



Bay Area Country Dancer

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www.bacds.org

Spring Dance Weekend

A (New) Little Something for Everyone

Even as the winter holidays draw near, Spring Dance Weekend at Monte Toyon is beckoning us like the first songbirds of spring. Next year's dates are March 13 – 15, 2009. The program is sure to please even the most discriminating tastes. For details on staff and a sample schedule, see the web pages at <http://bacds.org/camps/sw/>

The Spring Weekend committee is excited to announce several significant changes for the upcoming camp. We have heeded the call for all-American and all-English dance tracks and we will host separate Contra and English Country evening dances. The Monte Toyon site is one of very few featuring two large dance spaces with the same top quality floor finish. Spring Weekend has always made good use of both spaces during the daytime dance workshops, and now we will utilize the dining hall all evening as well.

We will be offering swing dance instruction, for the first time ever. Contra and swing have a strong symbiotic relationship. Dancers who enjoy those extra flourishes rely on swing styling for inspiration. Local dance darling Adrienne Simpson will be on hand to teach swing dance workshops and offer one-on-one tips. Level of instruction will be determined by those in attendance. If you want to get a head start prior to camp, see the page 2 article in the September 2008 Dancer for a list of local ongoing swing dance classes.

We are reducing our carbon footprint by relying more heavily on local musicians. The San Francisco Bay Area is blessed with an abundance of talent, plus all of the musicians travelling from afar are well-known to the California community. Several have lived in the Bay Area; all have played here many times before. As in recent years, there will be enough musical workshops and jams to please non-dancing musician campers. A special treat will be a tune-writing session with Bob McQuillen.

Following in the footsteps of Fall Frolick, we are offering a significant discount to younger adults. We have always offered low registration fees to campers age 18 and under and now are extending that discount to age 30. Campers in the 19-30 age range are asked to do work-trade in exchange for that discount. See more details in a separate article on youth scholarships in this newsletter.

Registration opens December 9th. Look for the flyer in your mailbox on or after that date. Or, if you've jumped on the paper-less bandwagon, register on-line, beginning December 9th. We don't have electronic payment set up, so you will still need to mail in a check, or hand it in at a dance. Check the web site <http://bacds.org/camps/sw/> often for updates, and full information on the excellent dance teachers and musicians at Spring Weekend 2009.

~ Robin Cohen, Spring Weekend Camp Manager

Upcoming Winter Events

December 31	NBCDS New Years' Eve Contra Dance	<i>Joyce Miller</i>
December 31	SCDS New Years' Eve Contra Dance	<i>Lynn Ackerson</i>
December 31	New Years' Eve English Dance	<i>David Newitt</i>
January 16-18	Contra Carnivale (CCCDs) (full)	<i>Nils Fredland, Ric Mohr, Susan Petrick</i>
January 17	Seattle Ball (www.seattleball.org)	<i>Bruce Hamilton</i>
February 15	Santa Cruz Mini Dawn Dance (TDSC)	<i>Andy Wilson, Lynn Ackerson, et al</i>
March 13-15	Spring Dance Weekend	<i>Bob Isaacs, Linda Leslie, Jenny Beer</i>
March 7	Playford Ball Workshop, Peninsula	<i>Bruce Hamilton</i>
March 21	Playford Ball Workshop, East Bay	<i>Alan Winston</i>
March 29	Playford Ball Workshop, Roseville	<i>Lise Dyckman</i>
April 3	Playford Ball Rehearsal	<i>Cavalcade of callers</i>
April 4	Playford Ball	<i>Lise Dyckman</i>

See www.bacds.org for more information. For events sponsored by neighboring organizations, see www.nbcds.org (NBCDS), www.scds.ca (SCDS), www.sffmc.org (SFFMC), www.cccds.org (CCDS), santacruzdance.org (TDSC).

Jenny Beer in Japan!

Former Bay Area caller (and Spring Weekend English dance leader) Jenny Beer has added an impressive gig to her resumé: a calling tour of Japan that has taken her back to the land she first visited in her role of cultural anthropologist.

Nearly two years ago BACDS and NBCDS hosted a group of visiting English country dancers from Japan who had come to the Bay Area to participate in the Mad Robin Ball, emceed by Sharon Green. The visit inspired a series of additional events: a Friday night welcome dance, emceed by Jenny Beer; a Sunday morning workshop, taught by Bruce Hamilton; a Sunday afternoon dance, led by David Newitt and Jenny Beer. Throughout the weekend, our two Japanese-speaking callers, Tom Roby and Jenny, and NBCDS dancer Hideko Oga Petchey proved invaluable, and by the end of the weekend one thing was clear: the Japanese group unanimously wanted Jenny to come to Tokyo to call in November 2008.

