



DanceFlurry News

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President's Message



Bill Matthiesen

The past two to three years have been exciting but also very challenging times for the DanceFlurry Organization.

New members may not realize we sponsor not only the big festival in February but also quite a range of other dances throughout the year. These include contra dances in Ballston Spa and at the Buhrmaster Barn and the Brunswick Grange, along with special family dances ... English dances at the Stockade Assembly and Rensselaer series ... swing dances through Capital Swing and Albany Chill ... and the wonderful Adirondack Dance Weekend each fall at Lake George.

Each of these events requires a fair amount of volunteer work to sustain the dance energy in our region. But the February DanceFlurry weekend has a scale all its own, involving hundreds of performers and volunteers who work throughout the year to provide one of the country's most exciting dance weekends.

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President's Message cont.

Our organization ran for many years under the “charismatic leader” model, with much of the direction and energy coming from founder Paul Rosenberg. Paul not only created many of the dance events in our area, he also was responsible for serendipitous new combinations of callers and musicians, as well as inspiring many volunteers to help make these wonderful events possible.

About three years ago the organization he founded began doing some real soul-searching about how we could become more useful to the various events we sponsor. We also had to assume responsibility for the advance planning needed to make the Flurry festival happen. We split the responsibilities between three people – Peter Davis took on the booking, Doug Haller directed the logistics for the festival, and Ginny Gokhale oversaw the finances. It was difficult, it was scary – but things came together very well for the 2006 event.

Then a big storm changed everything: It knocked out the power for the entire 2006 festival weekend, suddenly leaving our small organization with financial losses of staggering proportions. It was only through the generosity of our performers, our dancers, dance organizers, and the local community that we were able to recover for a stronger-than-ever festival this past February.

The scale of the festival and our other year-round activities creates significant challenges for us. So this seems like a good time to review where we're headed as an organization.

* At a board retreat in the summer of 2006, we set ourselves a goal of *doubling*

attendance at our local events by 2012 – with a special emphasis on bringing in *younger* participants. Many of us who were dancing twenty-five years ago still remember the energy we used to enjoy when our events attracted twice as many dancers as we do today. So we know it's possible. Our dance community is aging – we need to introduce new dancers to this wonderful music and dance tradition.

* The DanceFlurry Festival is already pretty big, so we're trying strategies to reduce some of the crowding, while also keeping the event diverse. We want a good balance between local performers and big-name groups from farther afield. We especially want to keep the festival accessible to younger dancers and to families.

* We want all our dance events to have a friendly, welcoming atmosphere. Each of us started as a beginner, so we want to show the same patience and caring for each newcomer. No dance snobs please! This is now a specific goal of our organization, not just a wish.

* The scale of our activities means we've been working hard to maintain our financial management systems in the very best order. All our events have liability insurance coverage. We also carry directors and officers insurance, as well as special disaster coverage for the Flurry Festival itself. Having long been an affiliate of the Country Dance and Song Society, we are now obtaining our own 501(c)(3) nonprofit status, which will allow us to more easily pursue NY State grants and other funding sources.

* We are focusing more attention on *membership development* and *membership communications* (like this newsletter). We've spent a lot of behind-the-scenes effort to upgrade our web presence, outreach and

membership materials, online dance calendar, dance telephone hotline, and our **President's Message cont.**

membership database. We're looking for ways to stay in closer touch with our members and supporters – perhaps even offer some special member events.

Membership is more than just receiving a discount card to events – you're also investing in keeping your local dance community vibrant and fun.

* We're devoting more resources to helping local events organizers reach new audiences – particularly younger dancers. This means helping with event publicity, advertising, photos and videos of events, web links, and getting information out to more news outlets, all with a goal of bringing new dancers to our events.

* We're also working with dance organizers and musicians to create new events. For example, Maura McNamara has created the Flurry Youth Institute, where classical string-instrument students in the schools get an opportunity to rub shoulders with traditional string players like Jay Ungar, George Wilson, John Kirk and Trish Miller, Peter Davis, and others. Maura is also planning a local "mega-band" where budding musicians will have the opportunity to actually perform at area dances alongside more experienced players. There are plans for a new contra dance in Glens Falls and perhaps another one at SUNY Albany. We've also expanded our support for the year-round special events of Albany Chill and Albany Swing.

* Obviously, expanding our outreach, setting up new events, maintaining existing dances, and keeping the Flurry Festival successful – these all require a lot of work. This means either paid staff or volunteers. Given our

folksy roots and our limited finances, we'd like to accomplish as much as possible through our membership – which means inspiring folks like you to lend a hand.. **You can support us by completing the enclosed 2008 membership form and/or volunteering to work on a Board Committee. Send an email to: flurryadmin@mindspring.com**

* Our board committees carry the bulk of the work – they are *PR ... Membership ... Fund-Raising... Program* committees – plus the DanceFlurry Festival has its own committee, which is made up of individual crews that focus on particular tasks for that event. All these groups are tackling specific tasks and looking for folks with special skills. Your expertise could really be helpful to keeping this region alive with exciting music and dance.

So please, continue to support us with your membership, your suggestions, your time, and your expertise. We're incredibly fortunate to enjoy such a wealth of wonderful dance and music events in our backyard. But it's only possible through the generosity and involvement of people like you. Building our community is what it's all about.

See you dancing!

