



DanceFlurry News

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Inside This Issue

DFO News and Notes	1
How I Got Started...	1+
Looking Back With Bill Matthiesen	2
Flurry Festival 2011 Performer Highlights	4
Making Connections Behind-the-Scenes	4
Keepers of the Dance	6
A Sound-sational Experience	8
DFO's New President: Jen Brown.....	9
Meet the New DFO Board Members.....	9
Who's Who With the Dance Series	10

DFO News and

Flurry Festival Despite the challenges of working around the City Center construction this year, we had another successful Flurry Festival. Much thanks and praise to the Festival team of Peter Davis, Ian Hamelin and Chrissie Van Wormer and the 25-plus volunteers on the Flurry Festival Committee for organizing and producing a great event! In 2011 we look forward to expanded facilities, with additional dance and performance venues all in one location.

Adirondack Dance Weekend In addition to the usual high-level contra dancing, this year will feature great English Country dancing. There will be some swing and couple dancing, too. The line-up of bands and callers includes Jay Ungar and Molly Mason, (most of) Bare Necessities, Spare Parts, Steve Zakon, Scott Higgs, Will Mentor, and Jacqueline Schwab.

DFO Web site Upgrade In order to take advantage of new technology, communicate more effectively with our community and attract more young people to our dances, DFO vice president Don Bell worked with consultant Arlen Johnson on a major upgrade of the DFO Web site. (There are also plans to revamp the Festival Web site section.) Johnson, an RPI senior web consultant whose own company is Dogen Media, provided pro bono services beyond his consulting work. The new system enables dance organizers to update their own dance web pages and provides a master dance calendar of all events. Thanks to Kevin DeLaughter, who updates all DFO contra series on the Google calendar and Web pages, and to Jim Dolen, who does the same for the Swing dances.

Eileen Parzek and Don Bell created a Facebook page for the Flurry Festival and the DFO which now has close to 700 fans. We invite you to become a fan and contribute to DFO community discussions about traditional dance.

Youth Initiatives One major DFO goal is to foster more involvement of young people in our activities. Rosalee Ruediger-Hamelin and Naomi Wimberley-Hartman have been working on two important youth projects: an in-school residency for musicians and a summer program scholarship for two high school interns. Maura McNamara launched a great, youth-oriented contra dance “Megaband” (see article).

DFO Outreach Activities The Outreach Committee (John Guay, Terry Kinal, Jason Fenton, Don Bell, Ian Hamelin and Linda Wicks) has been busy promoting dance and music by setting up displays and live music at farmers’ markets and events such as health fairs. We welcome your help at future events.

DFO Finances Finance Director Chrissie Van Wormer reports that the organization is in good financial shape. The Finance Committee has improved the budgeting process, another major board goal. A successful Flurry means we have the resources to put on another great festival in 2011. Our financial stability allows us to continue to support local dance series. 



How I Got Started . . .

The theme of this newsletter issue is “how we got started” dancing, playing music, or calling. You’ll find these stories scattered throughout the issue. One theme that’s common to many of the stories is a first encounter that came about because someone invited us (or dragged us) to a dance, or out on the dance floor, or up to the microphone. That’s good to remember—posting fliers and sending out e-mails is important, but often it’s the person-to-person invitation that makes the difference. Of course, you may invite folks who try it once and never come back, but don’t let that discourage you—keep on asking!



K Wardle

How I Got Started . . .



Nicole Syrluk: I was in Woodstock one Saturday night looking for something to do when I noticed a flier announcing that Eileen Ivers was playing at the Community Center. I had heard her perform before and really enjoyed her playing. So I walked to the hall and paid my six dollars. I looked around the hall, and the only chairs there were lined up along the wall. Then a woman came up to me and asked me to dance, and the light dawned. I was at a dance, not a concert! I told her I didn't know how to do this. She smiled and said that she would show me. She did, and I danced the rest of the night away. After that, I was hooked. I was so very lucky to stumble into the hall that night and have Eileen Ivers play for my first contra dance. She rocked the hall and made me a lifelong dancer.

