



Bay Area Country Dancer

No.106– June 2016

www.bacds.org

First Sundays: South Bay Intergenerational Contra!

Les Addison (Publicity Chair), Lori Honzik (Manager) and Claire Takemori (Programmer).

We have exciting changes to announce. As the former San Jose Community Dance evolved, it became possible to establish separate strong volunteer committees to manage and support the contra dances (now South Bay Contra!) and the English country dances (now San José English Country Dance).

South Bay Contra! dances moved to the first Sunday of the month. We added a Newcomer's Lesson at 2:15, and the first-time dance is free to newcomers who attend the lesson, so bring your friends! Starting in July, the dances will be extended until 5:30pm. We are also extending the dances through the summer, for non-stop fun. Because this is an afternoon dance, we have the opportunity to welcome families with children—there is a room off of the dance hall where we have potluck snacks at the break and where children are welcome to play with parental supervision. During the break, we offer a simple dance which is accessible to the very young and everyone else.

Dances are called using gender-free terminology—"Larks" for the role on the left and "Ravens" for the role on the right. We aim to create a comfortable space for all people. We invite all dancers to participate in the Newcomer's Lesson. It is an excellent opportunity for experienced dancers to get tips and pointers on dancing the "other" role while helping new dancers learn contra structure. When we don't have newcomers, we plan to offer advanced techniques or tips to help everyone's dancing experience.

South Bay Contra! has fabulous talent lined up for this summer:

- July 3 – **Switching Protocols** with **Jacqui Grennan** (Los Angeles) calling. Post *AmWeek* talent!
- August 7 – **Adrianna Ciccione & Daniel Steinberg** with **Kelsey Hartman** calling.
- September 4 – **Will Wheeler & Isele Phoenix Harper** with **Andy Shore** calling.

Come check out South Bay Contra! on first Sundays, 2:30-5:30pm, at First Unitarian Church of San Jose at 160 N 3rd St, San Jose, California. Parking is free at street meters on Sundays, or \$5 parking lot (95 N 3rd St, San Jose). Please do not park in the lot behind the church.

All details available at <https://facebook.com/groups/SouthBayContraDance/> and <http://bacds.org/sbc>

Fall Frolick Brings Together Dance Friends from Far and Near

By Sharon Green

I flew back from England last month with a head full of memories and a backpack full of cash. Not British pounds, as you might expect, but US dollars, enough to pay for two registrations to our October 14-16 dance weekend, Fall Frolick.

When we opened registration to Fall Frolick last quarter, two of the first applications we received came from UK dancers. Drawn both by the strength of our staff and by beauty of our Northern California setting, they wanted to get their applications in early so that they could book their flights across the Pond at a reasonable rate and also arrange visits to Yosemite and other major attractions. So when I saw these British dance friends the other week in Somerset, they immediately handed me the money, guaranteeing their spots at Fall Frolick.

Why is this incident significant? After all, now that this year's registration forms are online, folks are signing up for Fall Frolick all the time. It's significant because it demonstrates the drawing power of Fall Frolick and our other BACDS weekends and weeklong camps. People from coast to coast and across the Pond sign up because they trust BACDS to put together a stellar staff and to welcome campers, whether they're regulars who've been dancing for three decades or newcomers who've been dancing for three weeks.

Fall Frolick has a particularly stellar staff this year. From the East Coast, three fine musicians: Karen Axelrod, Rachel Bell, and Susan Kevra. When all three play together, they are Old World Charm School; when it's just Karen and Rachel, they are Peregrine Road. Contra energy, plus English elegance: it's a winning combination. (Karen also runs one heck of a funny auction, while Susan is a lovely caller of both contras and ECD, and Rachel writes great tunes: check out her *Blue Heron Waltz* sample track on *Soundcloud*.) Also from the East Coast, the dean of America's modern ECD choreographers: Gary Roodman. Not only will Gary be teaching his latest dances at camp, but also he'll be leading two workshops for choreographers. What a great opportunity to try your hand at writing a dance, or to observe the dance-writing process in action!