Bill Matthiesen
President, DanceFlurry Organization

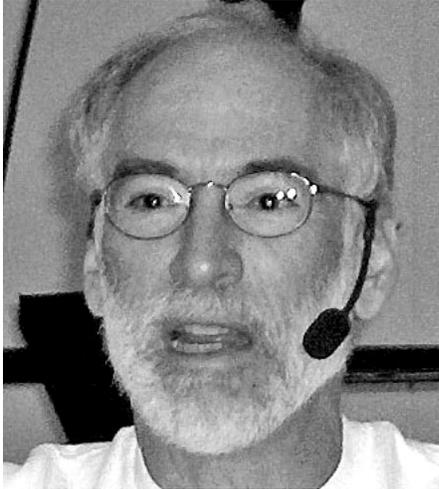
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Interview with Paul Rosenberg

by Don Bell



The Evolution of a Dancer

In early August 2007, I interviewed Paul about how he became a dancer and caller. Given Paul's shyness, his early dislike of dancing, and his initial awkwardness as a dancer, one would never have guessed that he would blossom into a good dancer, a popular dance caller and one of the founders of the Dance Flurry Festival. Paul's struggle with dancing is probably the reason he is so good at teaching beginners and young people. He can really empathize with them.

One of Paul's early memories of dancing was in his seventh and eighth-grade gym classes. The boys and girls gym classes were integrated for one or two dance lessons. They did the foxtrot. The boys and girls had to dance in ballroom position. Paul recalls the experience as "scary, horrible, and unpleasant." He and another male friend tried to avoid dancing as much as possible by sitting in a corner and drinking soda and eating pretzels.

Paul also remembers trying to do Israeli folk dancing at Hebrew school in grades three through nine. Folk dancing was very

important in Jewish education. He remembers being scared because he had to learn steps. "Just about everybody was getting it except me. I stood out. It was very embarrassing."

In the summer of his junior year of high school, Paul attended a Jewish day camp. At the end of the summer, there was a dancing and singing performance for parents. Paul masked his ineptitude by cowering in the back row of the performance group. "I wanted to have nothing to do with dancing." Paul describes himself as a 'nerd' who never went to a prom: "Us nerds didn't have girlfriends and didn't go dancing."

Paul attended only two dances during his entire college career. One was with a date selected by computer. They went to a free form dance with extremely loud rock music. He didn't know how to move to rock music. He had a terrible time. "I felt like dancing was definitely not my thing."

Paul's next exposure to dancing was after college graduation. As his friends started getting married, he found himself invited to their weddings. At the receptions there was dancing, drinking, and loud rock music with DJs. Paul found it very unpleasant and embarrassing to dance. Friends would go out on the dance floor leaving Paul alone with strangers. Sometimes all the people he knew at his table would get up to dance, leaving him alone with strangers. He was shy and thought to himself: "What do I do, what do I do?" Eventually he developed the strategy of hiding in the bathrooms. "I hated weddings... but I had to go. Unfortunately, nobody I knew had contra dance weddings."

Paul's first positive experience with dancing was seeing a square dance at Bear Mountain State Park. He was about 25 (circa 1978-79). He remembers a lot of young people – all

Paul Rosenberg Interview cont'd

smiling. He was almost tempted to join in, but couldn't tell if it was a public event and didn't have a partner. But seeing all those dancers having a good time changed his perception of dance; from then on he had a much more positive attitude towards dancing.

Paul told me one of the most significant people in the evolution of his dancing life was a girlfriend named Jennifer. She was a dedicated contra dancer. Paul didn't like to go to dances where alcohol was served. Jennifer assured him that there was no alcohol at contra dances. "She dragged me to a contra dance kicking and screaming on Valentine's Day in 1981. I remember great music and everybody being happy, joyful." Paul thought to himself "this is a place where I think I can fit in." Paul was still scared. He made Jennifer dance every dance with him.

Despite his fear of dancing, Paul was anxious to prove to Jennifer that he could do it. Once, when she was out of town, he decided to go on his own to a 'dawn dance' in Albany at the EBA chapter house on Hudson Avenue. As there would be at least eight hours of continuous dancing, he figured it would be a great opportunity to really learn how to do it. He thought it would be great surprise for Jennifer to see him enjoying dancing. He had a fabulous time and loved the music. "From then on I went to every dance I could – the Eighth Step dances, the Old Songs dances, the Greenfield dances, dance festivals – I became a dancing fool." That's how Paul became a good contra dancer.

Paul has recently returned to international folk dancing. Through persistence he eventually overcame his fear of failure and inability to do "dancing with steps." Now he

very much enjoys the exposure to different dance forms from many cultures.

The Evolution of a Caller

After Paul had been dancing for about a year, he knew he wanted to become a caller. Almost all the callers at local dances were from out of town. There were only a few local callers, and they were getting older. Most callers were trying to impress the experienced dancers and didn't work well with beginners. Paul knew that what was needed were local callers who could work well with beginners. Paul started calling some local dances and discovered that what he enjoyed the most was teaching beginners.

Although Paul has always loved dancing with beginners, he went through a period of wanting to experience the 'dancer's high' – dancing complicated, mind-blowing dances with twirling, whirling partners. As a caller, he also felt he needed that fix of calling complicated dances with hot bands.

However, a turning point in Paul's calling career came just after he called the contra dance in Cambridge, Massachusetts. For many years he had looked forward to calling this dance. It was to be a high point in his calling career, one of the hottest dances in the whole Northeast. But when he actually got to call the dance, he found the dancers and organizers unwelcoming and set in their ways.