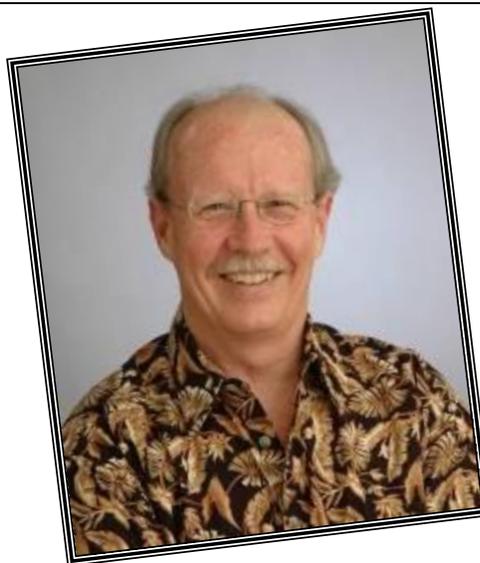
Janet Haseley: Although we had been square dancing, when my husband Ed and I went to a contra dance with my brother Jack, we thought it was boring to do the same thing over and over and over. But after Ed died I started attending contra dances again, and now I am thoroughly addicted. It's okay to go as a single because at the end of each dance the caller says "Find another partner." There's a walk-through for each dance and you meet everyone as you progress up and down the line. You meet people that you met at other dances somewhere else. It's fun!

Doug van Auken: Prior to college, I had been active in rock 'n' roll, ballroom, and square dancing. At Cornell University, I discovered musicians and dancers by the score. On my "library night," I would walk past the weekly International Folk Dance session. The music was captivating and the dancers were having so much fun. I quickly changed my library night so I could sit in on a few sessions. The leader had to drag me into the lines—but I soon enjoyed every moment of folk dancing. From that first session, I joined in most of the line and circle dances, sandwiched between experienced dancers. What really flipped me

out was the friendliness of traditional dancers. For me, dance is nourishment for the soul.



Buhrmaster Barn Dance
Sue Gersten, photo



Looking Back with Bill Matthiesen

By Don Bell

After at least 13 years as a Board member including five years as President, Bill Matthiesen is now a board member emeritus of the DanceFlurry Organization.

Making music and dancing through life started early for Bill Matthiesen. Luckily, when he began taking piano lessons in third grade, his teacher introduced him to swing music. He continued with lessons and played in a swing band in high school. As for dancing, Bill was in sixth grade in the late 1950s, when schools were still giving after-school dance lessons. He learned the fox-trot, waltz, and swing dance steps and enjoyed dancing with girls at "sock hops" (literally, shoe-less events held in gyms where coaches didn't want dancers to damage the gym floors). Kids decorated their socks with colors and sequins to make them more unique.

Unfortunately, while he was at Williams College, Bill's early ballroom dance career was cut short by a 1960s cultural tsunami – the Twist and other rock 'n' roll free-form dancing. Instead of connecting with a partner, dancers began doing their own thing and improvising. Bill didn't re-connect with dancing for quite awhile, not until he was in his thirties and a woman dragged him off to a large contra dance in Pittsfield. Immediately hooked, he became involved in the Pittsfield Dance organization, booking the musicians and contra callers. After only a few months of dancing, he attended English-American Week at Pinewoods Dance Camp (near Plymouth, MA). He had a great time learning contra and English dancing and cooling off in the ponds in the scenic landscape.

Segue to Spare Parts Bill met his wife, Liz Stell, through work and contra dancing. Liz and Bill's band, Spare Parts, was created the first time they played for a dance, joining a fiddler friend from Hartford. The band name became even more appropriate as they

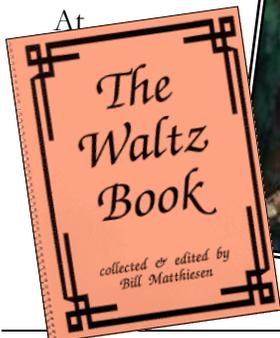
continued playing for dances with a variety of other musicians, including George Wilson and David Kaynor. From the beginning, the specific "Spare Parts du jour" depended on the genre of music required and the location of a dance event. David and George were both very strong influences on the band's music and approach to playing for contra dances. With Bill on keyboard and Liz on flute, the band has recorded many CDs and travelled as far afield as Alaska and California.

Through playing backup piano at contra dances, Bill realized that musicians didn't share a very big repertoire of waltzes in common. This inspired him to create a series of music books: *The Waltz Books I, II, and III*. Initially, he assembled the books for himself in order to have the chords and tunes at hand when he played gigs with various "Spare Parts." He had no idea the books would become so popular.

Discovering Vintage Dancing Bill and Liz have expanded their dance interests over the years. After attending vintage dance workshops offered by Richard Powers, Bill and Liz organized and taught sessions on "Dances Your Grandparents Did" at Williams College. Then they organized a ragtime dance week in Lenox in the summer of 1986. After a few years of enjoying vintage dancing they shifted to playing vintage music for Boston dance events.