It's Time to Sign Up for Summer Camps

American Dance and Music Week



June 26 – July 1

Space is still available.

AmWeek.org

Family Week



July 3 – July 8

Space is available.

bacds.org/familyweek

English Dance and Music Week



July 30 – Aug 6

Waiting list only.

bacds.org/heydays

This is why I go to Family Week

by Zia Rauwolf

Family Week is a place and a time. And yet it is so much more than that. For me Family Week is one of the camps that I go to each year. And to me all the camps are actually in some way in the same place; specifically down the rabbit hole. They are down the rabbit hole because I get to turn off my phone. They are down the rabbit hole because to me they are magical places. Where there is community, and music and dancing. Where people weave their joy together. And when we pack up—because they have to end—partly because I at least usually have so much fun that I don't sleep enough and have to go home and get some rest, I take that joy which is mine but also other people's and I take it into the world. I spread it everywhere I go. I'm friendlier and more relaxed in the supermarket, on the street, in traffic. I'm just so much happier.

Now Family Week is down the rabbit hole and to the left. And I get to bring my child into that amazing space. I'm a part time single parent of a 5-year-old, and going on holiday with my child means being on for my child the whole time. I don't have anyone to hand off to. And yet Family Week is set up such that it feels like a good balance between what she needs and what I need. It feels very civilized.

In the mornings there are classes for the kids and preschool for the little ones, at the same time there are workshops for the adults, which involve making music or dancing or telling stories. All wonderful ways to get to know my fellow campers and spend time being creative. In the afternoons there are various workshops for large and small. A couple of years ago I learnt how to stilt-walk, which I have always wanted to do.

Then there is more food, and all group meetings -- where people share little jokes and performances and music. Then there is a bedtime story for everyone, and then the under-9-year-olds get sung to bed. One of my favorite features of this camp is that after that there is a dance and maybe tunes somewhere, and there are people whose job it is to keep an eye on everyone's children. So if one needs their parents they come and find them, but in general I get to dance and socialize with adults. This is part of what I love about this camp. Another part I love is that everyone is actually interested in everyone else's well-being and helps where possible.

This year Family Week is temporarily at Monte Toyon, which is beautiful yet more expensive than our usual location (which is being renovated). We are going to compromise by having one fewer day for camp. I am excited anyway, since it's both a place and a time, and this year we do have a place and a time, and I'm looking forward to meeting my fellow campers down the rabbit hole. I'm hoping that this article has inspired new people to consider going to Family Week, since I really like the idea of sharing this joy with as many people as possible.

Come join us at Family Week!

When and where:	<i>July 3-8 at Monte Toyon near Aptos</i>		
Dance instruction for all ages by	Brooke Friendly	Kalia Kliban	Rhonda Cayford
	Julie James	DeLaura Padovan	
Outstanding music by	Jim Oakden	Susan Worland	David Brown
	Kathrine Gardner	Craig Johnson	David James
			Steve Hickman
Fun and games with	Ruth Halpern (stories)	Andy Wilson (stilts)	
	Christina Lewis (clowning)	Lorraine Kostka / Emily Janssen (art)	
	Stan Fowler / Kalia Kliban (general mirth and silliness)		
Website:	bacds.org/familyweek		

Ahoy, Mateys!

By Bowen Lee

Permission granted to step aboard the **H.M.S. Pomeroy**, setting sail for *Balance the Bay*, San Francisco's weekend contra dance on the shores of the mighty Pacific Ocean. We'll be steppin' lightly to the music of **Nor'easter**, sure to fill our sails with the talents of Julie Valmont, Cedar Stanistreet, and Max Newman from Boston, and **Sassafras Stomp**, hailing from their home port in Maine, composed of those sassy musicians, Johanna Davis and Adam Nordell, being joined by dashing John Pranio. The sparkling calling of our East Coast beauty, **Mary Wesley**, and our West Coast belle, **Susan Petrick**, will expertly navigate the contra.

