

Newsletter of North Alabama Country Dance Society • Group Affiliate, Country Dance & Song Society • Established 1982 http://secontra.com/NACDS/html • Linda McAllister, Editor • email: wmca@hiwaay.net • (256) 534-8354

Square Dancing

By Jane Ewing

For those of you who read the Yahoo chat page, that NACDS sponsors, you already know that I had a "Square" party recently. If you did not make it to the party let me explain briefly why working parties are necessary for callers like me.

Contra dance calling is, generally speaking, a matter of timing. The caller must finish prompting a move just before the dancer is to start the move.

We all know how enjoyable it is to dance with the music and be right on time! This can be practiced, just about anywhere, by someone learning to call. There are many smaller nuances that are learned by watching or taping and listening to other callers and a variety of bands.



Then there are many small, but very important, items regarding teaching, enunciation, and voice projection that are learned in classes conducted by some of the great callers across the country. But primarily, we hone our skills by calling and working with live dancers.

Square dance calling, on the other hand, can be a different animal than calling contra dances and circle dances. I say "can be" because there are several different types of squares that we as contra dancers do. Two styles, Western and Southern

squares can be a mixed bag of worms. This is kin to a "Rubik's Cube". I like to mix it up and then reassemble.

During the first week of August I went to the Augusta Heritage Center in Elkins, West Virginia. I spent all day in class with a caller that has been calling squares for 49 years. There were six callers in class and we had a very busy week learning and

> practicing techniques. Once I got home, however, I could not practice unless I had some willing dancers to come and practice with me.

My square party offered that opportunity. I appreciated the dancers' willingness to show up and participate with me.

We had good fellowship, good food and some very interesting squares forming out on the grass of my yard.

If you would like to learn more about square dancing than is normally covered during a typical Saturday dance, we will be having a

Square Workshop -

for both the caller and the dancers - on Saturday, September 3rd. This workshop will start at 6:00 PM. We will finish at 7:00 PM in time for the regular Beginners Workshop prior to the regular dance. If you are interested, <u>please</u> come join me. I need dancers on the floor, and I promise you will have fun!

00 Getting to Know You

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Shelly Vann	Linda Harman	Linda Singleton McAllister	
 NACDS Secretary 	 NACDS Membership Chair 	 NACDS Newspaper Editor 	
 Government Contractor 	(Replacing Beth Riggs who moved)	• Recently retired music teacher and	
 Hometown – Ft. Scott, KS 	 Worked at Integraph for 20 years 	choral director at The Academy for	
 Arrived in Huntsville in 1997 	 Huntsville native 	Academics and Arts magnet school	
from Germany for 4 more years of	 Spouse – Max (the one with the 	 Native of Huntsville but left for 	
active duty in the US Army.	green dancing shoes); 3 children –	20 years; returned in 1993	
 Something Unique – first female 	Hill is a graduate student in	 Spouse – Bill, A&M Professor. 	
to be assigned to NATO Airborne	chemistry at UC, Berkley, Sara is	Linda has 2 children – Melanie and	
Infantry unit in Heidelberg,	married and lives in B'ham, and	Brett with 6 grandchildren; Bill has	
GermanyAllied Mobile Force	Hannah is a 14 year-old freshman at	2 children, Suzie and Cliff and 2	
(Land). However, she was neither	HHS and she loves to dance. The	grandsons. None live here so they	
Airborne nor Infantry but was	first grandchild is due in October	are out of town often visiting them.	
executive administrative assistant to	and Linda and Max hope the arrival	 Enjoys cooking, entertaining, 	
the commanding general. No	will not interfere with dance	decorating, reading, gardening,	
parachuting was required!	weekends!	traveling and singing – sings with	
Enjoys contra & ballroom dancing	• Hobbies – sews, quilts, reads	First Presbyterian Church Choir and	
and traveling	fiction, plays hand bells at church	the Eugene Brasher Chorale.	
• Began contra dancing in January,	and fishes with her dad - catching	• Linda began dancing with her late	
2004 at Gorham's Blufffirst	20-30 lb redfish	husband in Nashville when they	
impression was that it was fun and	• Linda is a newcomer to contra	moved there in 1987. She enjoyed	
made her dizzy. She also felt like	dancing $-2\frac{1}{2}$ years but now she	the folk music, friendly people,	
she would never learn to do it well.	cannot imagine not dancing. Her	multi-generational and diverse	
(Wrong, Shelly)	favorite part is the flow of it all –	group of dancers and felt she had	
• She likes the energy at dances	swirling skirts, perfect timing of a	found a new venue in her music	
when all dancers are doing the same	balance and swing, the beat of the	world. She felt doubly rewarded to	
thing at the same time. "It's really	music, and how it continues to flow	meet Bill while contra dancing in	
great to be in a square that manages	even when the caller quits calling!	Nashville!	
to keep it all togethervery	• Linda said, "At my first contra	• "I remember my first contra dance	
exhilarating," says Shelly.	dance, I danced every dance and at	weekend in Nashville very well.	
• Shelly often goes to dance	the end of the night, I could not walk down the steps. I had to use	By late Saturday afternoon I had to	
weekends – Nashville, Knoxville,	1	take Ibuprofen, a hot bath, and a	
and Mentone, most recently.This gal has a new flame and she	the handicap ramp! The next morning was painful, but I was	nap with the heating pad to	
• This gai has a new flame and she said to wish her luck!	hooked."	rejuvenate me for the big Saturday	
Salu to WISH HEL LUCK!	nookea.	evening dance," said Linda. "But hey, the dancing was great!"	
		ney, me daneing was great!	

