



JULY-AUGUST
SUMMER ISSUE

TFTM *news*
The Tucson Friends of Traditional Music

AS LONG AS I GET TO DANCE

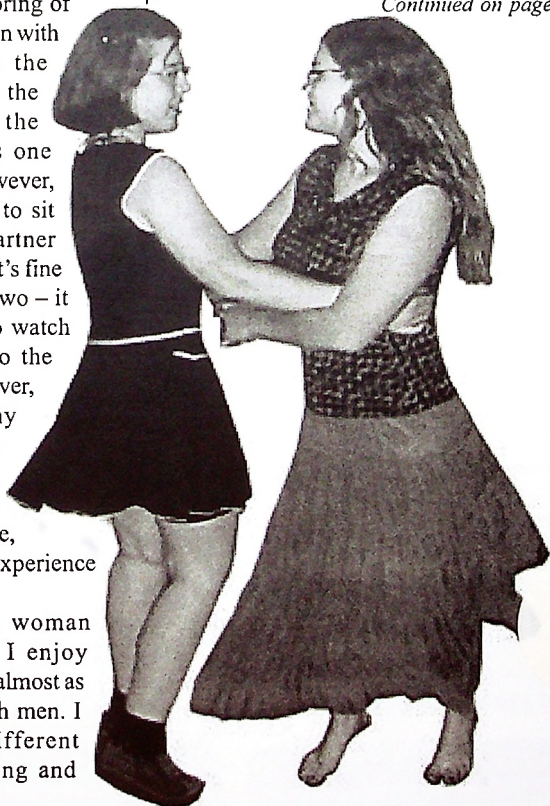
I re-discovered contra dancing in the Spring of 2005 and jumped in with both feet. I loved the dancing, the music, the friendliness of the dancers. There was one thing I didn't love, however, and that was having to sit out for lack of a partner while others danced. It's fine to sit out a dance or two – it gives me a chance to watch the dancers, listen to the music, and rest. However, sitting out too many dances brings up old memories of being a wallflower in high school and after a while, it colors the whole experience of contra dancing.

Occasionally a woman asks me to dance. I enjoy dancing with women almost as much as dancing with men. I enjoy their different approaches to leading and

dancing. However, being fairly new to contra dancing, I haven't felt comfortable taking the man's role.

The problem of gender imbalance is addressed formally at weekend dances by limiting the number of women who are

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allowed to attend. Women are placed on a waiting list until a partner shows up for them. I learned quickly to register for Dance in the Desert (Oracle) and May Madness (Prescott) ASAP to be sure I'm able to attend the dance.

How do other dancers feel about gender imbalance, I wondered? I decided to query more experienced dancers and callers.

Dale Tersey, 2006-2007 president of TFTM, said he doesn't see gender imbalance as a problem because there are frequently more women than men, and women are willing to dance with each other.

Bruce Hardwick in Prescott thinks it's a problem. "We don't have anything innovative in Prescott. We just have a collection of neckties and ladies volunteer to dance as men and wear them to ward off confusion." He suggested the solution lies in recruiting more men, but he is stumped on how to do this. He joked, "How about a Tucson-wide campaign? I'm thinking of a billboard with the picture of a really good-looking, young woman with the caption, 'I need a dance partner,' and a phone number."



Dan Pearl, the chair of the Thursday night Contra Dance at Concord Scout House in Cambridge, thinks most dances "tend to get to a self-selected steady state. A gender imbalance of less than 60-40 might be regarded by most as 'equal enough.' Any more imbalanced and more and more people might feel that things are getting a bit too competitive (for the predominant sex) or there is too much pressure to dance every dance (for the minority sex). If the situation is objectionable dance after dance, some of the majority sex may decide to give up and go elsewhere, thus improving the situation for those who stick it out. Eventually, a steady state is achieved and even if there is an

The Tucson Friends of Traditional Music Newsletter is Published

Ten Times a Year By:

The Tucson Friends of Traditional Music
PO Box 40654, Tucson, AZ 85717-0654

Tucson Friends of Traditional Music (TFTM) is dedicated to keeping the traditions of community music and dance alive and growing in Tucson. TFTM sponsors and promotes concerts, dances, workshops, and informal music sessions. Through these activities and a newsletter publication, TFTM builds awareness, educates, and fosters diversity in music and dance in the Tucson community.