Bill's interest in ragtime dance eventually led him to tango music. He started searching for early tangos, and one thing led to another. . . a solo piano recording at the Troy Savings Bank Music Hall, a tango book for Mel Bay Publications, a solo piano concert at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., studying Spanish, and a trip to Buenos Aires to meet with the oldest living tango musicians.

At



Spare Parts: Liz Stell and Bill Matthiesen

about this time, Bill and Liz decided to take ballroom lessons at the eba Center for Dance and Fitness in Albany. They learned to do the waltz, fox-trot, rumba, and cha-cha, as well as Cajun and Scandinavian dancing.

Bill met DFO founder Paul Rosenberg when Paul was starting to call contra dances and shortly before he got involved with the Flurry Festival. Bill and Liz became a staple of the Flurry—playing whatever music was needed, including tango, swing, couples dances, waltzes, and English.

DFO Presidential Accomplishments Bill joined the DFO board around 1997 and, in 2005, he was elected as DFO President. At about that time, Paul and fellow Flurry Festival organizer Pat Melita felt burned out and wanted to take a year off, as did other members of the Flurry organizing committee. Bill opposed the idea of a hiatus; he feared the Flurry might lose its popular Saratoga venue. He and the committee realized that it would be very difficult to find one person to step into Paul Rosenberg's shoes, so they decided to split Paul's job into two parts: logistics and programming. A new Flurry Festival leadership team was created with Peter Davis doing programming, Doug Haller handling logistics, and Ginny Gokhale managing the finances. This division of labor worked out very well, and it may have saved the Flurry from folding.

Bill brought his business background to his role as president and encouraged the further organizational development of the DFO. In the summer of 2005, Bill asked his friend Ben Markens to facilitate a Board retreat. It was a very inspiring and productive experience. After about two days of brainstorming, the Board drafted the organization's first mission statement, core values, and goals. Bill also began to promote the goal of attracting more young people to DFO events.

For five years, Bill balanced his role as DFO President with his personal business as a videographer and his musical career. He played a key role in the growing sophistication of the organization, ensuring the continuity of the Flurry Festival, strengthening accounting procedures and guiding the board to work on administrative, membership, and promotion projects. Bill feels optimistic about where the organization is right now. In spite of the depressed economy, the 2010 Flurry was a terrific success.

Continued

Looking Back with Bill Matthiesen, continued

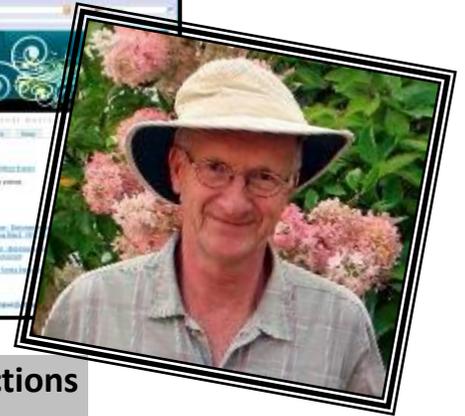
Bill is pleased that the DanceFlurry has continued Paul Rosenberg's non-elitist tradition of offering a wide range of dance and music events to all members of the public. He is excited by the prospect that this tradition will continue as the DFO welcomes a new generation to the Board. Bill believes their youthful energy, enthusiasm, and new ideas will keep the DFO alive for many years to come. Fortunately, Bill has agreed to stay involved as a board member emeritus. His experience as a musician, teacher, dancer, organizer and, occasionally, diplomat will continue to be an invaluable resource. 🌀

To find out more about Bill, the *Waltz Books*, and *Spare Parts* CDs, go to: www.bfv.com/spareparts.

Flurry Festival 2011 Performer Highlights

The Flurry Festival is quite simply the best winter weekend ever for dancers and music lovers of all ages! The 2011 festival is set for February 18 through 20 at the Saratoga Hilton and City Center in Saratoga Springs. Here's a sampling of the many fabulous performers who will be part of the festival:

Bob Isaacs ♦ Brasstown 2011 with David Kaynor ♦ The Clayfoot Strutters ♦ Crowfoot ♦ Curley Taylor and Zydeco Trouble ♦ David Millstone ♦ The Duke Robillard Band with Sunny Crownover ♦ Girl Howdy ♦ Hector Del Curto and The Eternal Tango Trio ♦ Jay Ungar and Molly Mason with Swingology ♦ Linda Leslie ♦ McNamara's Band ♦ Nightingale ♦ Peter MacFarlane and Liz Donaldson ♦ Perpetual E-Motion ♦ The Pinewoods Band ♦ Rebecca Lay ♦ Retumba! ♦ Tenor Madness with Hanna Richardson ♦ Triskele ♦ Yves and France Moreau ♦



