



Bay Area Country Dancer

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www.bacds.org

Who Is John Galt?

By Kevin Goess, BACDS President

Do you think we should pay callers, musicians, and sound techs for the great work they do making our dances so special? Then this article is for you!

You may have noticed some excitement in the news recently about AB-5. It's a California law that went into effect on January 1 that changes the way we classify people as either **independent contractors** or as **employees**. The new law "creates a presumption that a worker who performs services for a hirer is an **employee**." [1] In order to change that presumption and treat the worker as an independent contractor, you have to pass a strict three-point test, and pass all the points:

- 1) The workers must be free from supervision
- 2) They must be in a different line of work from the company
- 3) They must demonstrably operate their own independent business

Last year, the BACDS paid over two hundred people to call dances, play music, and wrangle the sound equipment. We don't claim to have paid them very *much*—nobody ever said this was the path to a W.R. Hearst-sized fortune. In fact, two-thirds of them made less than \$600 from us, an important cutoff which I'll get to in a bit.

But we treated all those great people as independent contractors. The BACDS doesn't have any employees, not a one. The closest we have is our beloved bookkeeper, who is an independent contractor, but she can stay an independent contractor because she is in "a different line of work from the company." [2]

However, because the BACDS is in the business of putting on dances, and callers, musicians and sound people are integral to that business, it is pretty likely that the California EDD would take a dim view of us claiming musicians that play for our dances are in a "different line of work" from the BACDS. [3]

Given all that, your friendly neighborhood board is scrambling for a way to react to the new law [4]. Some of the options we're investigating include [5]:

1. Ignore the problem and just hope it all goes away
2. Shut the doors, close up shop, throw up our hands and stop having dances
3. Find a way to hire everybody as employees

Ignore The Problem And Just Hope It All Goes Away

This isn't as irresponsible as it seems. There is a huge groundswell of unhappy people raising a furore over this new law. Transcribers are out of work, guitarists can't get gigs, consultants are being let go. A change.org petition has 169,000 signatures. There are a number of bills to amend or revoke AB-5 [6]. So it's not impossible that if we just wait a little bit, it'll be like this was all just a bad dream.

Shut The Doors, Close Up Shop, Throw Up Our Hands And Stop Having Dances

This isn't as unlikely as you might hope. We have exactly zero framework now for supporting employees. We don't have an HR department, we don't have employee handbook, we don't have vacation plans or retirement plans. The State of California has a helpful guide to get a new business started with handling employees: the PDF is 120 pages long. The work required to digest all that may be too much for our small but loveable group of dance managers, door sitters, and volunteer board to handle, and the expense involved may be too much for our tiny little dances to absorb.

Find A Way To Hire Everybody As Employees

This is even more daunting than it sounds. Can we go from zero to two hundred employees, most of whom earn less than \$600? We'd need to handle I-9s and W-4s, sick days, workers' compensation insurance, unemployment insurance, COBRA, healthcare, 401ks. [7] Since this is still America, where there's a buck to be made there's somebody standing there waiting to make it, so there are services that can help with this, but those services are not free.

As independent contractors, if we paid them less than \$600 then we didn't even have to issue them tax paperwork, so you could say they didn't really even "count". But there is no similar bottom limit for "employees." If they work a single hour for you, then they count. Maybe only part-time employees, but there's still a huge umbrella of conditions to be satisfied.

So What, or, How Can You Help?

Some of this is just letting you know that change is on the way. Musicians may be grumpier. Door prices may go up.

Worse things could happen.

But you could help by writing your legislators. Writing your newspapers. Tweeting #ab5. Spread the word, make some noise.

You could also help by joining the board and adding your expertise or just your strong arms and keen wit to the effort to figure all this out. Did I mention that the board's terms expire in the spring? We can always use more help!

What's With That Article Title Anyway?

A shameless attempt to get your attention. As objectionable as Ayn Rand is, I admit I find her images of the suffocatingly oppressive bureaucratic collectivist society coming to mind lately, and in unguarded moments imagine us all retiring to the hidden valley of Galt's Gulch, where we could just play music and dance to our heart's content.

Footnotes:

[1] That's from the Legislative Council's Digest of the law itself. Introduced by Lorena Gonzales, D-San Diego. It's actually the codification of an early court decision known as *Dynamex*, which itself changes the earlier multi-point *Borello* test.

[2] Unless we change ourselves to the Bay Area Dance and Accounting Services Society, which I think we should consider just because of the awesome acronym.

[3] It's not *impossible* we could get away with continuing to claim they are all independent contractors, but there is so much unresolved uncertainty about this new law that we really can't tell. A lot of shops are closing up or shutting down their California operations rather than risk the exposure. Alameda's Island City Opera cancelled its planned March production of *The Wreckers* because of AB-5.

