium by gusty winds, fascinating the



audience that was concerned whether the hat would be trampled by the dancers or escape unharmed.

This reminded me of the lesson we learned from Gail Barton as members of the City College of San Francisco’s folk dance performing team to always fasten all costume pieces as securely as possible, for if an item comes off during a performance the audience would be likely to focus their attention on the loose item rather than the dance itself. As Gail had warned, that was precisely what happened in Tallinn, and the audience oohed and aahed with the movements of the hat rather than those of the dancers. Ultimately, three hats came off, but it appeared all three went unscathed.

The show lasted 2½ hours, and it was a mind-blowing spectacle. For the finale, all 10,950+ dancers combined to fill the stadium arena with a swirling ocean of dance. By far, this was the most amazing dance event Cindy and I had ever witnessed.

But the marvels of the trip were not over, as we were to discover when we attended the 28th Estonian National Song Celebration two days later. Like the Dance Celebration, the Estonian Song Celebration is held every five years, and the two events are held jointly. The Song Celebration involved choral folk song and orchestral performances over a seven-hour program featuring music of Estonia performed by more than 30,000 singers and musicians on a vast outdoor bowl for the stage.



Groups and/or orchestras throughout Estonia, numbering from the hundreds to over 10,000, performed 40 musical numbers, most of which were Estonian folk songs from different regions. Although we experienced rain showers off and on throughout the first five hours of the song festival and everyone got somewhat damp (umbrellas were not allowed in the venue), the sun did eventually make its belated appearance and none of us was completely soaked.

There were a number of food booths available during the event, but finding a dry spot to sit was impossible. Using the portable restrooms meant braving fields of very slippery mud. The last two hours of the concert remained rain-free, and over the last hour or so, all 30,000+ performers united to sing the final numbers together, usually augmented by the roughly 50,000 spectators in attendance at the event glorying in this rare opportunity to sing their favorite songs together.

While the final number in the program was very rousing and magnificently stirred up the crowd, I preferred the previous song, where some 80,000 voices joined together a capella in a mighty chorus of joy. It was a moment that helped me envision what I believe heaven will be like, and a memory that I will always treasure.

James Kaumeyer Gifts ODC School

by Kevin Greek

James Kaumeyer, a prolific lifetime folk dancer, recently made a bequest gift of \$570,000 to the ODC School of San Francisco*. The ODC School will use the proceeds from this gift to establish the James Kaumeyer Endowment Fund, which will provide vital support for classes, resources, and offerings to the community. ODC School is deeply honored, and reported that it is the largest gift they have ever received toward its operation. The gift comes as a pivotal time for ODC School, and these funds will enhance and expand their ability to provide exceptional training and help maintain their studios and spaces as a place of self-expression, creativity, and community. San Francisco's ODC School



James Kaumeyer (2016).

and Rhythm and Motion Dance Program offers dozens of classes for all ages and levels, 365 days a year, in person at ODC Dance Commons, or online and on demand. For more details about ODC School visit odc.dance.

James discovered folk dance as an undergraduate student at UCLA in 1952. After graduation he became a member of several influential folk dance groups including the Westwind International Folk Ensemble, Westwood Co-op Folk Dancers, and the Gandy Dancers. After dancing for over 25 years in Southern California, he moved to Northern California, where he danced for another 25 years, principally in the North Bay. In 2016, he moved from Santa Rosa to San Jose, where he continued dancing.

James traveled the world with his fellow folk dancers, connecting with the folk traditions and culture of many people through dance, and acquiring a sense of belonging and purpose in the art form he loves so deeply.

In 2016, James made a similar bequest of \$25,000 each to the California Folk Dance Federations, both North and South. I remember the astonishment of the Federation Board when James arrived and announced his gift intentions at the lunch meeting being held at the Festival of the Oaks. The Board more than gratefully established the James Kaumeyer Endowment fund upon his intentions that it be used on promoting folk dance. The occasion was reported in the July/August 2016 issue *Let's Dance!* magazine (read it at folkdance.com). In the article James was reported to have said that he "can still lead a pretty impressive syrto."

If you have considered how you might make a profound and lasting commitment to the Folk Dance Federation, whether through a bequest in your will or another planned giving option, contact a board member or Folk Dance Federation president at president@folkdance.com. No gift is too small.



Click the small button to make a big impact!



* ODC stands for Oberlin Dance Collective. It was founded in 1971 by Brenda Way, who had been trained at Oberlin College in Ohio.

NEWS FROM AROUND THE BAY...

RAZZMATAZZ – Marilyn Smith

Every July, during our summer dancing sessions, we celebrate Gloria Côté's birthday (photo on p. 6). Gloria runs the music for our all-request program during the summer. It was a special joy to celebrate her 80th birthday this year. As we always do, we danced to Van Morrison's song Gloria and we all sang along. We enjoyed a delicious chocolate cake in the dining room, and members of Gradina, our local Balkan singing group, sang a special birthday song.



Razzmatazz dancers dancing to Gloria! Photo by M. Smith.

Fall classes begin Tuesday, September 2.

Marina Troost will teach the Beginning folk dance class from 5:30-6:30 pm, and I will teach the Intermediate class from 7-9 pm, with Marina as guest teacher from time to time.