Making Connections Behind the Scenes

Chances are, if you know what's going on with the DFO, you have Don Bell to thank. If you've checked a calendar on the Web site, or gotten news of an event via a Google message or picked up a membership brochure, you've benefitted from the countless volunteer hours he provides to the DanceFlurry Organization. For over five years, he's done heroic work, investing time to build up the organization's infrastructure. Don's MO is to tackle a problem carefully, thinking through what the organization needs. He is constantly on the lookout for information on emerging trends in communicating with audiences and building visibility. After several years of research and planning, Don shepherded the complete reworking of the organization's Web site, an enormous undertaking. He helped develop a new DFO logo as well as newsletters and promotional materials. And, whether behind the camera himself or encouraging the work of other photographers, he has tried to create a collection of images that can help promote the joy and community spirit of dance and music.

He does all of this in addition to taking care of routine board tasks, serving on a variety of committees, arranging events, running the Rensselaer English Country Dance and, with his wife, Diane Hamilton Bell (a musician with Hearts Ease) hosting rehearsals and meetings. We are incredibly fortunate to have Don on the team -- his contributions have really helped create the tools the DFO needs to be able to move ahead on so many fronts. 🌀



Stockade Assembly

How I Got Started . . .



BJ Best: I always wanted to be a dancer. I used to watch my neighbor pack up her ballet slippers and go off to dance class, wondering how that felt! I didn't really get out there until I was a mother of two. A friend invited me to a country line-dance lesson. I was never a country music fan, but my feet and spirit were happy regardless! I became a line-dance junkie and from there it grew into two-step, hustle, swing, cha-cha, etc. Contra dancing is my newest and most joyful addiction and I've got the flying skirts to prove it. What a friendly and welcoming group it is! The music absolutely lifts you up!

Peter Stix: I went to a callers workshop offered by George Marshall. After that at a New Year's Eve dance weekend, a friend of mine who was a caller gave me three dance cards and said, "Pick one and call it." I did, and it was a friendly crowd. From there, I kept on calling and started to promote and organize events. I became a regular caller in the rotation, calling around the Midwest and organizing tours.

Bonnie Terry: A friend of mine found a notice in the local paper about contra dancing and wanted to check it out. But, she said, she couldn't go alone, and she volunteered me as her escort. We went and I LOVED it. She didn't. I don't think she even went back once. But I've been dancing ever since! And have met some of the most wonderful friends you could ask for.

Rich Futyma: I was teaching at the University of Michigan's biological station, and one evening there was a square dance. Now I had tried international folk dancing before this, but my feet never could find the way. But after trying square dancing, I said, "Hey, I can actually do it." Returning to Ann Arbor in the fall,

I sought out contra dances and went out to this place in the middle of nowhere—the Webster Church Hall. I got in there and they were already dancing. Some woman dragged me onto the dance floor. I think I screwed things up royally, but I had a lot of fun, and I've been dancing ever since.



ADIRONDACK DANCE WEEKEND SEPT 24-26, 2010





Enjoy dancing, fall foliage, and outdoor recreation at a fun-filled weekend on Silver Bay, Lake George!

Contr English Country Swing Waltzes
 Scandi Singing Jamming Hiking Kayaking
 Massage

Musicians: Jay Ungar, Molly Mason, Peter Davis,
 Bare Necessities (Jacqueline Schwab, Mary Lea, Peter Barnes),
 Spare Parts with Eric Buddington & Stuart Kenney

Callers: Steve Zakon-Anderson, Will Mentor, Scott Higgs

For more info: www.danceflurry.org or
 Adirondack@danceflurry.org, 518-664-6781 (8 am to 10 pm),
 or write: D. Knutson, Registrar,
 5 Colonial Drive, Schenectady, NY 12306





Above and left:
Flurry Festival
 Lawrence White, photos



Far left:
Burhmaster Barn Dance
 Sue Gersten, photo

Keepers of the Dance

By Fern Bradley

Dance festivals are an all-you-can-consume smorgasbord of dancing. They're peak experiences, intense weekends of musical delight. But what really sustains us are the events that continually renew our love of music and dance—the local dances that take place on a regular schedule in church halls, community centers, grange halls, and schools. These events allow new dancers to join in and flourish, support a rich network of talented musicians, and lead us to build lasting friendships and a caring community. We're fortunate to have several excellent long-standing and new local dances series.

Putting on a festival weekend like the Flurry Festival takes intense effort by paid staff, an organizing committee and an army of volunteers. Running a local dance series also requires the dedication and long-term commitment of many volunteers. Each of the DFO's local dances is shepherded by an organizer and/or organizing committee who attend to the logistics necessary to keep a dance alive and swinging.