Tucson Friends of Traditional Music is incorporated in the state of Arizona as a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation.

For more info, visit www.tftm.org, or call us at 520-408-6181.

imbalance, people expect it (and get it) week after week, and while they might grumble, they have proven to stick it out.”

Gaye Fifer, a caller from Charlottesville, Virginia, said, “Personally, I like it when there are more women than men because then I can dance as a lead without leaving a man in the lurch. I have been to a few workshops (at contra dance weekends) where the caller has set out to make both genders aware of what it’s like to be in the other position. This has been done by having partners switch roles and intentionally do the dance in the other position. It is also interesting to have same sex partners and dance a dance in whatever role you are. This is good practice for learning either gender role, and not just responding to the gender of the neighbor coming at you.”

Merri Rudd, a caller from Albuquerque responded to my question about dancing the man’s part. “It’s really a matter of ‘leading’ versus ‘following.’ It’s helpful to know both parts, just so you understand the challenges that each dancer’s position has. Because I’m an experienced dancer, I often dance the ‘lead.’ Dancing the lead means knowing

who needs to be where when, guiding the follower with firm, but not painful cues, and making the follower feel safe and look his/her best.

“My best dancing-as-a-guy story was at a dance in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. It was a cramped, hot, muggy, sweaty venue with too many women, so I asked a woman to dance. She was wary and reluctant, but I told her I danced the man’s role a lot in New Mexico. The dance had

a *hey* figure in it. I

gently guided her through all the moves. At the end of the dance, she looked at me enthusiastically and exclaimed, “You’re the best guy I’ve ever danced with!!!!” She found me again before she left the dance hall to thank me.

“Some of our women dancers don’t know how to lead, so in 2007 we hope to have an afternoon workshop and potluck before a dance to teach them.

My suggestions for Tucson dances are for callers to teach one dance early in the evening that features switching roles.

I’d like to see a workshop on teaching women to lead at Dance in the Desert.

As Merri Rudd said, “I don’t really care who I dance with or which role, as long as I get to dance to rowdy, live music!”

When I call at dance weekends around the country, maybe I should add this to my repertoire of potential workshops. I think I will.”

Robin Lewis, a local dancer, wrote, “I originally learned to dance the man’s part because my younger daughter wasn’t comfortable dancing with anyone outside the family and it was easier for

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her to dance the woman's part at first. Now my two daughters, Laila and Katie, and I all dance the man's role quite a bit because it's better than not dancing at all. Frankly, it's not as fun as dancing with guys, but at least it's dancing. Plus, we feel that we are really contributing to the dance community because when we dance with other women, two women are removed from the gender imbalance problem."

When my sister was visiting this past winter, I brought her to a Saturday night dance. To my amazement, after sitting out a couple of dances, she asked a woman to dance.

"Why not?" she said. "What am I risking?" Her attitude was enlightening. I've decided I'll start asking women to dance. I've asked two women to dance with positive results. They both thanked me afterwards and one of the women has taken to asking other women to dance.



FAREWELL FROM THE EDITOR

by Jorga Riggbach

Two years ago I began my favorite volunteer job: TFTM Newsletter Editor. My goals, as they always are when I work as a volunteer, were to learn, to enjoy and to share. I am pleased to tell you that I succeeded. I learned a great deal about traditional music and contra dancing. I enjoyed the process of crafting a newsletter filled with information and interviews. I was especially happy to meet and get to know so many interesting, generous and talented people. I was able to share my enthusiasm by way of the newsletter with the traditional music/contra community.

Everyone was wonderfully helpful and cooperative. When I needed photos for the newsletter, I'd explain what I was looking for and dancers and musicians patiently worked with me.

Columnist Bruce Thomson, in spite of his busy work schedule, sent in his marvelous column, complete with a tune

and ABC notation, every month. What a sweetheart.

Jim McConnell let me use his handsome mug for many months in our membership ads and he also wrote reviews and acted as a sounding board when I needed advice or someone to help me proofread.