There still be time to sail with us. Registration is open for this contra weekend. The voyage begins Friday night, August 19, and disembarks Sunday, August 2. Don't forget the *Swashbuckler's Ball* on Saturday night, when buccaneers and pirates will don their nautical gear and dance the night away for a rousing good time. The ship sails to another port on Sunday night, the public dance at St. Paul's in San Francisco. And no need to let the young 'uns stay ashore. There's child care being provisioned for at Pomeroy Center.

Arrrgh! Don't miss the boat! You'll wish you walked the plank if you don't step lively and sign aboard *Balance the Bay* 2016. Visit the BtB website at bacds.org/btb, for registration form and information, and our Facebook group page for the hear ye, hear ye.

All aboard that's going aboard!

Balance the Bay, Pomeroy Recreation and Rehabilitation Center, 207 Skyline Blvd, San Francisco, August 19 to 21

Arrrrr!

Spend a week in the Redwoods at *AmWeek!*

by Eric Black

There's still room for YOU at AmWeek!

It's hard to find a more magical time than music and dance in the redwood forest. Come join us at **BACDS American Dance & Music Week** (AmWeek) this June 26 – July 1. Spend a high-energy week or a calm and relaxing one, AmWeek gives you lots of both. A stellar international program staff brings a 4-ring circus with attractions for everyone! There's wall-to-wall dancing, incredible music, traditional crafts, singing, and so much more.

Nationally known callers **Cis Hinkle** and **Will Mentor** have a great week of dance sessions planned, as well as a caller's workshop and open mic session for callers both new and experienced. Dance workshops will explore the Contra-Square connection, bring figure-to-figure transitions into focus, and have fun with unexpected twists and challenging timing. Evening dances pack the house!

AmWeek is not just for dancers; it's also fully a music camp for dance musicianship, with intimate teaching and sharing sessions with some of the best musicians in the contra world.

French Canadian band **Genticorum** journeys from Canada with their distinctive sound and engaging teaching. Teach your fiddle to sing Québécois with **Pascal Gemme**, or DADGAD guitar with **Yann Falquet**, and American and Québécois keyboard with **Nicholas Williams**.

Stringrays' music spans the playful and sublime, the raucous and the tender, the funky and the old-school, and they are all superb teachers. **Max Newman** will be leading the AmWeek Ukulele Orchestra, **David Surette** will lead mandolin workshops as well as the popular tune-writing class, **Stuart** and **Matt Kenney** bring out the groove in the all-inclusive Red Case Tunes workshop, and where else can you enjoy small up-close and personal lessons in New England fiddling with **Rodney Miller**?

Susie Burke will get everyone singing favorite songs and new. The traditional crafts workshops by **Rachel Olguin** are a unique and relaxing way to take a break from music and dance and socialize. **Will Mentor** is an art professor by day, and will do workshop sessions on landscape drawing, something very special in this magical location. Yoga led by fiddler and certified yoga instructor **Laura Light** is a mid-morning treat; there's no need to get up before breakfast for yoga. But you *will* want to get up early and join the **Waltzes Before Breakfast**, an AmWeek tradition!

AmWeek is held at the Jones Gulch YMCA camp, less than 45 minutes' drive from Palo Alto. The camp fee of \$675 covers lodging, meals, and program. There is a unique sliding-scale work-trade scholarship program for young or underemployed campers. See the web site at <http://AmWeek.org> for more information, and register online!

Camp begins Sunday, June 26, so get online and register today!



Spring Fever Takes a Break

by Jens Dill

There will be no *Spring Fever* dance weekend in 2017. The reason: committee burnout. This year's weekend was wonderful, but undersubscribed, and just took too much out of those of us who were running it. Taking a year off gives us a chance to form a new committee, with new ideas, and maybe make some changes to make it even better. If you would be interested in putting together a new Spring Weekend, see Jens Dill or Erik Hoffman, or E-mail springfever@bacds.org.