What it Takes to Run a Dance A monthly dance might seem like a simple gathering, but there's more behind-the-scenes work than you'd think. Someone has to find the location and negotiate with the owners for its use. Someone devotes time to contacting bands and callers and setting up the schedule, while someone else (or maybe the same someone) deals with fliers, press releases, e-mail reminders and online calendars. And there are the arrangements for refreshments.

On the day of the dance itself, someone must arrive early to open the hall, greet the band and caller, and possibly clear the dance floor and set up chairs. There's an admissions table to staff and fliers to display. It takes both muscle power and know-how to tote and set up a sound system. And, at the end of the dance, when the dancers walk out the door and go home, some bodies are staying late to tally up the receipts, tear down the sound system, and clean up the hall. Occasionally, there are special details to attend to, as at the very first Glens Falls contra dance, when the organizers arranged for a cake in honor of caller Ridge Kennedy—whose birthday it was!

All things considered, it's amazing that dance series run as smoothly as they do. Chalk that up to the good work of the DFO's merry band of dance organizers and their frequent helpers (see *Who's Who* on



Lawrence White, photo

page 10). But running a dance series does present challenges, and many of the organizers cited concerns about the venues as one of the toughest. There is the basic quest to “find a good hall to dance in. Lately that's been our biggest challenge,” said Rich Futyma. “There's a dearth of good dance floors at a reasonable price.” Rich reports that the Saratoga dance has found a satisfying new home at the First Baptist Church in Saratoga Springs. The dance also will return to the fourth Saturday (instead of the third) this fall to coordinate better with other area dances.

Ann Thomas told a memorable story about a site challenge for the Stockade Assembly in 2007. A month before the event, Ann called the venue with a routine question, and learned that the staff planned to move the dance from its usual elegant location into the gymnasium. The space was far from ready, with children's tricycles and exercise mats on the stage and curtains drooping loosely on the windows. On the day of the dance, a volunteer crew worked for nearly five hours to transform the space, and the dance was wonderful.

Keeping the right balance between volunteer commitment and the rest of life is challenging for organizers too. For example, Heather Coleman-Ibrahim was the head of the Capital Swing Dance committee before the birth of her two children. Now the dance is run by a strong committee, spearheaded by two members in particular. “Mike Ibrahim and Jim Dolen are really the lifeblood of the dance right now,” Heather says. She has scaled back her own involvement, and now her biggest challenge is trying “to be there more! I do the accounting and it's easier to track the numbers accurately if I'm there.”

Kathryn Wedderburn has watched her role with the Buhmaster Barn Dance grow during the seven or so years since she started booking the bands and callers. Like other organizers, she's now involved with recordkeeping and preparing a budget for the dance, too. So for Kathryn, the challenge is how to keep her

commitment focused on the role for which she originally volunteered. “The whole community needs to be aware that we have a limited amount of human resource here and we need to take care of it, or people get burned out,” Kathryn said.

Making the finances work is always a challenge too, especially for a new dance series. The 2010-11 Glens Falls series schedule will be limited to one fall dance and one spring dance, Bill Schwarz explained. This will allow more energy to be spent on organizing and publicizing the dances. The committee is also looking for a smaller and less expensive venue.

Focusing energy on two dances a year has worked well for the Stockade Assembly. “The Assembly got started when Bill Newman came up with the idea of having a couple of dances each year for which we would bring in well-known callers and bands,” said Ann. The Assembly, often referred to as “the ball,” will begin its sixth season in December. The Schenectady YWCA worked well as a venue but now the dance has moved on to other sites, and finding the right place is a continuing challenge, Ann noted.

Some dances keep costs down by relying on a house band, but that takes organizational effort too. Don Bell hosts regular rehearsals at his home for the Rensselaer English Country Dance series house band.

Why They Do It “I like giving a party,” Ann said. “I love it when people join in, and have a good time and appreciate it. I even get thank you notes!” Ann also notes that she enjoys choosing the combinations of bands and callers. “It’s like being a matchmaker.”

Some organizers offer a very practical motivation for running a series. “I do it so I don’t have to travel too far for dancing,” said Bill Schwarz. “And others have said that they’re grateful that we’re running a dance here in Glens Falls for the same reason.” Heather said she continues to work as a dance organizer because “I think the arts are so critical, and it is missing for too many people. Dance is an important

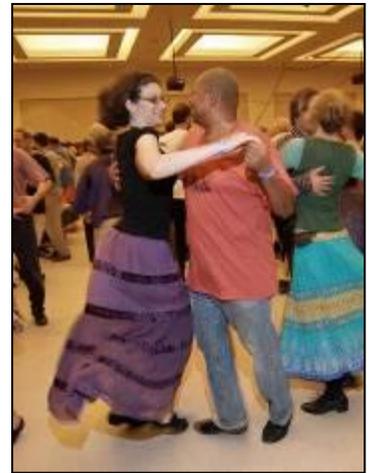
aspect of our culture, and I want to see it grow.” Heather also remarked on how much dance has added to her life and lives of others. “I have seen people meet and get married through dancing.”