I am really looking forward to this particular year because **it marks the beginning of my 55th year of teaching** in Santa Rosa.

SAN FRANCISCO GROUPS – Linda Milhoan

San Francisco dancers have recently proved just how determined we are to dance.

One Friday night at Changs, when Federation officers Laura Richardson and Clem Dickey coincidentally were our guests (see p. 3), **the power went out**, leaving just the emergency lighting available in the clubhouse. Fortunately, Ulrike and Lothar Narins had a battery-powered speaker in their car, and we were able to use it with our laptop computer to continue dancing in the semi-darkness.

Next, Monday's informal Stern Grove group (which includes dancers from several local clubs, plus friends) managed to dance in spite of an **emergency alarm system going off** for a while before finally being silenced.

And on Wednesday, the **San Francisco Dance Circle's boombox appeared to have died**. We did some dances with everyone singing and some using Craig Blackstone's phone linked to a recreation center speaker. Matt Miller eventually managed to get the boombox working again. Apparently nothing will stop us from enjoying dancing!

For the Peninsula Federation party in July, the Changs team of Craig Blackstone, Ulrike and Lothar Narins, and Jamie Ramirez served as emcees, playing a great variety of dances. Among the attendees for the fun evening were **22 Changs members** (from our current membership of 61)!



Dancing in the dark at Changs. Photo by C. Dickey.

CHICO WORLD DANCERS – Memo Keswick

The nine Chicoans who attended SFDC 2025 had a blast! Two of us were beginner dancers who attended a special class for beginners led by Loui Tucker. Final result: more dances to consider adding to the Chico World Dancer repertoire!

We have been comparing our personal favorite moments. Some of these were dance inspirations, meeting new friends, cultural presentations, and one-on-one talks with teachers. For others it was participation in the Saturday talent show and

... AND BEYOND

obtaining new costumes, dance videos, and music. We hope to attend next year, when Stockton Camp moves to Santa Cruz.

Back in Chico, we are working toward an upcoming August 24 fundraiser for a local museum. This fundraiser will aid in our member outreach and socialization.

We are also planning the next Statewide that we are hosting in Chico. Mark your calendar and save the date: June 12-14, 2026.



Nine Chicoans having fun at Stockton Camp.

BERKELEY FOLK DANCERS – Carol Hayden

The Berkeley Folk Dancers July party was themed **Under the Big Top**, and the participants came with many inventive, fun costumes!



Marija Hillis and Marian Snyder showed off their costumes at Berkeley's Under The Big Top Party in July. More photos on p. 6. Photo by A. Partos.

In early August, a small BFD team presented a total of 14 international folk dances at Ashby Village, a senior support organization. The showcase was enthusiastically cheered by an audience of over 40 people. At the end, the showcase team, along with many from the audience, danced a lesnoto together with two circles. It was a wonderful experience for the performing team members. Several audience members requested additional information about BFD (we ran out of flyers), so we expect a few of them will become BFD's newest members in September.

BFD's next event is the **Solano Stroll on September 15**. We literally dance in the street (at the intersection of Solano and Ventura) from 1-2 pm and again from 3-4 pm. The Solano Stroll attracts thousands of local residents when the city of Albany blocks off Solano Boulevard and it's lined with booths and demonstrations and audience-participation activities. Many of the strollers join in our beginner-level dances.

On September 20, we will have our **Inaugural Ball**, where we will welcome our new officers and say thank you to our previous ones.

Long-time members **Marija and David Hillis** are celebrating their **25th wedding anniversary** on September 27 at Live Oak Park with a couple sets of English country dances with live music from 2:30-4:30.

Finally, on **October 31** we will have our **Dance Selection Night**, where interested members will review new dances that will be demonstrated and vote on which ones to include as a tryout in our club's repertoire.

NORTH BAY – Carol Friedman

Our fall session in Petaluma at Hermann Sons Hall starts up on September 1 (no class on September 22 due to the Jewish High Holidays).

I've been having fun going through my music files and found several dances that I'll be bringing back this fall including Malhão (Portugal). I choreographed a dance to music recorded by Kitka called Oj, jak že bulo izpreždy vika (Ukraine). During the summer, one of my regulars sent me another wonderful piece of Bosnian music sung by Kitka called Tjeraj Mala Ovce Preko Brega, and I

News From Around The Bay – *continued*

have choreographed a dance for this as well. This inspired me to bring back another dance to a Sephardic Bosnia song that I choreographed called Oildo Mi Novya.

As always, we'll be dancing to old favorites and all requests. Note that we will be hosting live music with Bulgarika on October 20.

EAST BAY FOLK DANCERS – *Marion Snyderman*

The East Bay Folkdancers hosted a wonderful evening in June with **live music performed by local group True Life Trio**, backed by percussionist Dan Auvil. Over 60 dancers enjoyed the three women's beautiful harmonies and spirited playing on multiple instruments to lesnotos, čočeks, and even a Cajun waltz. **Our next live music event will be with Bulgarika on Friday, October 17.**



True Life Trio played for the East Bay Folk Dancers.