Paul still gets distressed watching elitist dancers and callers showing off and berating those who aren't good enough. He thinks challenging dances can be fun, but he does not enjoy watching beginners hanging on for dear life, especially at a regular dance. He does not enjoy calling or dancing in a competitive, judgmental environment where people are grimacing instead of smiling.

Paul Rosenberg Interview cont'd

An important influence on Paul at this time was Peter Amidon, who introduced him to the joys of family dances. This experience changed Paul's whole approach to dancing and calling. He gave up calling the 'hot' dances and started calling family dances and dances at parties and weddings. "I couldn't believe how much fun it was calling dances for families. I actually love doing simple dances and dancing with beginners."

Paul's exposure to different dance forms from many different cultures through international folk dancing has started him thinking about initiating a new dance series. He would like "to create a new type of dance movement in which people dance simple dances together to really nice music to enjoy each other's company... it's just the fellowship...I want to create a dance scene where everybody is welcoming and having a good time." He would cover a wide variety of dancing styles from many different countries around the world. The dance would be open to children but not specifically family oriented.

This is Paul's calling – always trying to use his talents and skills to introduce kids and grown-ups to dance, to give them a positive dance experience. This is Paul's way of making the world a more happy and peaceful place.

Homespun Occasions

You can hire Paul to call dances at your wedding, anniversary, family gathering or community celebration. He inspires folks of all ages to enjoy dancing.

<http://www.homespunoccasions.com/>

paul@homespun.biz

518-482-9255

Keep on Swingin' by Joshua Fialkoff

History and families' private video collections show that there's nothing people love more than flinging themselves about. Although these tendencies are perhaps obvious as far back as the Paleolithic era, some might say the technique was perfected some time in the early 1900s. It was during this era that flappers were born and the Charleston, a dance of flailing arms and legs, became a popular mode of expression. The Charleston was incredibly provocative at the time. Racy outfits and risqué movement combined as a protest against prohibition, war, and oppression.

As time moved on, the Charleston evolved. Inspired, perhaps, by the more popular ballroom styles, Charleston dancers began partnering up – dancing face-to-face or side by side. The next big revolution came with the Breakaway, in which a couple would transition from closed position (think tango, but more relaxed) to an open position (connected only by a handhold or not connected at all) within the dance. After various other leaps and jumps, swing dancing settled on the Lindy Hop, a dance that's short on rules and heavy on improvisation. Of course it didn't stop there. From the Lindy Hop came East Coast Swing (also known as Jitterbug), West Coast Swing, and a variety of other dances. And as long as there's inspiration to create new types of music, so will there be inspiration to create new dances.

Eventually, swing dancing died away; only a select few kept up the tradition. Then, the 1990s saw a renewed interest in the dance. Cinema and advertising, either leading the way or following close behind, helped to bring the dance and the music back into the mainstream for a short but pervasive foray. In contrast to the original outbreak during the 20s and 30s, the 1990s swing revival

Keep on Swingin' cont'd

focused primarily on East Coast Swing dancing and blues- or rock-inspired music like Brian Setzer, Louis Prima, and Cab Calloway. A small group of revivalists from Sweden, however, longed for the music and the dance that started it all. They began by studying old videos of dancing that featured groups like Whitey's Lindy Hoppers, The Congaroos, and The Hot Chocolates. Inspired by the energy and musicality of the older dancers, the Swedes traveled to the United States in search of Frankie Manning, an original member of Whitey's Lindy Hoppers and the innovator popularly thought to be responsible for the development of the air step or aerial. With Mr. Manning as the guide, a subculture developed that demanded the music of Basie and Ellington, and danced only the Lindy Hop and the Charleston.

Today, swing dancing of all forms enjoys a cult following, but one that reaches the world 'round. The Capital District alone has people who enjoy dancing the Lindy Hop, East Coast Swing, and West Coast Swing, and a plethora of events to keep them all happy. Recently the Capital District hosted the first annual Albany Cookout. The event drew swing dancers from New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Quebec, and even Norway to enjoy a series of four dances and a barbeque that spanned an entire weekend. To open the event, the DanceFlurry Organization welcomed Junior Mance and his trio from New York City. This was a special privilege for the Capital District as Mr. Mance is a veritable jazz legend who has accompanied other jazz greats like Dizzy Gillespie, Dinah Washington, and Louis Armstrong both on the stage and in the studio.

September brings another first for the Capital District as we welcome the highly acclaimed vocalist Barbara Morrison to the area for the first annual Albany Chill. Barbara will be joined by Manhattan pianist Gordon Webster and his five-piece orchestra. Also playing is New York City's George Gee's Jump, Jivin' Wailers and Albany's own J-Street. The fun begins Friday, September 21st and will continue through Sunday. To register and get more information, go to www.albanychill.com

Don't forget to check out these other dances in the meantime:

Malt River Lindy Practice (Latham Circle Mall) Every Tuesday 7:30pm–10:30pm
\$3, first time is free!!

Fuzebox (12 Central Ave.) Every Thursday 9:30pm, lesson at 8:30pm \$4 (\$6 with lesson)



2007 Smorgasborg of Swing
photo by Lawrence White

Can't We All Just Dance Together?

by Audrey Seidman

I've proudly come out as bi-dansual. This means that I'm willing to lead or to follow, especially in contra dances. I've also been heard to say that I'll dance with anyone with two legs (or wheels). Some people are pickier.

