

Bob Hears the Music

By Bob Bennett

About a year before my divorce, I took up guitar lessons. My instructor introduced me to the blues, and I was electrified. Here was my life in music. I played the basic 12 bar progressions until my fingers bled. I listened to all the greats, Buddy Guy, Johnny Winters, Muddy Waters, and many others. And just when I thought it couldn't get any better, I discovered Stevie Ray Vaughn. I couldn't imagine the guitar played more perfectly or with more heart. In a span of two weeks, I purchased almost all of his albums. His music was in my head constantly, and that was a very good thing.

I was star struck, and read everything I could find about him. For most of the 1980s he was just an obscure blues guitar player with a small cult following. But on August 27, 1990, he arrived. He had secured a place on stage with the living greats; Eric Clapton, Robert Cray, and Buddy Guy. After decades of struggling, he had reached his dream. Having achieved true star status, he was given the luxury of a helicopter ride to begin his journey home. He never got there. The helicopter crashed, killing all aboard.

They say we idolize people to make up for deficiencies in our own lives, and so as I wept for a man I never knew, I was really weeping for myself.

During my first couple of years as a dancer, I didn't hear the music. All my concentration was focused on not making mistakes. When I would tell people I was traveling to a dance, they would ask, "Who's playing?" And as always I would reply, "I don't know." Then they would say, "Oh. Well, who's calling?" And as always I would reply, "I don't know." I was the only contra dancer I knew who didn't have a favorite band.

And then one day, as I was dancing along, I heard it. A guitar. It was driving the rhythm in a way that burned through my insecurities and got my attention. The pace was furious and the playing was masterful. It seemed as though I could hear every note of every chord. I came to the realization that I was supposed to be dancing to *music* and that the band was not a metronome. After it was over, I glanced up at the stage and got a bit of a surprise. I had imagined the player would be soaked in sweat from the effort of pouring out all that physical and creative energy, but he was not even slightly ruffled. In fact, he appeared serene.

Some months later, it happened again, but this time the riffs were undeniably borrowed from the blues. For the first time, the joy of the music superseded the joy of the dance. The greatest joy of my present life had just been connected with one of the greatest joys of my past life. I will never forget it. And again, I got a surprise: It was the same guy. A few questions later, I learned his name is Roger Gold.

Up until now, the people who made the music I loved were above and beyond me. But as a dancer they are a part of my life. I see, speak, and dance with them on a regular basis. It occurs to me that in many ways our community is a complete community; everyone we need is already a part of us. We are self-contained.

I don't have much use for wishes these days, but I do have a few, and one of them is that Roger Gold never takes a helicopter ride.

Check out Bob's excellent photography in this newsletter as well as on our Yahoo Web Site and at <http://www.pbbase.com/bobbennett>

Getting To Know You

Diane Walls

Diane is a graphic designer and has been self-employed (primarily) for more than 18 years. (<http://www.claydogdesign.com>) She married Bryan several years ago and moved from Atlanta to Huntsville. They are the proud owners of 2 border collies and she has a sister in Palm Harbor, FL and a brother in Denver, CO.

Besides contra dancing, Diane's hobbies include pottery, gardening and dog agility training. She has very eclectic musical tastes ranging from folk to rock to world beat to classical to drumming to Irish to Celtic to Scottish! And yes, she even played the bagpipes and oboe when she was a teenager.

Diane has only been contra dancing five years and her first impressions of contra dancing included the shared laughter, friendliness and great music. Hey! That's what she still enjoys today. She and Bryan gypsy to Nashville, Mentone, Atlanta and she's even danced in Washington, D.C. and Tampa, FL. Besides contra dancing she occasionally does swing and Cajun and she performed Scottish dances in various Highland Games way back when.

Being a former officer in NACDS or just lending a helpful hand to a new newsletter editor fits nicely into Diane's agenda. Thanks for your timely help during these past few months as I am learning the newsletter process.

Roger Coupland

Roger is recently retired from Integraph and is enjoying having more time to pursue hobbies like hiking, reading, traveling, and card playing. (He was expecting 10 guests to play Bridge when I called to interview him for this column.) He is also still doing some consulting so life is not all fun and games in retirement.

His son, Michael, is 21 and soon to be a graduate of Harvey Mudd College in Claremont, CA. Roger and Michael soon will embark on a trip to sightsee and visit relatives in the British Isles. Roger hails from Wales originally. I guess that's why we love his accent!