We meet Friday 7:30-10:00 pm in Piedmont at the spacious Veterans Memorial Hall, 401 Highland Avenue, at Vista Avenue. The dances we do are mainly Balkan, but they extend as well to Israel, Hungary, and Armenia, with frequent forays beyond. Member DJs take turns playing the music, entirely by request, with an occasional half-hour of teaching. We are a dedicated and welcoming dance community with an unbroken history of meeting since dancing on the lawn on the UC Berkeley campus in the early 1960s. For more information, contact Lenny Talmy: talmy@buffalo.edu.

MONTEREY FOLK DANCERS –

Marguerite Fishman

Two of our members, Marguerite Fishman and Christine Lucas, attended Stockton Folk Dance Camp and thoroughly enjoyed their time there. They are looking forward to sharing new dances and skills with their Wednesday afternoon group. This was Chris's first adventure at Stockton and Marguerite's third.

They are feeling fortunate that Stockton Camp is moving next year to the U.C. Santa Cruz campus as it is only 50 miles north of Pacific Grove where they both live.



Marguerite Fishman and Christine Lucas enjoyed the Saturday banquet at Stockton Folk Dance Camp.

Welcome You Back

To the dancers who got burnt out,
To the dancers who fell in love with something else,
To the dancers who stopped due to an injury,
To the dancers whose circumstances forced them to retire,
To the dancers who realized dancing wasn't for them,
And to the dancers who let dance go for their own reasons,

I know you still walk to a beat no one can hear.
I know you can't stay still once your favorite songs play.
I know you reminisce on the trainings, jams, classes,
and performances of the past.
I know you still click that play button when a
dance video shows up on your timeline or YouTube.

So wherever you are in your life right now, whether it's
been weeks or years since you last "took it seriously,"
I hope you remember that the dancer will always
be in you. And it will always be there to welcome you back
whenever the urge comes.

On the internet in multiple places, author unknown.

WE INVITE YOU TO THE

50th Anniversary Concert

OF ŁOWICZANIE POLISH FOLK ENSEMBLE

Friday, October 24

LESHER CENTER FOR THE ARTS, WALNUT CREEK, CA

6:00 PM VIP RECEPTION

7:30 PM CURTAIN

"Dance Poland! 50 years together in dance & tradition"

with Guest Performers

Award-winning musicians from Poland, "Tekla Klebetnica,"
Krakusy Polish Ensemble, LA, Sokoły Polish Ensemble
for Kids, and MORE!

SCAN FOR MORE INFORMATION



THE 2026 FOLK DANCE FEDERATION WALL CALENDAR

Do you still have a wall calendar in your kitchen or a room you use as an office? You may not write appointments on it, but do you refer to it occasionally when someone says, “What day does next month start on?” or, “Does next month have five Fridays?” or, “How many weeks until the Festival of the Oaks?”

Do you browse through the collection of wall calendars at a local bookstore or stationery store in November and December? 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.

Well, get ready to purchase your **Folk Dance Federation wall calendar for 2026!** On the right is the page for August 2026. For each month there are photographs on the top portion and a standard calendar on the bottom. If you want a preview, you can flip through the pages of the 2026 calendar at folkdance.com/calendar2026.

How do you get one for your home? The easiest and cheapest way is to **sign up for the Officers Ball** because the first 50 dancers who register can **purchase a calendar for just \$5** (see the registration form on p. 28). After the first 50 calendars are spoken for, the remaining calendars will be **\$10 each**.

Won't one of these calendars make a nice holiday gift for your folk dancing friends? If you think there are enough people in your local club who will be interested, why not buy a half-dozen and resell them?

The proceeds from the sale of the calendars will go into the Federation Scholarship Fund.



1949 - First windshield sticker promoting folk dance was printed (initial print run 1000)

August 2026

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
					1	2
3	4	5	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
31						

BULGARIKA



BULGARIKA

2025 USA tour

Sunday,
OCT. 19, 2025

2pm-4:30pm

Doors open at 1:30pm

\$15

\$7/students (kids free w/ supervision)

Live Bulgarian Folk Dance Party

Kopachka Folk Dancers

Strawberry Recreation Center, 118 E. Strawberry Dr, Mill Valley

Bulgarika is a unique folklore band playing traditional music from all the Bulgarian regions. **Nikolay Kolev** and **Donka Koleva** have invited two extraordinary musicians to join them for the 2025 tour: **Stoyan Kostov** on tambura and **Anton Shekerjiev** on tupan and kaba gaida.

Free parking at Strawberry & in school across the street.
Vax/boosters highly encouraged, mask required if not (N95, KN95, KF94—we can provide).
Info: Kopachkafolk dancers.com president@kopachkafolk dancers.com

www.kopachkafolk dancers.com

SPEAKING OF DANCING

by Gigi Jensen

By Watching Dance, I Found The Ends of My Toes

The other day as I was watching people dance, I was struck by the fact that, while dancing is a three-dimensional activity, you can only see the front or back or side of someone. What would the space around a dancer look like if you could see all sides at once?

I often wished for a camera suspended over Pampa Cortes' head so I could see the energy he created with the trajectory of his movements, not just the sequence of movements. One day when he and his partner were rehearsing, she stepped away for a moment, and he continued practicing the choreography. It was fascinating to see how his body shaping and energy created an unseen partner within his arms. His imaginary partner had a sense of volume. It was amazing.