Last Spring, I was at an Old Songs dance in Altamont with many more women than men. As is usually the case, women paired up on the dance floor without a fuss, as the caller continued to address the "gents" and "ladies." I was sitting one out when he sat down next to me for a moment as the dance progressed. I asked offhandedly, "Why is it that we don't call all contra dances gender-role-free?" His response before he had to return to his job was an evenhanded, "Well, there are pros and cons to that."

I never got to hear his version of those pros and cons, but I'd like to start a conversation among dancers in the Capital Region on contra dance, gender, and language. With whom do you choose to dance? What should the roles be called? How can we know who's "leading"? Can we all dance together?

For women who prefer dancing with women and men who prefer dancing with men, a subculture of "gender-role-free" contra dancing has created a "safe space" for same-sex dancing and what might be called reverse-role dancing for about twenty years. One of the rituals of this culture is the use of brightly colored plastic strips tied around the arm or belt loop of the dancer in the gent role. This helps to distinguish the "band" from the "bare arm" dancer in the lady role. (These terms are the frequent, but not only, substitutions for "gents" and "ladies.")

The DanceFlurry organization generously supported the last iteration of the Albany

Gender-Role-Free Contra Dance. As the key organizer, I stopped planning them this year because we were drawing too few dancers to break even and – I admit! – there were so many beginners it just wasn't as much fun for me. Why contra dance if not for the experience of the flow of the movements, the peaks of the music, the opportunity for joyful sweat?

Still, I know that some folks come to contra dances for other reasons. Some may be looking for more than a dance partner. A friend once shared that, as a single person, she contra-danced as a way to experience touch.

I wonder, if it weren't for the touching, would we need the concept of gender-role-free dancing at all? Is the desire or need for separate dance space about semantics (gents and ladies vs. bare arms and bands)? Is it about language that is exclusionary? About meeting the right "eligible"? Or is it about our conditioning on whom we are comfortable touching in dance pose?

In early May, we conducted a brave experiment. DanceFlurry and the Albany Gender-Role-Free Contra Dance co-sponsored the first of the season's Buhrmaster Barn Dances. Some participants arrived unaware of what they were in for. We made mistakes: We didn't bring the plastic bands, for one. Even without these visual cues, the caller decided to call "bands" and "bare arms." One "gent" became confused and angry, before asking for his money back. One lesbian refused to dance with a man (or perhaps more accurately refused to follow). How disappointing!

On the other hand, two heterosexual men decided to take a whirl at the twirl and danced together. Two gay men, however, reported that other men recoiled from a man who was dancing in the follower role. While

Can't We All Just Dance cont'd

they may have misinterpreted simple confusion, they shared that they are not likely to return to the Barn Dance, or at least not willing to partner with a man again at a dance not more clearly GLBT-friendly.

Linda Leslie, the lovely and resonant Massachusetts-based caller, shared a story at May's Lavender Folk and Country Dancers Dance Camp. Larry Jennings, her mentor and one of the callers and dance organizers who played a role in resurrecting contra in the 1980s, believed strongly that the person who came up with the "right" terminology to use in gender-role-free dance would be responsible for the next evolutionary leap in the world of contra dancing.

Is this a challenge we'd like to explore together? How can we reduce the discomfort for all? How can we create a welcoming dance space for everyone? I don't pretend to have any answers, but hope you'll join the conversation. And ask me to dance!

Retired Board Members

Among the board members completing terms in May, 2007 were three individuals in particular whose tenure adds up to several dozen years of service. Doug Haller, Trish Miller and Rich Futyma all joined the Board in the early- to mid-1990s.

We greatly appreciate their dedication and work which helped to bring the DFO through crucial years of change and development.

We do note that Doug isn't going too far away as he will continue his work as Administrative Director of the Dance Flurry Festival.

Book Review by Don Bell:

Dancing In the Streets: A History of Collective Joy by Barbara Ehrenreich

Just for a moment, think back to your first joyful (or even ecstatic) experience with dance. (If you haven't had one yet, just keep on dancing and you'll get in the 'zone' someday!) Maybe you were just a toddler, discovering you could move in time to music, swaying back and forth or jumping up and down. Maybe you were a late bloomer and didn't get turned on to moving to music until your early teens or even later. Many of us started by gyrating to rock music.

I recall as a kid experiencing a feeling of joy when I moved to music. When I was about five years old, my sister and I pretended to be ballet dancers, mimicking the ones we saw on TV. When I was about twelve years old, I had a really ecstatic dance experience. My Cub Scout leader organized a square dance for our cub pack. None of us had ever square danced before. I took Sally (my sweetheart in the sixth grade) with me. We all had an outrageously good time moving together, laughing, smiling, touching. It was the thrill of being in a group united in a joyful activity. I also had a great time dancing in musicals. I danced in *The Boy Friend* in high school and *Guys and Dolls* in college.

The memory of these peak dance experiences came flooding back to me recently when I read Barbara Ehrenreich's latest book, *Dancing In the Streets: A History of Collective Joy*. This book is a timely reminder of how dance and carnival can provide people with joyful, even ecstatic experiences.

Ehrenreich gives us a sweeping view of the cultural history of dance from the Stone Age to the present. Prehistoric rock art from around the world depicts stick figures

Dancing in the Streets cont'd

dancing in lines and circles at least as far back as ten thousand years ago. Ehrenreich describes hunting/gathering societies “engaged in what might be considered unessential, celebratory activities – dancing in lines or circles, wearing masks or costumes, waving branches or sticks.” Greeks danced to worship the gods – especially Dionysus, the god of ecstasy. Some anthropologists consider ‘danced song’ as the most effective way of transmitting culture from one generation to the next because it involves so many sensory inputs.