Here is a brief excerpt from Jenny's blog, available at her website, culture-at-work.com: "Most of the women who participated in the 2007 San Francisco trip were there, and many had brought me photos and "a little something" including a handwoven shawl and handmade carrying bag, some dance books, origami, hand-embroidered pocket towels, fresh strawberries, and I'm not sure what all else. I taught in a comic mixture of Japanese and English and for the most part they understood. Demonstrate, demonstrate, demonstrate!"

See culture-at-work.com for photos and more blog entries recounting Jenny's adventures in Japan. And be sure to ask her about her trip when you see her at Spring Weekend this March!

Youth Scholarships: A Timely Initiative

Have you ever wondered whether people will still enjoy dancing Fiddleheads or Fandango in 2059 the way we enjoy dancing them nowadays, on the brink of 2009?

A few years ago the board of CDSS (the Country Dance & Song Society) began thinking about that question and all that it implied. For there to be contra and English country dancers in 2059, there had to be dance leaders to teach them and musicians to play for them, folks brought up in the tradition, and it was the job of CDSS, and of all those who love this tradition, to nurture young dancer/musicians and to bring new youngsters into the fold.

This was the origin of CDSS's New Leaders Good Leaders fund, and of the CDSS-sponsored Youth Scholarships, which last summer brought 3 young dancer/musicians to Mendocino American Week and 3 more to English Week, all at no cost to BACDS. (Each youth scholar is sponsored by an organization, often a Morris or sword team or a local country dance. CDSS pays for half the youth scholar's camp fee; the other half is paid for by the sponsoring organization.)

Inspired by the success of the Mendocino youth scholarship program, the Fall Frolick committee determined to create its own youth scholarships for older teens and twenty-somethings who were prepared to take on work-trade jobs in exchange for free admission to the weekend. The five young people who were awarded scholarships, all active participants in the community, arrived at Monte Toyon early, worked late and danced even later, adding great energy and enthusiasm to the weekend. Again, the youth scholarships were at no cost to BACDS, thanks to generous donors from BACDS, NBCDS, and SDECD who contributed funds to the program.

Now it's time to sign up for Spring Weekend, and the Spring Weekend committee also hopes to offer scholarships for young campers. To do so, the committee needs donations. If you can help, please write a check to BACDS and earmark it "Youth Scholarships." Send it to board member Sharon Green, who is working on recruiting young people to BACDS's weekends. The address is: BACDS, c/o Sharon Green, 6103 Harwood Avenue, Oakland CA 94618.

BACDS Board Modifies Pricing Policies

You will be seeing new pricing signs on the sign-in tables at BACDS dances. We haven't changed our door prices, but we've changed the way we present them.

or pay what you can: We've long had an unwritten policy that gives the dance manager discretion to offer a discounted price to someone who needs it. We've decided to make that explicit. As Sharon Green put it: "In these grim times, I don't want any dancer who has lost a job or has had a pay cut to be forced to give up dancing. Now, especially, people need a source of joy in their lives." You may be familiar with the "or pay what you can" policy from other dances (the Queer Contra and the Hayward Contra, for example), and you may remember that Davey Hudson first proposed this idea to the Board about a year ago. We weren't ready for it then. We are now.

Supporter: This is a new pricing category to remind those who really love our dances that it's OK to pay more than the regular price. We put a number to it (\$15), but it's really a "pay what you can" arrangement. The extra money goes right into the total income for the dance, which means that 60% of it goes directly to increase the pay of the musicians, caller and sound tech, and the remaining 40% goes first to cover the expenses of this dance series (hall rents are still rising), and if any is left over, it goes to help other dance series that may not be doing so well. The "Supporter" price is optional and voluntary, and when we tried it for the first time at the Palo Alto Contra on November 22, it brought in nearly \$50.

Note that the extra money in the "Supporter" price is not tax-deductible. If you'd prefer to make a tax-deductible contribution to BACDS, you can do that, at any time. But the tax-deductible contributions don't end up as "Door Income" and therefore don't increase the pay for the band. It's your money. You can decide how to best to use it.