I appreciate Jeff Thorne who wrote an article and Jackie Newlove who wrote this month's featured article. I was glad when I received something from the Dance Camp Committee and Board Members. *Gracias a* everyone who participated in making the newsletter useful by sharing information.

As much as I've enjoyed working on the newsletter, it's time to let it go. I am co-authoring a book that's coming out this fall. With all the deadlines I have, I don't know if I'm coming or going. Once I finish this book, I have a reprint to finish up.

So, with many thanks to all of you, this is *adios*.



REVIEW: LOWDOWN HOEDOWN AND RAZ-DE-MAREE

by Jim McConnell

There is something about Québécois traditional dance music that grabs your attention and lets you know what it is. The contras on this recording, played by the six people that make up Raz-de-Maree - "Tidal Wave," (*Tidal Wave* to us Anglophones) announce their origin loudly and plainly. If you've never heard this kind of music before, this CD will start you off right.

A forty-eight minute CD of music intended to accompany contra dance might sound like a good substitute for *Lunesta*®, but a good band can change your mind about that. **Raz Mareé** is that kind of band. Most cuts on this recording consist of four or five repetitions of the tune and that's the way it's usually done, but somehow these people manage to make each repetition sound fresh and alive; fun.

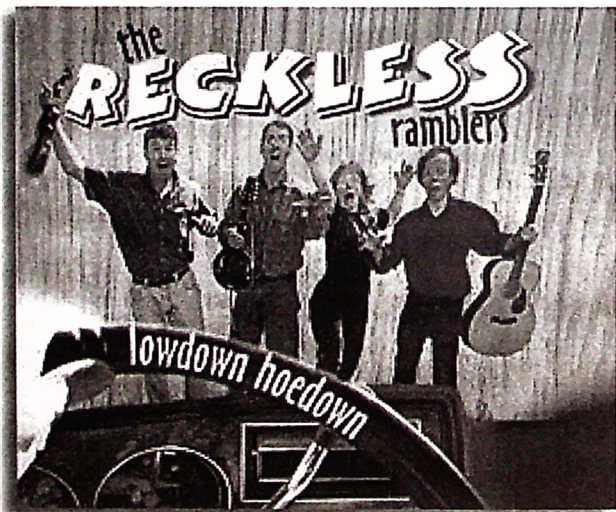
The **Lowdown Hoedown** CD features performances by the **Reckless Ramblers**, a new permutation of players from contra dance hotbeds all over the country. A group of



journeyman musicians, well known in the field, they cut their teeth on this music and dance tradition. The artists are

Sam Bartlett; mandolin, tenor banjo and drums; Nat Hewitt; fiddle and guitar; Ginny Snow; bass; Larry Ungar; banjo, guitar, banjo uke and resonator guitar.

Listening to these two discs sequentially, I was impressed by how stylistic the Québécois sounded and how familiar was the sound of the Reckless Ramblers. You might not be able to find a comparable group of musicians to the **Reckless Ramblers**, but on a given Saturday night you can find lots of contra dance bands on two or three continents



striving to do what **Reckless Ramblers** to do so easily.

The Québécois music is fresh and the whole rhythmic structure is complex and varied. The instrumentation and the way the rhythm shows up, puts the difference between the two groups in your face. So, how is it they are both meant to play for contra dances? I don't know but I'm looking forward to trying it out on the dance floor some time.

We do dance to a lot of French-Canadian tunes here in Tucson, including one that was made famous by a group called *La Bottine Souriante* which includes **Andre Bruner** who is also in **Raz Mareé**. There's even one tune on the CD, *Dedicado a Jo*, that is adapted it from a Mexican tune.

I recommend that you make up an excuse to buy one or both of these CDs.

Go to these URLs for ordering info:

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

<http://www.greatmeadowmusic.com>



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TFTM Newsletter Editor Wanted.
Start with the September 2007 Issue. Please Contact any Member of the Board of Directors to Volunteer.



TUNE OF THE MONTH

Bruce Thomson
(LibTNov1@aol.com)

THE NEXT GENERATION

One of the things that has bothered me for some time is the *gerontification* of many of the folk music and dance communities. When I started playing for dances, the average age of the people in the hall was mid to late twenties. Now our kids are in their mid to late twenties and not a lot of them are playing music or coming to the dances. I'm not a social scientist, so I can only guess the causes. Although the causes are important, I think it's more productive to expend our energy developing strategies to encourage more young folks to participate. I'll explore a few ideas in this column to get us started, and maybe some of you readers will have other ideas.