Other organizers see things through a different lens. Peter Stix said that he has served as an organizer for the Albany contradance for more than a decade for “fame, prestige, and glory, not to mention money.” Switching to a (slightly) more serious note, Peter adds, “and maybe because I’m a control freak.”

Don Bell offered this reason for being a long-time organizer of English Country Dances: “English country dancing helps me escape from the frenzy of the twenty-first century, return to a more civilized and elegant era. It’s a delight to see the joy in new dancers who have just started to appreciate this art form.”

I (Fern Bradley) help to organize a dance series too, the Hubbard Hall Contra Dance in Cambridge, and I’ve helped organize other dance events in the past when I lived in Pennsylvania. I agree with all the “why I do it” reasons offered by my fellow organizers, and I’ll conclude here with one more reason, included in my own story of how I got started dancing.

As a college student in Ithaca, I accompanied a friend to a summertime outdoor contra dance. We arrived late, someone pulled me into a set, and people gently led and pushed me through the lines of dancers. It was fun, but I never quite knew what I was doing or that there was a pattern to the sequence of steps. After a few dances, I climbed stairs up to a terrace that offered a view from above. From that vantage point, I discovered the magic of contra dancing. The dancers weren’t just dancing with the people next to them in line—they were all weaving a master pattern, with the music twining through it. The melody swirled up and into the darkness, and the beauty of the dance figures fascinated me. It was my first experience of dance as a community, and that’s what has sustained my connection to dancing. Wherever I’ve lived or travelled, I’ve found joy in the dance and dear friends among the dancers. 🌀



Lawrence White, photo



A Sound-sational Experience: Inside the Capital District Megaband

By Bonnie Epstein

The best way to fully experience anything is firsthand. However, having said that, I had never joined a band during my 15 years as a contra dancer, even though I am an accomplished pianist. All of that changed when my husband Alan and I moved to Greenwich two years ago. The people we met on the contra dance scene were so warm and friendly that it seemed a natural progression to move from the dance floor to the keyboard. I began attending the weekly "tunes" session at Hubbard Hall in Cambridge hosted by Bliss and Robbie McIntosh. This informal session is a stretch for me because we learn all tunes by ear—no printed music!

With my confidence boosted, I agreed when Alan, a mandolinist, told me about the Capital District Megaband and said we should join. It sounded like fun! We received a CD of the songs to practice, and to my relief, we were given the lead sheets at the first rehearsal.

Playing with the Megaband turned out to be a totally different experience from our cozy little tunes group of six to eight people. There are 30 musicians in the Megaband, ranging in age from preteens to seniors and in instrumentation from bagpipes to tuba. There are three pianists (we take turns), a tuba, concertinas, mandolins, bagpipes, flutes, fiddles, guitars, and spoons. What a colorful palette of sound!

Although spontaneity is part of the contra band genre, with a group of 30, including quite a few beginners, we needed choreographed spontaneity. The rehearsals were run by two superb musicians, Peter



Jerry Jerome, photo

Davis and George Wilson. To make things go as smoothly as possible, Peter devised hand signals. One finger meant one chord per line. George also devised hand signals, although "one" to him meant one more time through. Then there is the 1 in one hand and 5 in the other hand, which to Peter meant drone on 1 and 5, but which looks like 51 to the rest of us. With every rehearsal, though, our playing improved, the hand signals got tweaked a little, and the tunes that once sounded so foreign, such as *Glise de Sherbrooke*, *Reel de Remi*, and *Shenandoah Falls*, started to sound like old friends.

Through my two different band experiences, I am learning that the results are the same: FUN! 🌀

About the Megaband

A new venture of the Dance Flurry Organization initiated by former board member Maura McNamara, the Capital District Megaband is a community contra dance band based on the model of Sue Songer's Portland Megaband. The goal of the band is to provide an opportunity for musicians to play in a dance band setting—the band is open to all. Rehearsals at Café Lena and the Brunswick Grange enabled bandleaders Peter Davis and George Wilson to work with participants arranging sets and developing a group 'feel' for dance music. Amateur and experienced players prepared the dance sets at dance tempo for the first rehearsal. After several rehearsals in the spring, the band had its debut at the Albany Contradance on Friday, June 11, playing for a crowd of nearly 100 enthusiastic dancers. DFO is grateful to Peter and George for directing the band, and to Maura who, in addition to playing, handled the behind-the-scenes tasks such as scheduling rehearsals, distributing music, and fielding questions.