Where your admission fee goes: This is another of Davey's ideas that we adopted. The bottom of the price sheet has a pie chart and some statistics that show how the admission fee is divided up to pay the talent, the hall rent, and so forth. The sizes of the pie slices are calculated from the historical attendance and cash flow figures for each specific dance series. We hope the information about how the series is doing financially and where the money goes can help you decide how much to contribute, now that the prices are adjustable.



From the President

The numbers are in for the fiscal year that ended August 31st, and they are not what we'd like them to be. We posted a net loss of \$13,771. This compares to a gain of \$28,790 in the prior fiscal year, and a loss of about \$11,000 the year before. The bulk of the fluctuation is attributable to the camps, which are highly sensitive to whether or not they meet their break-even attendance.

For reference, here is a comparison of how the camps performed during the last two fiscal years.

Dance series revenues have been steadily declining in recent years, and this year they went into the red for the first time. Collectively, the dance series lost \$2404 in fiscal year 2007-08; in the year before, they gained \$875.

American Week	2007	+\$8039	2008	-\$979
English Week	2007	+\$7064	2008	+\$1412
Family Week	2007	-\$759	2008	-\$2887
Fall Weekend	2006	-\$3301	2007	-\$4932
Spring Weekend	2007	+\$1476	2008	-\$4083
Balance the Bay			2008	-\$3077

Historically, we've always had a few camps each year that lose money. We count on being able to make it up with gains from the camps that made money, plus the surplus from the dance series.

The biggest single contributor to this year's loss is declining attendance. We've been talking about the downward trend in dance attendance for some years now, and many of us have been trying to do something about it. Our efforts have helped, but they haven't reversed the trend. Now we're coming up against a world-wide economic crisis, and we can expect people to have *less* money for discretionary spending. Perhaps we can sell our dances and our camps as *inexpensive* alternatives that make sense in a down market.

It's not time to give up hope. We still have plenty of money in the bank, and can probably survive 8 years or so of this kind of loss before we bottom out. It's likely that the world economy will be back on its feet by then, and it's just possible that our dance offerings will gain a new and younger following. We've been encouraging youth participation, through special student pricing, through participation in the CDSS Youth Scholarship program, and by offering our own, self-funded youth scholarships to our weekend camps. Investing in youth has a long-term payoff, and we're committed to it.

The Board considered raising door prices this winter, and decided that in the present times of economic uncertainty, we are better off leaving them alone. We did make some changes to how we present our prices (described elsewhere in this newsletter).

We're also thinking about advertising strategy. We could use some help from those of you who have experience in advertising, publicity, or marketing. Past experience tells us that no matter what kind of advertising we do, the vast majority of new faces at our dances are there because they were brought by a friend, and not because of the ads.

So, bring all your friends, and keep bringing them. Pass the word that what we do is fun. The best answer I can think of to hard times is to keep dancing.

~ Jens Dill, BACDS President, bacds-president@bacds.org

Save the date for *Balance the Bay*: August 14-16, 2009



Balance the Bay, our Urban Contra Weekend, is coming back for its second year with every bit as much fun and excitement as last year, and *with improvements*.

We're bringing in *Crowfoot* (Adam Broome, Jaige Trudel, Nicholas Williams) to play alongside our local favorite, *Swing Farm* (Ray Bierl, Charlie Hancock, Steven Strauss).

Our callers will be *Adina Gordon* (Asheville, NC) and *Joyce Miller* (Grass Valley). *Richard Powers*, from Stanford, will lead couple-dance workshops.

If you are curious, you can hear Adina call on January 11 at the San Rafael Contra; and Crowfoot will be featured at this year's Contra Carnivale (the following weekend). Thanks to programmer Lynn Ackerson for lining up the talent.

Our new location is the *Janet Pomeroy Center*, just a couple of miles from last year's site. The new hall has a better floor, more space *off* the floor, nicer views, and fewer neighbors (the San Francisco Zoo on one side, and Lake Merced on the other). It also has direct public transit access (there's a bus stop right across the street).

We chose to move the date from May to August because August has fewer conflicts with other dance weekends, and because San Francisco is famously *cool* in the summertime, especially where we will be dancing, only a few blocks from the ocean.

A big new feature this year will be the on-site Saturday Supper, a sit-down meal where we can all mingle and socialize before the evening dance. Thanks to Sarah Watts for being willing to arrange for this to happen.