Dance is the ‘biotechnology of group formation,’ according to one neuroscientist. It strengthens the social fabric by bringing diverse groups of people together in friendly and fun interactions. Ehrenreich sees group dancing – especially in lines and circles - as “the great leveler and binder of human communities, uniting all who participate in the kind of ‘communitas’ ... found in twentieth century native (North American Indian) rituals. To submit, bodily, to the music through dance is to be incorporated into the community in a way far deeper than shared myth or common custom can achieve. In synchronous movement to music or chanting voices, the petty rivalries and factional differences that might divide a group could be transmuted into harmless competition over one’s prowess as a dancer, or forgotten.”

Dance, however, has not always been considered an acceptable form of communal joy. For long periods of history, Ehrenreich shows us how dance was discouraged or even repressed. Despite our image of Romans as decadent, they cracked down viciously on Dionysian worship in 186 BC, banning dancing schools for Roman children a few decades later. Although early Christians incorporated dance into their liturgy, by the

end of the fourth century, dance became associated with the devil. In the late Middle Ages the Catholic Church prohibited dancing within churches. (Ironically, a lot of our community dances are now held in old church halls.)

In northern Europe, Calvinism brought a hasty death to the old public forms of dancing, along with costuming, masking, and feasting that accompanied them. “Even communism, turned out – with the arguable exception of Cuba – to be a drab and joyless state of affairs, in which, as in the capitalist West, mass spectacles and military parades replaced long-standing festive traditions.”

Even in recent times, Ehrenreich observes that both Protestant fundamentalism in the United States and the Islamic radicals in the Middle and Far East have been profoundly hostile to dance. She notes that “radical Islam cut its teeth on the suppression of ecstatic Sufism; it opposes music, dancing and the public mixing of the sexes.”

Ehrenreich concludes that, although banning dancing may not cause depression, it removes an ancient cure for it. Ehrenreich believes “the capacity for collective joy is encoded into us almost as deeply as the capacity for erotic love. We can live without it, as most of us do, but only at the risk of succumbing to the solitary nightmare of depression.” Dancing to music is not only mood-lifting and community building, according to Ehrenreich; it’s also a uniquely human trait. No other animals, not even chimpanzees, can keep time to music. She exhorts us to “reclaim our distinctively human heritage as creatures who generate their own ecstatic pleasures out of music, color, feasting and dance. We have nothing to lose but our isolation.”

A Brief History of the Adirondack Dance Weekend by Peter Stix

The Adirondack Dance Weekend will be held for the 12th time at the end of September. This event got its start from the energies and vision of the grand dance entrepreneur Paul Rosenberg in 1995. That first year the event was held Camp Chingaghgook, a mildly rustic YMCA camp on Lake George.

The following year event co-managers Kristen Brunner Hislop and Cynthia Butcher moved the event across Lake George to the Silver Bay YMCA Conference Center, the event's current location. Kristen and Cynthia managed the event for a second time in 1997.

There was no Adirondack Dance Weekend held in 1998, but about the time of the 1999 Dance Flurry Festival, Stacy Kitt had the idea of bringing it back to life. Stacy asked Amy Jesaitis and Peter Stix to join the effort and they have co-managed the event ever since.

Every year this trio tries to improve on the prior year, whether it's by menu planning, festive lighting for the dance halls, facilitating ride-sharing, introducing English country dance or the camper band and caller session, or coming up with "themes" for the Saturday night dance parties. This is one of the ingredients that has made the weekend so successful. Their vision is for a relaxed and relaxing weekend where participants can choose to attend daytime workshops, enjoy the view from the rockers of the Main Inn, hike, kayak, hang out. While there are many repeat attendees—which provides a friendly, reunion feeling—the first-time attendees are welcomed by all and are reassured by the comfort those repeaters derive from the familiar: the setting; the program; the midnight waltzing in the

Boathouse; and the fabulous snacks by Dan and the Snackettes.

This year's 12th Adirondack Dance Weekend is their ninth as co-managers. It may well be time for fresh management to take on the logistics.

For the latest on space availability, email dance@nycap.rr.com or phone 518-489-9066 (8 am to 8 pm ET Please).

www.danceflurry.org/new/silverbay.html

A New Contra Dance in Glens Falls by Bill Schwarz

Jeanne Noordsy, Cathy Corrigan, and I are planning a dance series in Glens Falls! We expect to start the third Saturday in November. Our venue will be the Temple Beth El, on Marion Street off Glen Street, one-quarter mile north of the center of town. It's an easy walk to downtown cafes for a meal, for those who arrive early. Dancing at this location is nothing new; the temple currently hosts the monthly series of USADanceADK, a ballroom dance club, on second Saturdays. The temple's dance floor is at least as large as the one at First Presbyterian Church in Ballston Spa, and includes a sizable stage and separate room for refreshments. Street parking is available on Marion Street and nearby Glen Street (Route 9).

We have heard from numerous Glens Falls and Queensbury residents that they would welcome a contra dance, and many musicians who live in the area have expressed interest in performing. So if you live north of Saratoga and want to contra, this is your opportunity for a dance experience closer to home!