Pete's Posse Tour in August

by Jens Dill

Some of you may remember a bit of confusion about the date for this year's *Balance the Bay* weekend. The committee goofed; we thought we had reserved the date with the hall, but we had not followed through. We had to shift the date from the second to the third weekend in August *after* we had hired the bands. Unfortunately, one of the bands we had booked, *Pete's Posse*, could not make the new schedule. So we invited them to come out anyway. They will be touring the Bay Area the week before *Balance the Bay*. Some details are still pending, but here is the current schedule:

- Wednesday, August 10: San Francisco house concert.
- Thursday, August 11: East Bay house concert.
- Friday, August 12: *Circle Left* contra dance in Berkeley.
- Saturday, August 13: North Bay contra dance in Mill Valley.
- Sunday, August 14: North Bay house concert.
- Monday, August 15: Palo Alto contra dance.
- Tuesday, August 16: Santa Clara house concert.
- Wednesday, August 17: Berkeley contra dance.

The President's Corner



From the President: Would you like to be a Lark or a Raven?

That's a question you may be asked more often these days, shortly after you've said "yes" to "would you care to dance?" This is because more and more people in our contra dance community are resisting the idea that the choice of which role to take in a dance is automatically associated with one's gender. Not long ago, gender-free (or gender-neutral) dance calling was something different, something special or strange, and something that you could seek out at the Queer Contra dance. Once in a while, a "regular" dance series might have tried a "gender-free" dance as an experiment. Now it seems to be moving into the mainstream.

So what *is* happening? The movement toward gender-neutral calling (and dancing) got its biggest push from the LGBT community. If your whole life is oriented toward not conforming to stereotypical sex roles, you naturally feel more comfortable and welcome at a dance that doesn't immediately take a look at your shape and apparel and classify you as a "lady" or "gent." And you want to be free to dance with your romantic partner without raising anyone's eyebrows. This was the reason that the Queer Contra was organized in the Bay Area. They chose the Lavender Country and Folk Dancers (LCFD) as their sponsoring organization rather than BACDS, partly to make it clear that they were "different" from the traditional "straight" dances.

That introduced many of the rest of us to the idea of gender-free dancing. Many of our callers were recruited to call Queer Contras, and many of our dancers attended them, and reported back in generally favourable terms. The Queer Contra organized a weekend dance camp, and let it be known that you did not have to be queer to attend. That too, was a success.

Gender-free dancing seems to have a particularly strong appeal among young people. Today's youth are much more likely to resist being placed into traditional gender roles. The Circle Left Contra was started (also under the LCFD umbrella) by a group of younger dancers, and has been tremendously successful. The organizers of Circle Left mostly came from the Berkeley Contra dance community, and it's not surprising that Berkeley was the first of the non-LCFD dances to adopt gender-free calling. It worked well enough there that it is spreading. Both the Hayward Contra and the San José Contra have recently switched to gender-free calling.

Are all of our dances trending that way? Who knows? It seems to be working at those dances that have tried it. Attending a dance with gender-free calling does not feel much different than attending a dance with traditional calling. Most people do prefer to dance with an opposite-sex partner, and most people do prefer to dance the role traditionally assigned to their sex. So most people line up the way they always did. The difference is for the people who prefer to ask a same-sex partner or prefer to dance the non-traditional role, or even to role-swap during the dance. They now have official approval to do so. So the most you have to get used to is the new calls, and the idea that the person coming at you for the next move may not be of the gender you expect. Since the younger generation seems to prefer not being bound to a gender role, and also seems to enjoy the challenge of role-swapping, I'd guess that gender-free calling is the wave of the future (at least until the next generation has other ideas).

As a parenthetical note, I just learned that the original Queer Contra has shut down for the time being. But it's not because of any association with gender-free calling. It's for the usual reasons: an expensive hall and leadership burnout. Which means the Queer Contra will revive anytime someone else wants to step up and run it. Circle Left is still going strong.

Historically, the gender-free movement has been plagued by a terminology debate: what to call the roles if you can't use gender-suggestive terms. Lots of choices have been tried: "Leads" and "Follows" is gender-neutral, but imposes its own stereotypical connotations on the roles. "Bands" and "Bares" presupposes that you have a supply of armbands for the dancers in one role to put on (and it makes role-swapping harder). Geographical designations have been tried in English Dances, where most dances are lined up in proper formation, so that "clocks" and "windows" or "east" and "west" sort of work until people get improper. Lots of other ideas have been proposed, to the point where whenever somebody goes online and asks the question, it still provokes way too much discussion. Here in the SF Bay area, we've settled on "Larks" and "Ravens." And that seems to work pretty well.