The first and most obvious strategy is that when young folks come to the jam



sessions or dances, we make them feel welcome. It's probably a little easier for dancers because there is so much direct social interaction, but common sense (if you've got it) and courtesy (you better have it) can go a long way.

Introduce yourself, then introduce the newcomer to others. Help newcomers with tricky dance calls or steps and don't criticize mistakes. Be prepared to rescue a young person, especially if you see that person is repeatedly stuck dancing with a dork.

For musicians, encourage the newcomers to pick some of the tunes in a jam session. They're almost certain to pick something **really** boring like "Bowl Them Cabbage Down" or "Soldier's Joy," but it won't kill you to play it again – maybe you can work on a harmony or something. Play other easy tunes during the evening, and play them slowly for a while. Help the young newcomers with tricky passages or chords. Suggest web sites, CDs

or music collections to help them build their repertoire, and maybe help them find a teacher if they're so inclined.

Getting young folks to come to the dance or jam session in the first place is tough. It starts with publicity, but most of us aren't too familiar with this arena. A good web site helps – especially if you can

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Walking in My Sleep

Musical score for "Walking in My Sleep" in G major, 3/4 time. The score consists of four staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a common time signature (C). The melody starts on G4. The second staff continues the melody. The third staff continues the melody. The fourth staff concludes the piece. Chord symbols G, D, and C are placed above the notes to indicate the harmonic accompaniment. The piece ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

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somehow get the word "sex" in the page title. Not too long ago the Albuquerque paper did a big story with nice photos on the local contra dances: attendance at the next dance doubled. For musicians, a regularly scheduled open jam at a public venue (coffee shop, pub, or recreation center) offers a non-threatening, non-judgmental environment for youthful musicians. They can come or leave as they please without an invitation and they can sit in the back and play quietly if they're uncertain about the tunes. Having said that, the folks in the front should be aware of the young people and try to draw them into the main circle.

A third strategy that has been used with some success in New Mexico is to offer a one-credit class through the local university's music department. Each semester the department offers numerous one-credit music studios taught by adjunct instructors, usually for no pay.

A class taught this past spring by the *Virginia Creepers*, a local old-time band, at the University of New Mexico had twenty students: a mix of students including a couple of music majors and non-students. The class met for two hours each week, and involved discussions of music theory, music history and old time music lore (much of it was pure, unadulterated baloney), instruction

on each of the instruments, and a lot of group playing. The principal emphasis was on learning tunes in a variety of styles and developing the student's musicianship. After several weeks, the students were divided into two "bands" and the semester culminated with a concert in one of the small concert halls. The class has fun and a number of young folks have been recruited into the old time music scene, but it does require a significant commitment from the instructors.

If anybody has other ideas for recruiting new, young musicians and dancers to the contra dance and music scene, please send 'em to me. It might be a good topic for future columns.

Unquestionably the best way to recruit younger folks to the scene is the national success of young, hot bands. *Uncle Earl* is a quartet of dynamic, attractive women who are excellent musicians. The group consists of **Kristin Andreassen** (guitar), **Rayna Gellert** (fiddle), **KC Groves** (mandolin and guitar) and **Abigail Washburn** (banjo). They have an active touring schedule and have recorded some really good CDs as a band and as individuals. If any group can lure youthful dancers and musicians into the fold, it's these ladies. This month's tune is from their 2005 release "*She Waits for Night*" on **Rounder**. The first cut, *Walking in My Sleep*, is a pretty good dance tune and has good words as well.

Photos in this issue: Page 1 - Laila and Katie Lewis. Page 2 - Jackie Newlove. Page 3 - Linda Stacey, Marilyn Clevinger. Page 5 - Open Band. Page 7 - Liz Healy. Page 8 - Bruce Thomson & Uncle Earl. Page 13 - Sue Dupre & Rick Mohr. Page 14 - Dale and Lorien Tersey.