While writing this month's column, I was at Stockton Folk Dance Camp. I had a great opportunity to watch people dancing. I look at how they inhabited the space in which they were moving. It seems obvious while dancing but, to an observer, it was interesting to see how most folks accommodated the dancers around them, and some didn't. By extension, it was interesting to see how each person used his or her own space.

I watched some of the professionals dance, looking to see how they shaped their space with their energy. Ahmet Lüleci had an energy that surrounded his torso and emanates from his chest. In conversation with him, he explained that he tells his dancers that it's the energy from your chest that is more crucial than what their feet are doing. I noticed that Cristian Florescu danced as if he were a column of energy that shoots up. Richard Schmidt created a strong, solid presence that enveloped the space within his arms.

As a dancer myself, I think about how I can express my energy. How do I shape my movements? Am I dancing like a stick figure, just moving my arms and legs in the requisite motions?

I knew about proprioception from the workout routines on "Sit and Be Fit" aired on PBS. Often called "the sixth sense" (along with smell, touch, hearing, vision, and taste), proprioception is how we know where our bodies end and the world around us starts. I did a little research online and found this from the Cleveland Clinic's website:

"Proprioception is your body's ability to sense its own position and movements. It's an automatic or subconscious process. Proprioception allows your brain to know the position of your body in space without having to rely on visual input alone. It's also crucial to maintaining balance.

"Kinesthesia, or kinesthesis, is the ability to use proprioception and other functions to generate body movement and learn a variety of physical skills. Kinesthesia is a behavioral process that allows your body to detect a movement and learn how to improve on the movement."

I also found a nice article about how dancers can improve their movement. It's called "Mastering 3D Movement in Dance." Consider looking it up. It's quite interesting.

Am I simply copying movements or do I understand why I'm doing them? Am I creating my own energy, and thus my own dance? Am I sharing that with others? All this reminded me that I can improve the quality of my own dance. It's a journey that I relish.



FROM THE *LET'S DANCE!* PHOTO ARCHIVES

In the last issue



Can you name the dance? The third person who sends the correct answer to either loui@loutucker.com or editor@folkdance.com wins a \$25 gift card.



That's Nora Nuckles, Bobi Ashley, and Marilyn Gentry in a photo taken at Stockton Folk Dance Camp in the 1980s. **Karen Wilson-Bell** was the winner of the \$25 gift card, and her dance journey is featured below.

WE HAVE A WINNER – Karen Wilson-Bell

When I was a Girl Scout growing up in Metaline Falls, Washington (pop. 200), our leader decided we would work on our Folk Dancing Merit Badge. That was in the 50s, when square and round dancing were a major part of the international folk dance repertoire. I remember learning Gustaf's Skoal and basic squares and several round dances. In my church youth group they taught us a few energetic Finnish folk dances (to get the wiggles out).



The Girl Scout's Folk Dance Merit Badge.

At Washington State University, I immediately joined the WSU Folk Dancers. The first night I arrived early and was impressed when two guys in costumes came into the room, one carrying the club banner and the other doing cartwheels. The group was friendly and welcoming. They had an amazing repertoire of 50 partner and set dances and 50 non-partner dances. Before long I was learning all of those dances and dancing with other groups several nights a week.

With one of my friends from the WSU Folk Dancers, I enrolled in the Folk Dancing class. Miss Harris, the instructor, recognized that we already knew many folk dances, so she assigned each of us to learn a dance well enough to teach to the other members of the class. That's when I learned how much more

preparation was needed to teach a dance, not just dance it.

When my husband was stationed at Ft. Sill, Oklahoma, we joined a square dance club at first, then started teaching a folk dance group at the USO club. Afterward, we moved back to Pullman, Washington and enthusiastically rejoined the WSU Folk Dancers.



Karen Wilson-Bell at Stockton Folk Dance Camp in 2024.

In 1976 we moved from Pullman, Washington to El Segundo, California. I took classes in Scottish Country, Scandinavian, Hungarian, English, Latin, and Israeli dance. I taught a beginning folk dance class and started calling contras. I served as Vice-President and President of California Folk Dance Federation, South.

I returned to Stockton Folk Dance Camp more than 40 times, meeting many wonderful teachers and friends. I missed attending from 1983-1991 due to an auto accident and life changes (including divorce and re-marriage). I worked with the Stockton Research Committee for 20 years and served on the Stockton Board of Directors for six years.

I moved to Spokane, Washington, in 2007. I joined the Spokane Folklore Society, which primarily sponsors contra dances to live music. I am currently on the roster of regular contra callers. I am currently teaching the Bigfoot Folk Dancers, which meets twice a month.

I had always dreamed of traveling to another country to learn their regional dances and teach them to some of the folks upon my return. I had the opportunity for two such trips in 2010 and 2015. We visited the small village of Felsőrákos in Transylvania, and I learned the local variations of Csárdás, Gólya and other kicsi táncok (small dances).

Another dream of mine was to attend several dance camps in different parts of the country. Now that I'm retired, I like to attend at least four week-long dance camps a year and six weekend festivals or workshops. Dancing keeps me physically fit, mentally sharp, and forever young at heart!