Why do we like "Larks" and "Ravens"? Several reasons. (1) There is a mnemonic to help. **L**arks line up on the **L**eft when the couple join the dance (or end a swing), and **R**avens line up on the **R**ight. (2) They are easy for the callers to learn to use. "Larks" and "Gents" have the same number of syllables, and "Ravens" and "Ladies" do also. Callers do not have to change the cadence of their calls. (3) They have distinctively different sounds and a different number of syllables—important characteristics for any role label in a dance call. (4) They are not entirely free of gender-loaded connotations, but those connotations lead you to think of larks as small with melodious voices and ravens as big with rough-sounding calls. And that leads you entirely in the wrong direction. It is only by abandoning gender stereotyping that you can accept that larks can be male and ravens female, and that the whole point is that anyone can dance either role.

I was amused to learn, however, that "Larks" and "Ravens" has acquired its own cultural baggage. The *Balance the Bay* dance weekend has always asked its registrants about their preferred dance role(s). We've used the terms "lead" and "follow" in the past. I don't like these terms very well, since they imply an active-passive relationship that is not really built into Contra dancing. So this year, I innocently substituted the terms "lark" and "raven," since I like them better. Now all of a sudden, I'm hearing from people that they think that *Balance the Bay* has officially adopted gender-free calling. Sorry, but no. The committee and the programmer were not consulted. Nobody has asked the callers to change the way they plan to call. And there is good reason for them not to: *Balance the Bay* brings people from all over the country who are not as familiar with gender-free calling as we are here in the Bay Area. This year's callers would have to do a lot of prep work to bring people up to speed and may have to limit some of the things they'd do in the program, and the committee would have to make extra effort to let the out-of-towners know that things would be different. We may go gender-free in the future, but we're taking it in easy steps.

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

Volunteer Thanks

- ♪ Thanks to the new **South Bay Contra** committee: *Claire Takemori, Lori Honzik, Carlton Keedy, Moria Merriweather, Les Addison, D'or Seifer, Steve Moyles, Martha Elderon, Michael Wright, Jens Dill, Tanya Merchant, Andy Shore, Julia Wong, Alan Winston, Linda Roy*, and possibly more. When this many people show up for the organizing meeting or contribute to the decision making, you know you are starting something that will have an impact.
- ♪ Thanks also to the new **San José ECD** committee: *Myles Garcia, Cynthia Barnes, Catherine and William Allen, Linda Roy, Carol and Ken Linney, Jay Peng, Sarah Whiteside, Bill Baldwin, VJ Mohan, Dean Yon, Jens Dill, Alan Winston, Lise Dyckman*. Again, a big and enthusiastic turnout for the organizing meeting.
- ♪ Thanks to our outgoing Board members for their service: *Cassandra Vlahos, Diane Zingale, Stephen Connelly, Chrissy Howell, Joyce Cooper, Shirley Worth, and Jody Distler-Dill*.
- ♪ Thanks to our new Board members who are just starting out: *Carlton Keedy, Cat Fox, Marilyn Kinch, Kevin Goess*. Also thanks to our Board members who are continuing: *Eric Black, Jens Dill, Sharon Green, SharYn Peterson, Clara Stefanov-Wagner, Mary Tabor, Scott Johnson, Alan Winston, Yoyo Zhou*. Thanks to *Clara* for taking on the job of Secretary, and to *Mary Luckhardt* for serving as Treasurer (even though she is not on the Board).
- ♪ Thanks to *Larens Imanyuel*, a stalwart of the CCB community. Almost always there early to help set up and sit the door, and late to put away things and empty the trash, and set up fans to keep us cool on hot days, he probably knows more about the hall than anyone not connected with the church. Wednesday dances, both Contra and English, wouldn't know what to do without him.
- ♪ Thanks to *Lisa Gartland* for her efforts as dance manager for the fourth Saturday Berkeley English dance.
- ♪ Thanks to *Stan and Susan Kramer* for their years and years of contributing to the Bay Area's dance and music scene. The Kramers are moving east; to Berea, Kentucky and the old family homestead. We wish them well in their retirement and hope to see them back often.
- ♪ Thanks to all the invisible volunteers who keep things going behind the scenes.
- ♪ I can't possibly remember all the people who need to be thanked for their efforts. If I fail to mention someone, let me know, and I'll add them next time. I can't even fit everyone in, because of all the events they create.