And stay tuned! The Megaband may have a reprise performance at the September 12th Buhrmaster Barn Dance.



Fern Bradley, photo

Musicians of the Megaband**Banjo:** Barbara Mullin**Cello:** Maura McNamara**Concertina:** David Barnert, Jennifer Stafford**Fiddles:** Bill Baxter, Lauren Endres, Jeffrey Haas, Kristen Hislop, Diane Jones, Patricia Kernan, Ray Kottke, Jess Labello, Polly McIntyre, Tom Santilli, Claire Sweeney, Sandra Weise**Flutes/Whistles:** Charles Fisher, Megan Sweeney, Beth Williams, Linda Wicks**Guitar:** Leisa Brockett, Megan Brockett, Elysia Butler-Baker, Rick Liberty, Jennifer Ogradowski**Mandolin:** Alan Epstein, Jeanne Mathewson, Dian Ryan**Piano:** Bonnie Epstein, Marsha Lazarus, Kate Storms**Tuba:** Carle Kopecky**Uilleann pipes:** Dave Jones, Fritz Stafford**DFO's New President:
Jen Brown**

Jen Brown had one brief day of leisure in between earning her MBA at SUNY Albany and being elected as DFO President at the annual meeting held in May.

A long-time volunteer with the Flurry Festival and Capital Swing Dance and a board member since 2005, Jen Brown works in a professional management capacity for the State of New York. Her first Festival as DFO Treasurer was the year of the blackout. Since then, she's been an important part of the evolving improvement of the DFO administrative processes, serving on the Finance Committee and, more recently, becoming involved with grant writing.

She believes that balancing the professional and artistic sides of the organization is important, since the business side of DFO needs to be supportive of the artistic side. Jen is also interested in working on the Board's goal of increasing dance and music opportunities for and broadening the DFO community. 



Saratoga Swing Kids demonstration at the 2010 Flurry Festival
Dale Windsor, photo

Meet the New DFO Board Members

At the annual meeting on May 16 at the Buhrmaster Barn Dance, the DanceFlurry Organization membership re-elected board member Terry Kinal to another term of service. Four new board members were elected as well, and the Board welcomes their infusion of enthusiasm, talents, and vision.

Rich Pisarri is part of the Flurry Festival "Cash Crew" and is an avid swing dancer. Having worked for the Internal Revenue Service for more than 30 years, and elected as DFO Treasurer, he will promote sound business practices that maintain and grow a sustainable organization.

Gabe Holmes and two other dancers administer the Facebook group "We Love to Dance in Albany," which promotes area dances such as the Glens Falls, Saratoga, Albany and Old Songs dances as well as some dances in adjacent areas. Gabe has a strong belief in contra dancing as a way of encouraging the arts, promoting physical fitness, and building strong communities.

Janice Joyce is part of the First Friday Swing dance committee and a volunteer at the Flurry Festival. She values dancing because it's a form of expression, great exercise, good clean fun, and a safe way to meet new people. She would like to explore ways to piggyback on the upsurge of interest in dance to bring in new members and promote the DFO.

Linda Wicks serves on the Flurry Festival Committee as Volunteer Coordinator, and also helps with other DFO programming and outreach efforts. She has experience promoting and organizing events and is interested in assisting with new events.

For more information about other board members, visit www.danceflurry.org/board. 

Who's Who with DFO Dance Series

We are deeply indebted to those who keep our year-round dance events going. The next time you've enjoyed a dance: thank your partner, thank the band and caller and *thank the organizers!*

Albany Contradances! – Peter Stix

Adirondack Dance Weekend – Laura Perrault, Dawn Knutson, Dan and Jenny Kerwood

Buhrmaster Barn Contra Dance - Kathryn Wedderburn, Bonnie Terry, Kevin DeLaughter

Family Dance - Paul Rosenberg, Sue Mead

First Friday Swing Dance – Heather Coleman-Ibrahim, Mike Ibrahim, Jim Dolen, Gary Allocco, Jen Brown, Candy Dolen, Janice Joyce

Glens Falls Contra - Bill Schwarz, Jeanne Noordsy

Hubbard Hall Contradance – Fern Bradley, Bliss and Robbie McIntosh

Rensselaer English Country Dance - Don Bell

Saratoga Contra Dance - Rich Futyma, Maria Hoffmeyer, Alan McClintock, Bonnie Terry, Laura and Ken Perrault, Barbara Freund, Bill Schwarz, Cathy Corrigan

Stockade Assembly - Ann Thomas, Diane Bell



How I Got Started . . .