TURKEY May 6th – 22nd and ARMENIA May 23-June 8 (tentative dates) in 2026 with **TINEKE & MAURITS van Geel** and **AHMET DEMIRBAGH**



Join Ahmet Demirbagh and Tineke and Maurits van Geel, your dedicated tour leaders and experts for these vibrant dance and culture tours. They will be guiding you through rich traditions, dance classes, cultural treasures, and breathtaking landscapes. Direct flights from Istanbul to Yerevan make exploring both countries easy. Tours can also be booked separately. Detailed program available autumn 2025. Want to secure your spot early? Pre-register now and be the first to receive detailed updates and booking opportunities:

<https://www.tinekevangeel.nl/tours/>

Adventure, culture, and dance await—you won't want to miss it!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Editor –

I recently took my grandchildren dancing. A is 11 and on the lower end of the spectrum with definite Asperger tendencies. He won't make direct eye contact, doesn't like to be touched, and gets overwhelmed with too much stimuli. As is typical, he is very good with numbers and patterns.

Initially he agreed to hold hands only with us, his family, and quickly caught on to the rhythm and patterns of the circle dances. Lo and behold, after several dances, he even joined the mixers where you don't have to hold on to anyone for very long. I'm not sure if he ever looked at anyone directly, but he never asked to wear his noise-canceling earphones.

As we left, he asked if I would take him again because he had fun. To top it all off, when he got home, he gave his father a full frontal hug, a rarity. Folk dancing can definitely be therapeutic for neurodivergent youngsters.

~ Anonymous

Editor –

Could you let all local dancers know that I have folk dance music on **hundreds of mini-disks**. They are **FREE to whoever wants them** before they go to the dump. Please contact me at 209-537-9491 if you're interested.

David Raube,
Ceres, California

WANT TO SEE YOUR NAME IN PRINT?

Do you have some interesting news or information about your community, an event, or some aspect of folk/world dance or culture that would make interesting reading in *Let's Dance!* magazine?

- ✓ Why not tell the *Let's Dance!* readers how great the dance scene is in your area and what you and your group has done to make it great?
- ✓ If you've done some traveling that involved folk dance, music, art, etc., consider writing something to share with *Let's Dance!* readers.
- ✓ If you've read a dance-related book, seen a video, or visited a website that you think others would enjoy, please submit that information.
- ✓ If you are or were involved with a workshop, festival, performance, or the like, consider writing an article.
- ✓ If you've been taking photos at dance events, consider forwarding them for inclusion.

Take a look at the last issue or two to see the kinds of articles that are typically printed. Or, if you look and think to yourself, "Why don't they have an article about...," consider writing that article yourself!

Deadline for submissions is 25 days before the date of the magazine. Contact the *Let's Dance!* Editor at editor@folkdance.com to discuss.

FROM THE EDITOR

While Indexing *Let's Dance!* Magazines



I have most recently been indexing the issues printed in the 1970s. In 1973, Vi Dexheimer retired as editor of *Let's Dance!* after 14 years and Leslie Pryne became the editor. During Leslie's brief two-year tenure, the magazine featured interviews with master teachers in several issues. The author/interviewer was listed as Jovana. Apparently no one at the time questioned the identity of Jovana. It wasn't until Gary Anderson received an email from Dick Oakes in 2015 (which Gary forwarded to me) asking if he knew who Jovana was that I tracked her down. It was Leslie Pryne herself! If you want the entire story, you can download the back issue of the July/August 2015 on folkdance.com and turn to page 10.

The interviews are fascinating. Beyond the information about the subject of the interview, they provide an interesting perspective on the international folk dance community in that decade.

February 1973: Shlomo Bachar

March 1973: Andor Czompo

April 1973: Graham Hempel

May 1973: Germain Hébert

October 1973: Jerry Helt (continued in November 1973)

November 1973: Mihai David

January 1974: Bruce Taylor

February 1974: Tom Bozigian

April 1974: Glenn Bannerman



Nine interviews and only eight photos? Who's missing? How is he different from the others?

Other interesting tidbit from prior years:

May 1945: Dan Carrington, a Garfield Folk Dancer in Europe, reported from a Marseilles railroad station that liberated French and Russian soldiers (some in prison five years) danced in the streets to music provided by drum and balalaika.

July 1945: On one of the hottest days of the year, 110 folk dancers showed up in costume for a program at Oak Knoll Hospital. In two hours, the clubs visited four wards, and sometimes the hospitalized men joined in the dancing.

November 1959: Lillian and George Kieslich are active in the East Bay Council. Their home on Morse Drive in the Oakland hills near Mills College is being raised on stilts so a dance floor can be constructed under the house.

October 1969: The San Jose YW Twirlers, lead by Jo Buttitta, honored the 29 (!) couples who met in their club and later married.

October 1972: *Let's Dance!* has subscribers in Japan, Australia, Guam, Mexico, the Philippines, and many European countries. Subscription reached 1,500 in 1948, when it was only 12 pages. Subscribers doubled to 3,000 in the early 1950s. In 1957, the cost was increased to \$3 per year or 35¢ per issue.

April 1973: *Let's Dance!* has approximately 5,000 subscribers, 55% in N. Cal., 19% in So. Cal., 21% outside Cal., 5% outside the U.S. (mostly Canada and Japan).