Of course, we're always looking for people to join the committee and help with the planning. You can subscribe to the committee mailing list without obligation (at bacds.org/mailman/listinfo/btb-committee) and follow the discussion.

Publicity Mailings

BACDS mails out flyers and announcements every 3 months with the dance calendar and this Newsletter. Did you know that you can also see them online? Sign up at <http://bacds.org/mailman/listinfo/bacds-epub> to receive a text-only email message each quarter with a short description of each flyer and a link you can follow to view (or print) the flyer as PDF.

To help save paper and reduce the clutter in your mailbox, beginning with the March mailing (for April-June 2009) we will mail *paper* copies **only** to people who have confirmed that they want to continue to receive them. We're happy to send paper, but we want to avoid sending paper to people who don't want or need it. ***If you would like to continue to receive paper mailings, please let us know*** by mail (postcard or letter) to

BACDS, PO Box 6147, Albany, CA 94706

or by email to bacds-membership@bacds.org or submit your request online at <http://bacds.org/mailings>. You can also let us know about address changes in the same places.

Unless we hear from you, this will be your last paper mailing. We hope you'll prefer the convenience and the conservation of receiving your flyers electronically. (This is Silicon Valley, after all!)

... and don't forget our fabulous summer camps!

BAY AREA

American Dance and Music Week, Movement Afoot, July 4-11, 2009

at the Mendocino Woodlands in the Coastal Redwoods of Northern California

OUTSTANDING MUSIC

Tidal Wave: Stuart Kenney, Rachel Aucoin, Sabin Jacques & Eric Favreau

Notorious: Eden Mac-Adam-Somer, Larry Unger, Sam Bartlett & Mark Murphy

Dave Bartley with The Avant Gardeners: Laura Light & George Paul

CONTRAS AND SQUARES

Lisa Greenleaf & Linda Leslie

COUPLE DANCING

Matthew Duveneck



CLOGGING & STORYTELLING

Chris Bischoff

CONTRA CALLERS' MINI-COURSE

Lisa Greenleaf

SOUND

Marty Brenneis

SUPREME CUISINE

Tod Nysether

For more information, go to www.bacds.org/amweek or contact Loren Kalmen, Registrar <amweek2009@amweek.org> (775) 240-0117

COUNTRY

BACDS 17th Annual Family Week • July 5-11, 2009

Share the dance traditions you love with a new generation!

Camp favorites Steve Hickman and DeLaura Padovan return to staff our 17th Annual Family Music & Dance camp.

Join us for six days in the pine and oak woodlands of the Sierra foothills just outside Sonoma, CA, only a few hours from the Bay Area, as adults and children of all ages gather to create a community, to dance, play, sing, swim, listen to stories, make crafts and, most important of all, to build the kind of friendships that will last a lifetime.



Come and have a great time, knowing that your child is having as much fun in their class as you are in yours.

Come and get to know the wonderful folks who have been coming to Family Week for years.

Program Director: Randall Cayford
Camp Manager: Wayne Mullen

Registrar: Rhonda Cayford

Check our website for program and staff updates at: <http://bacds.org/familycamp/>

DANCE

English Dance & Music Week

at the Mendocino Woodlands Camp (in the Redwoods of Northern California)

English Country Dance: Philippe Callens and Brad Foster

Border Morris & Jigs: Julie James

Waltzing & Cotswold Morris: Matthew Duveneck

Sound by Bob Felch & Adrienne Simpson



July 11-18, 2009

Fabulous Music by Jim Oakden, Daron Douglas, Anita Anderson, Dave Bartley, Eden MacAdam-Somer, Larry Unger, Jon Berger, and Charlie Hancock

Complete Music Track, Tune-writing Workshop, Callers' Forum, Choreographers' Workshop, Daily Gathering, Picnic in the Meadow, Singing, and more!
www.bacds.org/eweek

SOCIETY

BACDS is dedicated to teach, promote and present country and ritual dancing throughout the San Francisco area. For BACDS information, or to contact us, please write to PO BOX 7309, Redwood City, CA 94063. Phone (415) 282-7374. E-mail bacds@bacds.org. Web <http://www.bacds.org/>

This issue was edited by Julie Thomas and Loretta Guarino Reid. Send corrections to caljuliet@comcast.net. Deadline for Spring *Dancer*: Feb 15. Send submissions to caljuliet@comcast.net. Please join the conversation.