Dates: Nov 17, Dec 15, Jan 19, Mar 15, May 17

Contact: 793-2781 bschwarz@nycap.rr.com

2008 Flurry Festival - What's Up?

by Peter Davis



Photo by Timothy Raab

Summer is when the Dance Flurry programming gets going in earnest. This is one of the funnest parts of the job. I can go into the database (bravely tweaked by Jim and Sue Mead) and see all the dances, music sessions and workshops that folks have proposed. There are so many fantastic musicians, dancers and instructors who have applied - I'm like a kid in a candy store.

As the process goes on, it gets harder and harder to avoid scheduling conflicts. However, I expect to have the schedule completed in early November.

Peter Davis, Program Director
2008 Dance Flurry Festival

Some of the performers:

Aged in the Hills
Amber Night (Mary Lea, Karen Axelrod, Anna Patton)
Andy Morse
Bairbre McCarthy
Beth Robinson
Beverwyck
Big Bandemonium
Bob McQuillen
Celest DePietropaolo and Marie diCocco
Cis Hinkle
Comhaltas
Dan Levinson
Dark Carnival (Lise Brown, Mary Lea, Peter Barnes)

Dave Crump
David Kaynor
Declan Crowley
Di Bostoner Klezmer
Doc Scanlon Trio
Eden MacAdam-Somer
Elissa Weiss
Eshu Bumpus
Fern Bradley
Gene Murrow
George Wilson
Hsueh-tze Lee
Hudson Crossing
Jane Rothfield
Jane's Gang
Jay Mankita
Jay Ungar and Molly Mason
Jesse Lege and Bayou Brew
John Kirk and Trish Miller
John Roberts
Karen Axelrod
Ken Crawford
Larry Unger
Laurie Hart
Linda and Chester Freeman
Lindy Hop Heaven
Mana Behan
Marc Casslar
Maria Zemantauski
Motoko
Nightingale
Notorious
Pat Melita
Paul Morrissett
Paul Strausman
Peter MacFarlane
Ragtime Jug Stompers
Ralph Sweet
Red Stick Ramblers
Redline Zydeco
Rick Mohr
Roger the Jester
Saints of Swing
Sam Bartlett
Scott Higgs
Sensemaya
Spare Parts
Storycrafters
Tales 'n Tunes
Tentumbao
Terri Hughes
The Amidons
The Flipsydz
Tidal Wave
Vanaver Caravan
Willis Prudhomme
Xin-Hua Lee

Contra Dancing in Costa Rica

By Emil Jarczyński

Pura Vida Dance Camp is part of an annual trek to Albergue Hacienda in Moravia de Chirripo, Costa Rica, a working ranch in an idyllic setting at the edge of a rainforest. (Pura *Vida* means pure life, and that reflects the zest for life you find here.) The Clayfoot Strutters, a band from Vermont and New York provide the music. They play their own style of world beat music, grooved-based contra. And they play it as easily as breathing. They were joined by twenty-five of us dancers, from Fritz Creek, Alaska to Cottonwood, Arizona and Flemington, New Jersey to Ypsilanti, Michigan, who came to hone our dance skills and hike the rainforest, ride horseback, and raft the Pacuare River.

Riding the small tour bus on the way to the ranch from Alajuela near the airport, absorbing more of the country the deeper we went, I shared a seat with LaDonna and learned that on a Saturday night in Arizona you can not only do Contra, but Balkan, Cajun, clog, Irish or Israeli. Who knew? As we traded stories, the towns got smaller, the roads steeper and narrower with switch backs, and the countryside more lush and verdant - in Turialba we bought fresh baked pecan swirls, in Grano de Oro we passed some villagers riding double on horseback, and there were orange colored *poro* trees.

At the ranch, the dances are held every night in an open-air pavilion. The sweet night smells of the tropical garden mix with the finely ground corn meal that's spread on the dance floor to help our feet glide. Kathy Anderson, from Ohio, calls the dance in both English and Spanish. The Ticos (the name the Costa Ricans call themselves) come to join us. They gather on one side. Mostly young people, colorfully dressed, they stand in little knots or sit on the benches that line

the dance floor. We invite them as partners and form the two lines that make the Contra. Mothers lean over the railing, encouraging the little ones to step out onto the floor too. This is new for most of the Ticos. With fragments of Spanish and animated demonstrations of a *do-si-do* and a *left-hand-star* we show them some of the basic moves. "*Izquierda, a la izquierda,*" we say as we nudge the circle *left*. They catch on quickly. We all laugh at our first few missteps. Kathy moves us through all the steps as she teaches us this new dance. "I learned this one from an old caller back home," she says. I think the old caller would have been pleased that the dance he made up, maybe in a barn in Ohio, had taken a road trip south and was now a *hispano-americano danza*. 'Allaman right' becomes '*Allaman derecho*'.

After a full evening of Contra dancing where the Strutters had played their hearts out and we're still pumped with adrenalin, the Ticos bring their Latin CD's and teach us Salsa and Merengue. The Salsa was full of turns, the Merengue lively and quick. Our young instructors, Oscar with the immutable smile, and Jenny, winsome and not much more than sixteen, are tireless teachers. We take to it eagerly. Stepping up and back, forward on your toes, trying underhand and backhand turns. But finally, as we had danced our fill, we have to say good night. Just a little out of breath, we step down from the open-air dance floor. Strolling back to the ranch with Pam and Jean and Sandra, my new dance partners from Pennsylvania, Virginia and Wisconsin we catch glimpses of the moon between palm trees. The moon looks different down here somehow, the color of a peach, hanging lazy in the sky.