Fall Camp

Oct. 31 – Nov. 2, 2025

with Catherine Rudin presenting an eclectic mix of classic and new dances

Dance in a beautiful climate-controlled room, located in a tranquil, park-like setting. Enjoy teaching and review sessions, evening dance parties, and other activities. The weekend includes 5 meals (Friday dinner through Sunday breakfast), snacks, and two nights in motel-style rooms (with heating and air conditioning, private bath, bedding, and towels). **Space is limited. Register soon!**

Fall Camp is at the Brandeis-Bardin Campus of the American Jewish University, 1101 Peppertree Lane, Brandeis, CA 93064. (It is near Simi Valley in Southern California, just south of the 118 Freeway.)

Prices this year are lower for double and triple occupancy, and all prices are again subsidized by the Folk Dance Federation of California, South.

Single room	\$540
Double room	\$440 per person
Triple room	\$395 per person
Commuter (No room, 5 meals)	\$270 per person

Please enter an amount from above \$_____ *One form per person*

Sunday lunch \$ 27 \$_____

Please consider an **entirely optional donation** to help keep our prices affordable \$_____

Total Enclosed: \$_____

Refund policy: You may cancel until Oct. 6 for a full refund. We can't guarantee full refunds after then.

First name (for your badge) _____ Last name _____

Email _____ Phone(s) _____

Address _____

Name(s) of roommate(s) _____

We will try to accommodate special dietary requirements _____

Emergency contact (name & phone) _____

The Federation requires campers to sign a General Liability waiver, which is available on FallCamp.org
If you have already signed that waiver for another Federation event, check here: []

Please complete a separate **registration form** (and waiver if needed) for each camper. Make your check payable to **Folk Dance Federation of CA, South**, and mail it with your form(s) and waivers (if needed) to:

Mindy Belli 321 S Vista del Canon, Anaheim, CA 92807

Questions not answered here or on FallCamp.org? Email Mindy at DanceFallCamp@gmail.com.

What's Up Down South?

– News from Southern California –

FALL CAMP

October 31-November 2

by Terry Gucwa

Registration is now open for Fall Camp 2025!

Fall Camp is an annual fun-filled weekend of dance, music, crafts, nature, and camaraderie. Fall Camp will again be on the beautiful rural Brandeis-Bardin Campus of the American Jewish University, near Simi Valley (40 miles northwest of downtown LA). Fall Camp 2025 will feature one main teacher, Catherine Rudin, plus several of our own California-based dance teachers.

The Brandeis-Bardin Campus has become a special place for Fall Camp participants. It truly is a retreat, nestled in one of the most pleasant natural settings left in Southern California. That natural setting boasts first rate architecture, including the magnificent, air-conditioned Wapner room where we dance, and the adjoining Molle Library where we set up craft projects and puzzles. We stay in comfortable, motel-style carpeted cottages that surround our dance hall. And we just stroll across the plaza from the dance floor for great food in the Dining Hall.

Our main dance teacher this year is Catherine Rudin. Not only has Catherine danced for five decades, she has danced and taught in many places across the United States. It was the



Catherine Rudin, featured teacher at Fall Camp.

COVID pandemic that brought her to national attention. Starting with Zoom, and then from travel to other parts of the country, many of our Southern California dancers have experienced Catherine's teaching and are thrilled about her appearance at Fall Camp. As one local dancer wrote

to me, "Catherine is one of my favorites for both good styling and the breadth of her choice of dances."

Decisions on supplementary dance teachers, and what they will teach, are in progress. We're identifying the best of recent festivals and camps, particularly Stockton, so that you can catch up on, or review, dances that are new, but have staying power.

It just wouldn't be Fall Camp without Potluck Band. Your fellow dancers who play instruments or sing, get together for three brief rehearsal sessions. Then they perform for about 20 minutes at the start of the Saturday evening party. The best part for me is that nearly every year there is at least one person who has never done this sort of thing before. They come with misgivings, especially after first sight of the sheet music or lyrics. After a couple of rehearsals they start to think, "Maybe I can do this." Then the players, singers, and dancers party together and, well, magic happens.

Please visit the FallCamp.org web site for more photos and video from previous years, and this year's registration form.



In early July, the Cerritos Folk Dancers celebrated the 99th birthday of Mei Hsiang Tsai (front row, center in the red blouse). *Photo by M. Zhang.*

Although Mei stopped dancing a few years ago, she attends every meeting of the group and watches. Another of their members who is still dancing is 94 years old.

Officers Ball 2025 FUN-ding the Future



Saturday, October 4, 2025
Veterans Hall, 302 Main Street, Pleasanton

FEATURING INSTITUTE TEACHERS:

Adony Beniares Craig Blackstone Marija Hillis
Judy Kropp Lothar Narins Alan Rothchild

Dances to be taught will be provided in late September

OPTIONS FOR PAYMENT:

1. Pay online at <http://officersball.folkdance.com>
2. Mail check and form to Sabine Zappe, 153 Race Street, San Jose, CA 95126

Doors open at 1:00
 Institute 1:30-5:30
 On-site Dinner 5:30-7:00
 Dance Party 7:00-10:00

Questions? Contact Loui@Louitucker.com

Officers Ball 2025 Registration Form

Name(s): _____

PRE-REGISTRATION for the entire Officers Ball (by Sept 30):

\$55 PACKAGE (Workshop, dinner & evening party)	X ___ =	\$ _____
\$25 workshop	X ___ =	\$ _____
\$20 dinner	X ___ =	\$ _____
\$25 evening party	X ___ =	\$ _____
\$5 2026 Folk Dance Federation Wall Calendar	X ___ =	\$ _____
	Total:	\$ _____



Any dietary issues we should know about? _____

Avant Deux en Ronde

(France)

This dance comes from the Vendee/Poitou area of France and is also known as Rond Avant Deux. It was presented at Stockton Folk Dance Camp in 2025 by Roo Lester, who learned this dance from Leslie Barrat at the Argonne International Folk Dance in 2023. There are a number of tunes for this dance. Leslie used the tune listed below, as did Roo. This dance is not complex, but it is very satisfying.