He began contra dancing in the late 1980s at the little historic church at Burrirt on the Mountain. There were wonderful people involved and it was great fun and good exercise, he recalls. The fun, exercise and wonderful people is still the same though the location has moved to the foot of the mountain. Roger regrets that he does not get to dance as often as he'd like these days. He has been to Mentone and Nashville occasionally since he began doing contra dance.

Roger enjoys a variety of types of music including pop and classical.

Do you want to be featured in this section or write an article? It's simple. Email articles, bios, and/or pictures to Linda at wmca@hiwaay.net.



This and That

New Year's Resolutions often go by the wayside quickly, but here is a good one to consider. Knowing that all volunteer organizations survive only with volunteers working, why not become a member of the elite group that makes our dances happen. I say "elite" because it's a small group, not an exclusive group. All volunteer workers who set up tables, chairs, sound equipment, refreshment table, etc. absolutely would welcome new volunteers to share the load. The Christmas Dance was fun with great music and dancing but do you remember the lovely decorations, great door prizes, and good refreshments. Of course you do...and yes, many volunteers worked together to make the dance a success. So, resolve now to join the group of volunteer workers – at least occasionally. *Thanks.*

Huntsville Calendar

Huntsville dances are the 1st & 3rd Saturdays of each month in the gym at Faith Presbyterian Church, 5003 Whitesburg Dr., South, (corner of Whitesburg Dr. & 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!

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

Date	Caller	Band
Jan 7	Chrissy Davis-Camp	Wolves a Howlin'
Jan 21	Vicki Herndon	Jim & Inge Wood
Feb 4	Jane Ewing	Ed Baggott & Elsie Peterson
Feb 18	Harry Delugach	Maple Hill



Area Dance Gypsy Calendar

Date	Location	Caller	Band
Jan 14	Birmingham	Vicki Herndon	Ed Baggott & Elsie Peterson
Jan 27	Sewanee	Janet Shepherd	Mountain Creek Boys
Jan 6	Nashville	Chrissy Davis-Camp	The Cumberland Tenderfoots
Jan 13	Nashville	John Sharlet	Wingates
Jan 20	Nashville	Susan Kevra	Russ Barenberg & Friends
Jan 27	Nashville	Judy Greenhill	Relative Harmony (from Toronto)
Jan 28	Nashville (2-4 PM English Workshop)	Ginger Pyron	Calliope
Jan 14	Chattanooga	Chrissy Davis-Camp	David Coe & Frances Cunningham
Jan 28	Chattanooga	Judy Greenhill	Relative Harmony (from Toronto)

FoOTMaD (Birmingham) dances 2nd Saturdays at the YMCA, 3rd Ave & 23rd St, 7:30 PM. <http://www.bamalong.com/bed.htm>.

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 details, call (931) 598-0814 or check <http://www.mistycontra.zoomshare.com/>.html

NCD (Nashville) dances almost every Friday at 8:00 PM at University School.

For directions, contact Chrissy at (615) 210-6808 John, email: DanceFools@aol.com or <http://dancenashville.org/>

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. <http://hometown.aol.com/horselovers/index.html>

Sautee Community Dances (N. GA) once a month from Sept – May. <http://sauteecontra.home.mindspring.com/>

NACDS

North Alabama Country Dance Society

4304 Holmes Avenue, NW, Huntsville, AL 35816

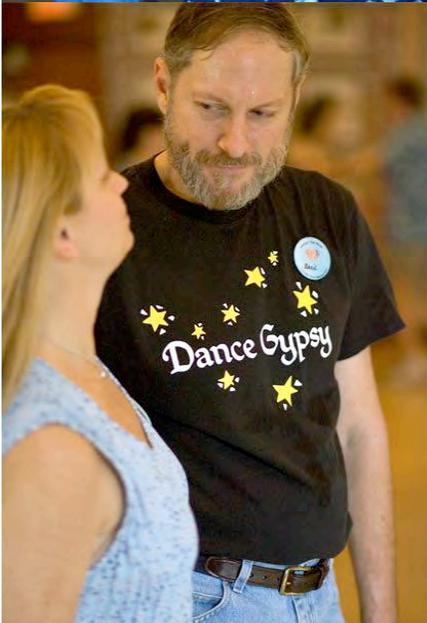
Address Correction Requested

Please Join Us!
Or Renew Your Membership!

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!



Diane Walls, Marilee Keim, Shelly Vann
Basil Pinker & Liz
Donna Deaton, Roger Gold

Happy New Year