Guest Passes (All members – bring new folks!)

By (NACDS member)

This guest pass admits bearer to any regular Saturday night dance (1st & 3rd Saturdays) of the NACDS. All dances are at 7:00 PM at Faith Presbyterian Church (corner of Airport Rd. & Whitesburg Dr.) Call Bryan 256 837-0656 or Doug 256 882-6378 for more info. \$7 value Good thru November, 2005

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Huntsville dances are the 1st & 3rd Saturdays of each month in the gym at Faith Presbyterian Church, 5003 Whitesburg Dr., South, (corner of Whitesburg & Airport Rd.). Beginners Workshop is at 7:00 PM then the regular dance is from 7:30 – 10:30 PM.

Admission is \$7 (\$6 for members), \$4 for teens, free for ages 12 & under. Remember to bring comfortable, non-scuffing shoes for dancing. Bring someone new to a dance this month! You will find 2 free guest passes in this newsletter.

Contact Bryan Walls (256) 837-0656 or email: <u>bwalls@pobox.com</u> or visit <u>http://secontra.com/NACDS.html</u> for more info.

Date	Caller	Band
September 3	Jane Ewing Special Squares Workshop 6:00 PM	Kaleidoscope - Chuck & Katrina Weber, Mike Bush
September 17	Harry Delugach	Biscotti Boys - Chip Gulbro, Steve Nix, Eric Torstenson, & Jim Holland (an eclectic mix of tunes and instruments)
October 1	Seth Tepfer	Ed Baggott & Elsie Peterson
October 15	ТВА	Kaleidoscope – Chuck & Katrina Weber, Mike Bush



Area Dance Gypsy Calendar

DATE	LOCATION	CALLER	BAND
Sept 10	Birmingham	Doug Singleton	Smoke & Mirrors – Sandy Goldring & Ann Whitley
Sept 10	Chattanooga	Nick Boulet	Nashville Weather
Sept 22	Sewanee	Barb Kirchner	Ed Baggott & Elsie Peterson
Sept 23-25	Chattanooga	George Marshall	Wild Asparagus & others (Dance Weekend – see Web site)
Oct 28-30	Nashville	Robert Cromartie	String Beings (Dance Weekend – see Web site)
Oct 28	Sewanee	Bryant Haynes	Fiery Gizzard Stringband