[4] You might notice that it's already a number of weeks *after* January 1, and be about to reach for the word "dilatory" to describe our reaction. But the court in *Dynamex* said that their decision was retroactive, so the new requirements actually go back in time, confusingly **before** January 1. Does that mean *everybody* who is out of compliance has been out of compliance *forever*? The California Supreme Court is scheduled to address that some time this year. Either that or the Temporal Agents from the 31st century is about to show up to protect the timeline.

[5] These are just some of the options. I'm assuming you don't want this article to go on forever. One of the interesting ones not listed here was "form a worker's cooperative". Who knows, but that might still happen.

[6] AB-1850 to clarify AB-5, SB-881 to amend it to exclude "musicians or music industry professionals". AB-1928 to repeal it entirely. SB-1039 charges the legislature to change the whole framework and introduce a third classification besides the existing two. And there's at least four other bills I saw mentioned but haven't found yet.

[7] I won't argue our musicians and callers don't *deserve* these things, but as the man said, "Use every man according to his desert and who should 'scape whipping?" Hmm, maybe that's not so apropos, but it's still a great line.

Willits Dance Family

By Megan Wolf

How did a small town in rural Mendocino County start a Rapper team and multiple folk dance groups? It all started when two teenagers met at Stockton Folk Dance Camp.

It was my first year at camp, I was there with my friends, but we didn't have enough boys to dance with. My friend and I met Jordan Uggla, who was there with his parents, Dave and Joyce (longtime BACDS dancers). He didn't really dance, but we woke him up every morning to do Tango class with us so we could have a partner. Fast forward several years, Jordan joined the folk dance group I was in. I moved to small town Willits for a teaching job. We eventually fell in love and Jordan moved to Willits. I had done folk dancing and contra for a long time, but he introduced me to English Country Dancing. At first, I wasn't sure about it. I really loved contra and missed the swinging. But soon ECD swooned me and I was hooked.

I had been leading a free after school folk dance club for kids for a few years, when I saw that Bruce Hamilton was going to be calling ECD in Caspar (our closest dance about an hour away). I asked him if he would come do a workshop with my dance kids. The kids had a great time and we added several English dances to our folk dance repertoire. We have a few kids who have been dancing with us for several years that we've taken on dance adventures to weekend festivals, such as Fall Frolick and Mad Robin Ball.

When I learned about BACDS Family Week, I knew I had to take them! I had been wanting to take them to a camp but they were too young for adult camp, so this was perfect! Two years ago, I took 4 kids ages 11 to 14 and we became the Willits Dance Family. We had so much fun! The kids loved learning more ECD and Contra but they got super hooked on Rapper and Irish Set dancing. These kids love to dance and their passion is contagious. At the end of our first time at Family Week, several parents told me that their own teen barely danced at camp, but now that my students attended, they danced way more! My students also taught a complicated and fun Israeli dance to other kids at camp during free time. They have also shared skills they learned at camp with kids back in Willits. After they learned some Rapper Sword, they

taught other kids figures. We were lucky to be gifted swords by Bruce Hamilton and have had Rhonda Cayford visit Willits to teach us more Rapper and now we have multiple Rapper teams here in Willits! Our Willits Dance Family has grown, and now we want to take more kids to Family Week, but we need to raise the funds to do so. Here's a letter the kids wrote:

Dear Dance Enthusiasts,

We are the Willits Dance Family, a group of six kids, ages 10 to 15. We love dance, from international folk, to English country, to contra, and even rapper. We are incredibly dedicated to learning as much as possible about dancing in all of its different forms. We are seeking sponsors to help send us to the BACDS Family Week so that we can continue our dance education. Over the last two years we have fostered amazing friendships inside and outside of camp, and we would love to meet more of the dance community and grow our dance family. This year, six kids will be attending camp, and with a work trade discount included, we still need to raise \$2,900. We are asking you to support youth in country dancing, and help continue and grow the dancing community for generations to come.

Sincerely,

The Willits Dance Family

BACDS Family Week

By Rhonda Cayford, BACDS Family Week 2020 Programmer

Train whistle blowing, makes a sleepy noise,
Underneath their blankets go all the girls and boys.
Heading from the station, out along the bay,
All bound for Morningtown, many miles away.
- Malvina Reynolds

So ends the day for children at BACDS Family Week. The musicians lead the procession and the whole camp sings along and walks with the children to their cabins to say goodnight. We call it the Pied Piper, and it is one of the sweetest moments of the day.

BACDS Family Week is in its 28th summer of creating a week-long immersion in folk culture and an escape from technology and the pressures of everyday life. Campers of all ages come from the Bay Area and beyond to dance and play together, with classes led by professional staff. Family Week classes are grouped by age, which provides everyone a unique opportunity to take classes with their own group and still enjoy a vacation with their families.

Our dance classes this summer include Contradance called by Kelsey Hartman, English Country Dance led by David Newitt, and (new this year!) French Canadian dance with Donald Dubuc from Quebec, all accompanied by our outstanding musical staff.