- Music: 2/4 meter “Entrez la belle en vigne.” *Chai Live* Double CD, CD 2, Band 1.
Unfortunately, this 10+ year old CD is no longer available. However, a search for “Entrez la belle en vigne mp3” will provide a link to an alternative recording by Oktobre. In addition, Tom Pixton made his own recording for this dance, which you can get from him at tom@pixton.org.
- Video: A search on YouTube for “rond avant deux” will yield at least two videos.
- Formation: Circle of dancers, facing center, hands joined down in V-position.
- Steps & Styling: In Fig I, arms swing forward when stepping forward L and back when stepping back R. In Fig II, the arms continue to swing forward and back but are not in sync with the footwork.
When lots of people are dancing, space between dancers is often close. With live music, dancers echo the calls from the lead singer.

Meas	2/4 meter	PATTERN
4		INTRODUCTION. No action. Start with the vocals.
	I.	FIGURE I. STEP-TOGETHER MOVING CW.
1		Step L to L (ct 1); step R next to L (ct 2).
2-12		Repeat meas 1 eleven times.
	II.	FIGURE II. AVANT DEUX – MOVING IN AND OUT.
1		Beg L, three steps fwd (cts 1, &, 2).
2		Step R fwd (ct 1); lift L fwd (ct 2).
3		Beg L, three steps bkwd (cts 1, &, 2).
4		Step R bkwd (ct 1); lift L fwd (ct 2).
5-8		Repeat meas 1-4.



Sequence: Repeat as noted above until the end of the music.

Lyrics and translation

Entrez la belle en vigne	Come into the vineyard, beautiful one,
Quand les pampres sont grands	When the grapevines are tall
Je n'entre point en vigne quand il n'y a rien dedans	I would never enter a vineyard when there's nothing in it.
Gué gué je vous aime la belle	Ford, ford, I love you beautiful one *
Gai gai je vous aime tant	Ford, ford, I love you so much *
Il y a des orties et moi qui les craint tant	There are nettles and I'm so afraid of them
Entrez, entrez, la belle, on vous donnera des gants	Come in, come in, lovely one, we'll give you some gloves
Mon père n'a point de fille qui reçoive de présent	My father doesn't have a daughter who would accept gifts
Elle en recevrait peut-être d'un cœur tendre et constant	Maybe she'd accept them from a tender and constant heart
Un bel anneau d'or qu'on donne ens'y mariant	A beautiful gold ring which is given when marrying

* Ford, as in “cross a stream.”

IN MEMORIAM

Karl Mins Finger – 1939-2025

Karl Finger of Monterey, New York, was born in New York City in 1939. As a child and in high school, he



attended Camp Woodland in upstate New York, where he met Pete Seeger and began a lifelong passion for music and social justice.

Karl was an accomplished, internationally known recording artist, folk singer, guitarist, and a leader of international folk dances. He also called squares and contra dances.

Karl ran dance evenings and weekends in Brooklyn, Manhattan, western Massachusetts, the Catskills, and Solway House in Saugerties, New York, bringing top folk dance teachers from across the country, and creating a warm and vibrant environment for everyone to learn, dance, and have fun.

He led trips for more than 30 years to over 50 countries around the world, learning local dances and folk music, as well as conducting workshops for American travelers who were interested in cultural exploration. The dancers, musicians, and enthusiastic travelers who joined him on these trips number in the thousands.

Karl wrote, performed, and published his own music; he performed on over 40 music albums and several singles. He lectured on folk music's role in history and social movements, and he produced and performed on a series of albums of folk dances and singing games for children.

In addition to teaching dances from around the world, Karl choreographed for and performed with several international folk dance troupes. He also organized and led weekend-long festivals, workshops, classes, dance parties, and jam sessions.

Karl's entire life experience was consistent with his view that music and dance are fundamental and essential to human existence. He generously shared his passion and gift for music and dance with those he loved: family, friends and community in Monterey.

Donna Louise Tripp – 1928-2025

Donna Tripp had a rich life filled with a love of the



arts and the outdoors. Born in Minneapolis. Donna took her first ballet lessons at the age of three and began performing at age 11. Thwarted from a professional ballet career by her height (5' 10"), Donna developed a knack for teaching ballet and other dance styles.

Donna married Doug Tripp, a Colorado native, in 1953, and moved to California two years later.

Donna led a Girl Scout troop, and she and Doug took teens on an annual trip down the Colorado River.

Although she took pride in a 27-year career at Bank of America as a business analyst, Donna's abiding passion was folk dancing. She taught international dance at the Long Beach Jewish Community Center 1961-1985. Donna performed with the Gandy Dancers and the Hungarian group Betyarok.