Upcoming Events

Saturday, June 4	Nepal Hospital Benefit Contra -- SF	<i>Kelsey Hartman with the Synaesthetics</i>
Saturday, June 11	Mad Robin Ball in Petaluma (NBCDS)	<i>Joanna Reiner with C. Hancock, S. Kammen, J. Oakden</i>
Fri-Sun, June 17-19	Faultline Frolic (NBCDS)	<i>Cis Hinkle, Warren Blier w/Notorious & Paddy Ryan's Dream</i>
Sunday, June 19	Aftershock Contra (NBCDS)	<i>Cis Hinkle with Notorious</i>
Saturday, June 25	Special Palo Alto Contra (<i>pre-Amweek</i>)	<i>Cis Hinkle with The StringRays</i>
Sun-Fri, June 26-July 1	American Dance and Music Week	<i>Cis Hinkle, Will Mentor, Eric Erhardt</i>
Friday, July 1	Post-Amweek Contra in Palo Alto	<i>American Week Staff</i>
Saturday, July 2	Special San Francisco Contra	<i>Will Mentor with Genticorum</i>
Sun-Fri, July 3-8	BACDS Family Dance Week	<i>Brooke Friendly, Kalia Kliban, Julia James</i>
Friday, July 29	Special Palo Alto English	<i>David Millstone with Goldcrest</i>
Sat-Sat, July 30-Aug 6	English Dance and Music Week	<i>Joseph Pimentel, David Millstone, Mary Devlin</i>
Wednesday, Aug 10	Special Berkeley ECD + workshop	<i>Mady Newfield</i>
Friday, August 12	Special <i>Circle Left</i> Contra (QCD)	<i>Kalia Kliban with Pete's Posse</i>
Saturday, August 13	Special San Rafael Contra (NBCDS)	<i>Pete's Posse</i>
Monday, August 15	Special Palo Alto Contra	<i>Susan Petrick with Pete's Posse</i>
Wednesday, August 17	Special Berkeley Contra	<i>Erik Hoffman with Pete's Posse</i>
Fri-Sun, August 19-21	Balance the Bay	<i>Mary Wesley, S. Petrick w/Nor'easter & Sassafras Stomp</i>
Sunday, August 21	CounterBalance Contra in SF	<i>Mary Wesley with Nor'easter</i>
Monday, August 22	Special Palo Alto Contra	<i>TBA w/ Cedar Stanistreet and Julie Vallimong</i>
Fri-Sun, October 14-16	Fall Frolick	<i>Gary Roodman, Kevin Hughes, Kalia Kliban, more</i>
Saturday, November 19	Twelve-hour Twirl (TDOGS)	<i>Lindsey Dono ... w/Mean Lids, Syncopaths, Uncle Farmer</i>
Sunday, December 4	No Snow Ball	

See bacds.org for more information. For events sponsored by our neighbors, see nbcds.org (NBCDS), sactocds.org (SCDS), sffmc.org (SFFMC), santacruzdance.org (TDSC), montereycdc.webs.com (MCDC), cccds.org (CCCD), haywardcontradance.org (TDOGS), lcfid.org/sf (QCD)

This issue was edited by Chris Folger and Jens Dill. Send corrections to TheDancer@bacds.org. Deadline for the Summer *Dancer*: May 20, 2016. Send submissions to cjfolger@yahoo.com. Please join the conversation.