At the ranch you're on Tico time. The chalkboard by the always-open front door says the morning hike starts at nine. But nine really means after breakfast. And

breakfast isn't done until you've had the first dessert of the day - raw sugar cane from the field, or some gallimaufry of berries and cream. That evening the band starts at eight, for the Contra Dance, but not until you've sampled the guaro after dinner - a little like tequila, but lighter. The band makes their way over to the small stage; we saunter across the lawn learning a little more about each other. Johnny and Ana Soto, our gracious hosts, smile as we file past. The Ticos begin to gather. There's a ripple of anticipation, but no one seems to rush. The dance will start soon, it always does. Down here it's Pura Vida! Tico time.

Find out more about this wonderful dance vacation:

<http://www.puravidadancecamp.com/>

DanceFlurry Organization Takes Over the Dance Hotline (518) 292-0133

Several years ago Paul Rosenberg started a dance hotline to make it easy for traveling dancers to get information about local dances, the Dance Flurry Festival and Paul's Homespun Occasions business. Paul Cronin did the voice recordings. The hotline was particularly helpful for dancers getting information about the Dance Flurry Festival.

Last year, at Paul's request, the Board decided to take over the service. We re-organized the structure of the hotline menus, and distributed the responsibility for voice recordings. Sue Mead handles Dance Flurry Festival messages. Rich Futyma maintains the contra dance information. Joshua Fialkoff keeps the swing info up to date. Don Bell does English country dance information. Paul Rosenberg updates Family dance information.

New Member/Donor Database

As the Board began to focus more attention on membership development, member communications and fundraising, it became apparent that we needed to substantially upgrade our member/donor information system from the spreadsheets we were using. We achieved this goal by designing and implementing a member/donor Access database. We want to extend our **thanks to Ken Ivins, of Ivins Consulting in Saratoga Springs,** for his services in database design.

A New DanceFlurry Web Site

Thanks to Barry Floyd for doing a lot of work over this past year on a new design for the DanceFlurry Organization web site. The new site will be ready sometime this fall.

New Relationship With Folk Times Newsletter

The DanceFlurry Organization used to pay Folk Times to supply a free newsletter subscription to our members. There was also a small listing of our dances that was almost invisible to most readers. Due to a change in advertising strategy, the free subscription is no longer available as a member benefit. However, you can now get the Folk Times newsletter free online at:

<http://users.adelphia.net/~folktimes/>

To get more visible impact in the newsletter, we are placing large ads promoting the organization and the dance series we support. The first ad will appear in the November/December issue.



Join Us Become a Member - Make a Donation

The DanceFlurry Organization is a non-profit organization that relies on memberships, donations and volunteers to continue our dance and music programs.

We are a community of local dancers, callers and musicians dedicated to supporting traditional dance and music in the Capital-Saratoga region. The organization sponsors numerous year-round activities in the Capital-Saratoga region:

- Dance Flurry Festival in Saratoga Springs
- Adirondack Dance Weekend at Silver Bay on Lake George
- Saratoga Contra Dance in Ballston Spa
- Buhrmaster Barn Contra Dances in Colonie
- Brunswick Grange Contra Dance
- Glens Falls Contra Dance
- Eighth Step Contra Dance in Albany
- Family Dances in local communities
- Swing Dances in Albany
- Rensselaer English Country Dances
- Stockade Assembly (English country dance in Schenectady)
- Musical jam sessions
- Workshops and scholarships for musicians, dancers and caller development
- Traditional music and dance education programs in area schools
- A subscription to the DanceFlurry newsletter

Become a Member

As a member you will receive:

- The joy of supporting local community dances, dance musicians, callers, dance events, and the Dance Flurry community
- A distinctive and attractive member name button (to be worn at dances) that allows you to get a discount at sponsored dance events
- A monthly email dance calendar/newsletter of Capital region dance events
- The opportunity to participate in the organization and attend general member meetings
- The opportunity to sponsor specific events and programs
- A \$10 discount on a full weekend Dance Flurry Festival ticket
- A charitable tax deduction for any membership level greater than \$25

Make a Donation

You can make a tax-deductible donation to the organization through your membership (any membership level over \$25) or by giving through our online PayPal account at our web site – www.danceflurry.org



2008 Membership Form

Complete this form and mail it along with your check (payable to DanceFlurry Organization) to:
DanceFlurry Membership, PO Box 448, Latham, NY 12110-0448

New ___ Renewal ___ (memberships are for one calendar year - Jan 1, 2008 through Dec 31)

Basic Membership

___ \$25 Individual	___ \$45 Couple/Family	___ \$15 Limited Income Individual
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Donor Level Membership

___ Supporter \$50	___ Sponsor \$100	___ Patron \$250	___ Partner \$500	___ Angel \$1000	OR Other Amount \$ _____
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___ I approve publication of my name as a donor.

Check one only: ___ I would like a dancer name tag OR ___ a membership card (for wallet)

Name(s)	
Address	
City/State/Zip	
Email	Phone

Dance Interests:

___ Contra ___ English ___ Swing ___ Tango ___ Scottish ___ Family ___ Ballroom
___ International ___ Scandinavian ___ Cajun/Zydeco

Other Dance Styles: _____

Music Interests: ___ Music jams

Music styles I like _____

Instruments I play _____

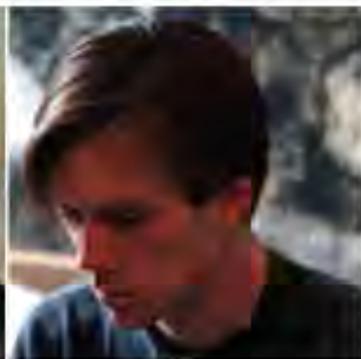
We Need Volunteers!