She ultimately specialized in Nordic dance, co-leading the Scandia Dancers, comprised of couples performing traditional dance in folk costumes. The group displayed Donna's choreography at numerous festivals in Finland and Norway. For nearly 60 years, Donna nurtured, mentored, and befriended hundreds of dancers.

GERRI ALEXANDER – 1931-2025

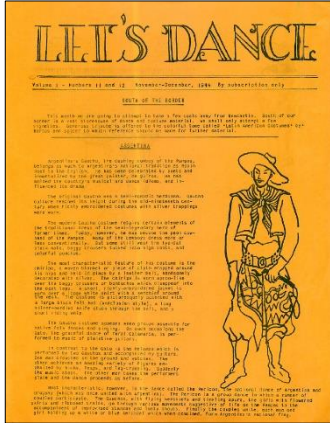
Gerri Alexander lived to be 94. She was a long-time dancer with West Valley Folk Dancers and Beverly Barr's groups. Gerri served as Historian of the Folk Dance Federation, sang with Zhen Women's Folk Chorus and, along with husband Bob, was on the Folk Dance Scene committee, and was very active with Camp Hess Kramer for many years.



Gerry and Bob retired and ultimately left Southern California to live in Lake Oswego, Oregon.

A BLAST FROM THE PAST

Take a look at how *Let's Dance!* covers have changed over the last eight decades. The first 10 issues were published under the name *The Federation Folk Dancer*. Michael Herman, who published *The Folk Dancer* on the East Coast objected to the use of that name, so it was changed to *Let's Dance* starting with the November 1944 issue. The magazine had only a masthead for the first few years. It didn't have a distinct cover until the October 1947 issue.



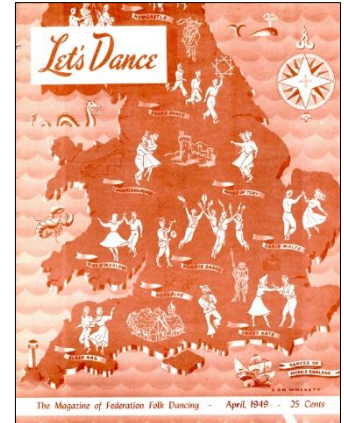
The first issue with *Let's Dance* in the masthead.



February 1947.



October 1947.



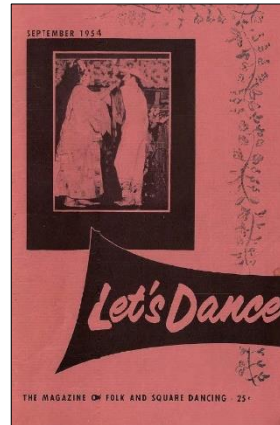
April 1949, the first issue with a color cover.



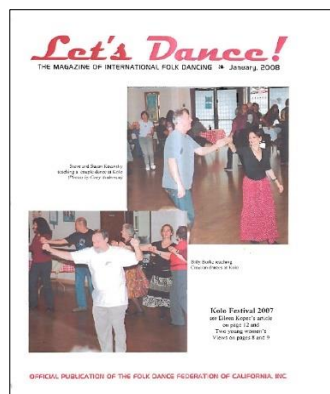
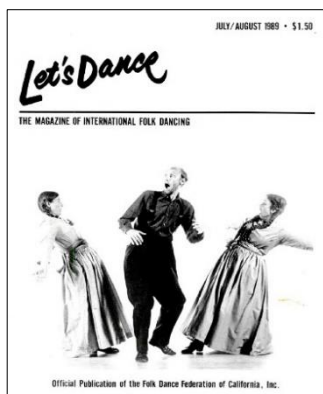
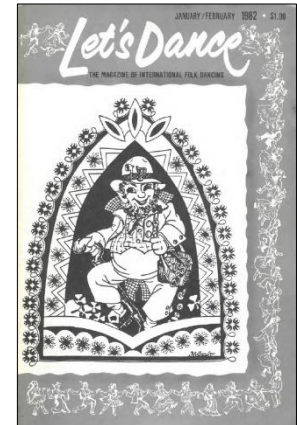
A new look, January 1950.



Another design change, May 1953.



There was a major format change in 1956, from 8.5" x 11" to 5½" x 8½," the size most current dancers remember best. The only change made in the next 30+ years was to a gray-scale cover in January 1952. The size prevailed until the July 1989 issue. Note: they appear to be the same size above, but they were half the size of the prior issues.



Also, the August 1965 issue changed the tag line at the bottom of the cover from "The Magazine of Folk and Square Dancing" to "The Magazine of International Folk Dancing," marking the official separation from the square dance community.

The July-August 1989 issue (above, left) brought back the 8.5" x 11" size. The tag line was changed to "Official Publication of the Folk Dance Federation of California, Inc." The cover remained black and white until 1998, when red was added to the cover. In February 2004, Gary Anderson became the editor, and he eventually added color photographs throughout the magazine, beginning with the January 2008 issue (above right).

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OF CALIFORNIA, INC.
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**I have never heard of a war that
proceeded from dance halls.**

**~ Bertrand Russell,
Nobel acceptance speech, December 11,
1950.**

advertisement



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This (almost) monthly publication has folk dance events in California and elsewhere, folk lore articles, and lots of good reading.

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