Ann Thomas: I once read an article about English country dancing in the New York Times written by a woman named Linda



Wolfe. She described how she attended balls with a ball partner. I said to myself, "I want to do that." At first, I just watched the English dancing at the Flurry, and I loved it. A year later

at the Flurry, I heard about English dance lessons being given and I started. It took me three years from the time I read about it to the time I started dancing.

Kathryn Wedderburn: Here's how I got started calling rock 'n' roll contras: Paul Rosenberg had called rock 'n' roll contras at the Flurry a couple of times, calling regular contras to rock songs, and he and Pat Melita thought I would be the right person to step into the role. I said, "Okay, but get me a band I can work with." I wanted to do something different, to create dances especially for the session. I'm not a singer—but as I worked on it, this whole persona came about. The thing I love best is creating dances where the movements of the dance match the music, but also the story line of the dance follows the lyrics.

Heather Coleman-Ibrahim: I was a student at the University of Georgia and lived in an international dorm. One girl who was part of our social group was part of a ballroom dancing club, and she said I should try it. I was skeptical, but I tried it and liked it! When a new semester started, the only dancing lessons that would fit my schedule were swing dance. I kept on coming back because of the people—and when I came to the Albany area, I stayed involved.



Swinging, jamming and performing at the Flurry!

Photos
Far upper left: Dale Windsor
All others: Lawrence White

How I Got Started . . .



Bill Schwarz: When I was living in New York City, I was president of a ski club. For one of our weekend trips, the leaders had arranged a contra dance. I was a first-timer, but others had some experience. I enjoyed myself, but I didn't follow some of the step sequences too well. At the end of the trip, when prizes were handed out for categories such as most improvement in skiing, I received a special award: a little notebook where I could write down the dance steps so I'd remember them. I guess it did the trick, because I started going to the regular Saturday night contra in Manhattan and I've been dancing ever since.

Don Bell: I've been doing some type of dance most of my life, and I got introduced to "country dancing" (contras, squares, English, Irish, Scandinavian, etc.) while teaching school in a small rural farming community in Ontario. I met my wife, Diane, at Pinewoods Dance and Music Camp near Plymouth, MA. While we were dating, driving 400 miles from Toronto got to be very tiresome very quickly. I moved to the area when we were married. Appropriately enough, we now live on Pinewoods Avenue.



Membership Information Form

Memberships are for one calendar year - January 1 through December 31

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I can help: ___ run local dances ___ with organizational activities

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Please complete and mail it along with your check payable to DanceFlurry Organization to:
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Dance Events for the DFO Community

(Area code is 518 unless indicated. More info at www.danceflurry.org)

Adirondack Dance Weekend (Silver Bay YMCA, Lake George) Sept. 24-26, 2010; 664-6781

Albany Contradances! One Friday a month, Sept.-June; 729-7791

Buhrmaster Barn Contra Dance (Colonie) First and third Sundays, May-Sept.; 413-441-5236

Capital English Country Dancers (Albany) First Sunday, Oct. - May; 477-5684

Capital Swing (Albany) First Fridays; 235-8492

Diamond Dance (Saratoga Springs) Swing and more every third Saturday; 587-5132.

Flurry Festival (Saratoga Springs) February 18-20, 2011; 384-3275

Family Dances (Delmar and Albany) Nov. - April; 482-9255

Glens Falls Contra Dance Nov. and March; 307-6091

Hubbard Hall Contra Dance (Cambridge) Fourth Sundays, Sept.-April; 692-9079

Old Songs Contra Dances (Voorheesville) First Sat., Oct.-Apr.; 765-2815

Rensselaer English Country Dance (RPI, Troy) Third Sundays, Sept.-April; 273-5172

Saratoga Contra Dance, Fourth Saturdays; 885-4430

Stockade Assembly (Albany) English Country Dance balls, Dec. and April; 388-6565

Thursday Night Swing at the Fuze Box (Albany) 432-8866

Tri-City Trad (Capital Region) music, dancing, and singing; 210-7060



(Hudson Mohawk Traditional Dances, Inc.)
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It's easy to keep up to date with dance events when you subscribe to our monthly newsletter/dance calendar. Go to www.danceflurry.org. Enter your e-mail address in the "Subscribe" box and click on the *Subscribe* button.

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Lawrence White, Photos