CTDS (Chattanooga) dances 2nd & 4th Saturdays at All Saints Academy, 310 E. 8th St., downtown, 8:00 PM. Contact Steve at (706)937-4991, Claire & Bryant at (423)876-7359 or http://contranooga.org

Misty Mountain Dancers (Sewanee, TN) dances at the Legion Hall in Sewanee, TN. For dates, call (931) 598-0814 or check http://www.mistycontra.zoomshare.com/).html

NCD (Nashville) dances almost every Friday at 8:00 PM at Woodbine Community Center, Burbank & Oriel. Contact Chrissy at (615)210-6808 or John, email: <u>DanceFools@aol.com</u> or <u>http://dancenashville.org/</u>

A Bit Farther Away, But Well Worth The Travel

CCD (Atlanta) dances on Fridays & alternate Tuesdays. http://contradance.org KCD (Knoxville) dances every Monday. http://www.kornet.org/kcd/ MCD (Memphis) dances on the 1st & 3rd Fridays. <u>http://hometown.aol.com/horselovers/index.html</u> Sautee Community Dances (N. GA) once a month from Sept – May. <u>http://sauteecontra.home.mindspring.com/</u>

Upcoming Dance Weekends

Chattaboogie - Chattanooga's 1st ever dance weekend. Sept 23-25. <u>http://chattaboogie.com/</u> **Music City Masquerade** - Nashville's weekend. Oct 28-30. <u>http://mistycontra.zoomshare.com/0.html</u> **Balance the Bell** - Louisville's fall dance, Sept 23-25 - Joseph Pimental and Grand Picnic **Dance Tapestry** – Atlanta's 29th annual dance, Nov 11-13 - Robert Cromartie, Cis Hinkle, Airdance, Elftones & Smoke & Mirrors

Tips for Contra Dancers Old Timers or Newcomers

• **Have fun!** Do not be nervous about mistakes. Everyone was once a beginner – listen, laugh & enjoy.

• Callers generally do a "walk through" and it is <u>very</u> <u>important to listen –</u> even if you know the dance, someone else may need the practice. Ask for help if you do not understand something

• It is customary to change partners for each dance and it especially helps newcomers learn quickly. It's also okay for women to ask men to dance or if there are not enough of one gender, be brave and try dancing another part. If you are a woman and you're dancing the male part, it helps to wear a tie to indicate which role you are dancing. We don't have any hair ribbons yet for the guys who dance the women's part.

• All dances happen because of volunteers. NACDS has had a faithful few doing all the work for years. So, jump in and help. Members who helped August 20 realized how much the faithful few had been doing all these years! Thank you.

• Eye contact is important and flattering!

• "Give weight." Hold your arms firm but flexible. Guys, when you swing the gals give the gals support with that hand on the back; otherwise, they feel like they are falling. Gals, lean back a bit. Giving weight helps the dance to flow smoothly.

• Have a firm hand grip but don't squeeze the hands (arthritis- ouch). You may want to leave big rings at home.

• Remember – no alcohol, smoking or perfumes in dance hall, but yes to breath mints and deodorant!

• Timing is important. The music for most contras and squares has four beats per bar and the dance moves are generally multiples of four. Generally the moves are eight beats. For example, circle left eight, circle right eight, swing eight beats, etc. Occasionally, there is a lucky sixteen beat swing. Practice being on time for each move even if you have to skip a move to catch up. Fancy twirls and footwork are fine if you and your partner are comfortable with the extras and are on time for the next move.

NACDS North Alabama Country Dance Society 4304 Holmes Ave., NW, Huntsville, AL 35816 Address correction requested



Send just \$10 for one, or \$15 per family, to the address above.

> Make checks payable to NACDS. (mailing label shows renewal date)

> > Members receive monthly newsletter, 2 guest passes, and a \$1 DISCOUNT to each regular dance!