___ I can help run local dance events ___ I can help with organizational activities



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FOR DETAILS AND REGISTRATION INFO



DanceFury
ORGANIZATION

*Connecting/Inspiring through traditional
music and dance*



Adirondack Dance Weekend

Bring your dance shoes—and your hiking boots and kayak—for a relaxed and refreshing weekend of dancing: contras, swing, waltz, Scandinavia, square, and English country.

Silver Bay YMCA Conference Center, on the undeveloped north shore of Lake George in the Adirondacks, is the beautiful setting for a wonderful weekend. Whether you choose lodging in the Main Inn or in one of the (slightly) more rustic cabins, you still enjoy meals prepared by Silver Bay staff, fabulous snacks, music for dancing, dance workshops, midnight waltzes in the Boathouse, and all of the facilities Silver Bay has to offer. All this for one all-inclusive rate!

Our 12th annual Adirondack Dance Weekend staff: Rodney Miller's Airdance; The Hot Foot Club; Beverwyck; Spare Parts with Eric Buddington; Steve Zakon-Anderson; Vikki Armstrong; David Kaynor; Peter Stix; Snacks by Dan and the Snackettes.

Silver Bay—a registered National Historic Site—is 90 minutes north of Albany. Relax on the rocker-filled porch of the Main Inn, or enjoy the peaceful setting inside, or out at The Point.

Space is limited and is filled on a first-come, first-served basis. DFO members enjoy discounted prices ranging from \$264 to \$289; children 6–17 are \$224 to \$254; children five and under are FREE. For the latest on space availability, email dance@nycap.rr.com or phone 518-489-9066 (8 am to 8 pm ET please). www.danceflurry.org/new/silverbay.html



connecting/inspiring through
traditional dance & music

Find out more about our dances:

www.danceflurry.org

danceinfo@danceflurry.org

dance hotline 518-292-0133



Buhrmaster Barn Dance
photo by John Sullivan

The DanceFlurry Organization supports traditional dance and music events in the Capital-Saratoga region. We sponsor local dance series and special events such as the Dance Flurry Festival and the Adirondack Dance weekend. Some upcoming events supported by the DanceFlurry Organization include:

- **Adirondack Dance Weekend** – Sept 28-30, 2007. A full weekend of contras, hiking, jamming, singing, fabulous snacks, in a beautiful scenic setting with fall colors. Performers include: Airdance, Steve Zakon-Anderson, Beverwyck, The Hotfoot Club, Spare Parts, Vikki Armstrong, David Kaynor, Eric Buddington, and Peter Stix. Contact: dance@nycap.rr.com, (518) 489-9066
- **Dance Flurry Festival**, Saratoga Springs, February 15-17, 2008
A weekend festival for dancers & music lovers of all ages! Dances - Performances - Workshops - Jamming - Crafts...and more! Contact: (518) 384-3275 info@danceflurry.org, www.danceflurry.org
- **Saratoga Contra Dance** (Ballston Spa) – 4th Saturdays, Oct 28, Nov 24, Dec 22, Jan 26, Feb 23, Mar 29, April 26, May 24 Scandinavian Dance 7:00–7:30 pm
Contact: (518) 885-4430, richfutyma@netscape.net
- **Brunswick Grange Contra Dance** – 4th Sundays, Nov 25, Dec 23, Jan 27, Feb 24, Mar 23, Apr 27
Contact: (518) 283-4957 geg@taconic.net
- **Glens Falls Contra Dance** – Saturday Nov 17, Dec 15, Jan 19, Mar 15, May 17
Contact: (518) 793-2781, bschwarz@nycap.rr.com
- **Eighth Step Contra Dance** (Albany), Friday Oct 12, Nov 9, Nov 30, future dates TBA
Contact: (518) 489-9066, pstix1@nycap.rr.com
- **Capital Swing** – 1st Fridays, Oct 2, Nov 2, Dec 7, Jan 4, Feb 1, Mar 7, Apr 4, May 2, June 6 ...
Contact: (518) 235-8492, su_chick@yahoo.com
- **Rensselaer English Country Dance** – 3rd Sundays, Sept 16, Oct 21, Nov 18, Dec 16, Jan 20, Mar 16, Apr 20, May 18. Contact: (518) 273-5172, donbell@nycap.rr.com
- **Stockade Assembly** (English Country dance in Schenectady) – Sunday Dec 9, April 27
Contact: (518) 495-9826, thomasa@union.edu
- **Family Dances** in Delmar, NY
Contact: (518)-482-9255, paul@homespun.biz, www.homespun.biz



Dance Flurry News

September 2007

DanceFlurry Organization
(Hudson Mohawk Traditional Dances Inc.)
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danceinfo@danceflurry.org

dance hotline 518-292-0133

Keep In Touch

Subscribe to our monthly email newsletter /calendar about traditional dance events in the Capital-Saratoga region and Dance Flurry Festival news. Go to www.danceflurry.org, enter your email address and click on the 'Subscribe' button. You can also read archived messages at <http://groups.google.com/group/danceflurryorg> -

Subscribe to 'Flurry News', our periodic email announcements about the Dance Flurry Festival. Go to www.danceflurry.org and enter your email and click on the 'Subscribe' button. You can also read archived messages at <http://groups.google.com/group/flurrynews>