Teens and adults can dance all morning, or be part of a callers' workshop, a camper band class, or a singing class. Teens can also be teaching assistants for the younger children's classes. The children's classes include playful music and dance, plus crafts classes and the ever-popular stilt walking. There is a preschool in the morning for the under 5-year-olds. The whole camp gathers after lunch and dinner each day for family dances and to share songs, stories, and short performances. Family dances are led to include all ages, and those too young to walk are often carried. The evening is capped off with a story from our storyteller, and then the Pied Piper steps in.

After Pied Piper there is more dancing for the older children and adults while teen babysitters make the rounds of the cabins to check on the sleeping children while their parents dance. When the dancing is done, the night owls continue to play music or play games or sit and chat until bedtime finally calls.

Age groups bond quickly and soon even the youngest children are off playing together. There is a glow of pride mixed with a twinge of sadness as we watch our children become quite self-sufficient, with the comfort of knowing they are safe and cared for.

By the end of the week everyone knows everyone else at camp, and a community has grown from the assortment of families and friends. The children are everyone's children and the friendships formed at camp continue throughout the year. The community has become the village it takes to raise a child.

Community is as much what camp is about as all the activities. Although camp started as a way to share a love of music and dance and to pass these traditions from one generation to the next, what has flourished along with that is a bond between people that is so much bigger than a week of camp.

Family Week is held at Monte Toyon in Aptos, a beautiful retreat center in the redwoods but only a short distance from town. It is a residential camp with dormitory-style cabins and meals served community style in the dining hall. Camp runs Sunday June 28-Saturday July 4, 2020.

Registration is open! Please visit our website at www.bacds.org/familyweek to learn more about camp and to register, or contact our registrar Katie Riemer at 510-684-1454 for more information.

We hope to see you and your families at camp this year!

The Future of Teen Contra Dances?

By Claire Takemori

The Teen Contra, Jam & Games has created some really good things. Teens have come together, put down phones, and created fun & joy. A teen band formed with fiddler, guitarist, and bodhran player !
Teens who thought they could not dance, now love to dance (including my own son)!

I think this is a very worthy event, and possibly one of the ways that may help country dancing live on in the Bay Area. However, it's a lot of work to organize, manage, call and do sound every month (and not get paid). I'm looking for folks to help these dances continue. Maybe it will become a quarterly dance and move around the bay? Maybe it will find organizers and support in Oakland, Palo Alto or San Francisco? Please let me know if you can help in any way? Website, send email reminders, flyer design, Facebook events, manage a dance, sound tech, etc. Name your passion!

Please invite teens to the next Teen Contra, Jam, Games in San Jose: April 18, May 16
Register & Information: bacds.org/teen

Thanks! I look forward to hearing from you.
Claire Takemori
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Fall Frolick 2020: New Location, New Dates!

by Sharon Green

Imagine an English country dance weekend with Susan Kevra teaching her new dances to Rachel Bell's tunes. Imagine it with Bruce Hamilton inspiring dancers to reach new heights "through the ceiling," and with Kalia Klivan skillfully talking dancers through an hour of no walk-through bliss. Add to that a little French dancing with Rachel Bell, toss in some Sacred Harp, with chances for late-night jamming and dancing for as many as will, and what do you have? Fall Frolick 2020, that's what!

And then there's the music. Imagine Persons of Quality, The Whoots, xxxx, all playing together: Rebecca King, Jim Oakden, Jon Berger, Shira Kammen, Charlie Hancock, Susan Kevra, Rachel Bell. What a gathering of stars!

Now imagine all that talent and all that fun at Healdsburg's Bishop's Ranch, one of the best-loved dance venues in California. With superb food, a beautiful setting, and an indoor pavilion created specifically for dancing, Bishop's Ranch welcomes dancers to a unique experience. It is a special place.

Fall Frolick 2020. Bishop's Ranch. November 13-15, 2020. Imagine yourself there.

Upcoming Events

Sat Mar 14 – Sun Mar 15	Contra College in Menlo Park	<i>Various</i>
Sun Jun 28 – Sat, Jul 4	Family Week in Monte Toyon, Aptos	<i>Various</i>
Sun Jul. 5 – Sun Jul. 12	Hey Days at Sonoma State Univ.	<i>Various</i>
Fri. Aug 7 – Sun. Aug 9	Balance the Bay! in San Francisco	<i>The Synchopaths with The Latter Day Lizards</i>
Saturday October 31	Halloween Ball	<i>TBD</i>
Fri Nov 13 – Sun Nov 15	Fall Frolick in Healdsburg	<i>Various</i>

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), montereycontradance.org (MCDC), cccds.org (CCCDs), facebook.com/NorthOaklandSquareDance (NOSD), lcfid.org/sf (QCD)

This issue was edited by Chris Folger. Send corrections to cjfolger@yahoo.com. Deadline for the Summer Dancer: May 22, 2020. Send submissions to cjfolger@yahoo.com. Please join the conversation.