Words:

If you see that gal of mine
Tell her if you please
When she goes to bake her bread
Roll up her dirty sleeves

Chorus:

Walking in my sleep
Walking in my sleep
Up and down that Dixie line
Walking in my sleep

Bake them biscuits baby
Bake them good and brown
When I eat my breakfast
I'm Alabama bound.

Pain in my fingers
Pain in my thumb
Pain in my ankle bone
I ain't gonna work no more.

Yonder comes that gal of mine
How do you think I know
Tell her by her golden curls
Hanging down so low.

ABC Notation

X:73

T:Walking in My Sleep

N:From Uncle Earl, "She Waits for Night", Rounder-11661-0565-2

N:Transcribed by Bruce Thomson

L:1/8

M:C

K:G

|:"G" g2g2 ged2|[g3d3][gd][g4d4]|g2g2edB2|"D" A3AA4|
a2a2a2g2|[f3A3]f[f4A4]|f2f2edBF|"G" G3GG4:|
|:"G" D4DEG2|B3BB4|B3A GABc|"D" d3dd4|
A2A2A2B2|"C" c3cc4|BcB2AGEF|"G" G3GG4:|

CD REVIEW: ROUND THE HOUSE "SAFE HOME"

by Jim McConnell

Full disclosure: Most of the players on this CD are friends. I have known them since I moved to Tucson fifteen-years-ago. I can't pretend to be objective or disinterested where this recording is concerned.

Round The House has become a fixture on the Tucson music scene and is becoming equally well-know and popular in the Southwest and all over the country. They recently played in the **Dallas Celtic Music Festival** and are regulars at venues all over Arizona and New Mexico. Their reputation is earned by the dues-paying, hard work they put into learning their instruments (I include Ms. Zucker's voice here).

A professionally produced recording is more rewarding to listen to for several reasons. For me, the most important reason is that the individual members of the group can always be heard making the contribution they mean to make. The individual texture added by each instrument is fully present, like the colors woven into a plaid. You can stand back and look at the effect of the whole piece of cloth or get in close and see where each thread goes. You can listen to the music ensemble or to any of the individual instruments. This is a well produced CD.

In this case, that's good because each member's part is worth listening to. Mark Robertson-Tessi's guitar furnishes the bottom, the rhythm, the lead, the harmony and when he's not doing any of those things, he furnishes a tonal backdrop for

the rest of the group. Claire's bodhran playing is crisp, sure, expressive and at times innovative enough that I was never bored with it. If that sounds like faint praise, think again. I can say that about very, very few bodhran players. I will also say that if she weren't there, her drumming would be sorely missed. I have listened to her singing literally hundreds of times, but I never heard it like this. For one thing I heard a remarkable lower register that was powerful and rich-toned. I would like to hear more of it.

Dave Firestein is almost a force of nature when it comes to mandolin and octave mandolin playing. He is steady and dead-on with the tune. His Octave mando playing in accompaniment is sensitive and, at times, sweet. (I imagine I will pay dearly for using these adjectives next time I see Dave.) He is also an accomplished tenor banjo player. Although Dave doesn't play it on this CD, I wish he had.

Sharon Goldwasser continues to amaze me with her fiddle playing. She has gotten to the point that her playing sounds intuitive, natural and relaxed. I admire her for her determination and I admire her playing; it was spot-on for this CD. Her respect for the traditional aspect of the tunes shines through when she plays the older, trad music.

This is a good recording that will reward the listener. He/she will have fun, be excited, amused and saddened by the songs and tunes in turn. I listened to this CD and I thought it was time well spent. I believe you will too.

REGISTER FOR DID NOW

by Liz Healy

We're going to have a really great Dance in the Desert Contra Dance Camp again this year. Mark your calendar for November 9-11, 2007, to dance to the music of the renowned musician, Rodney Miller, and Airdance with calling by Sue Dupre and Rick Mohr. The cost is \$190.00 (or \$180 for TFTM members) for two nights and all meals at the Triangle Y Ranch in Oracle, Arizona. Registration began June 1, and we're already about a third full. We will need to begin a waiting list for single women soon, to gender balance the camp, so if you're a single woman, get your registration in right away.

For your convenience, we have easy, online registration at www.tftm.org. We're looking forward to seeing you there.



About Sue Dupre: "I have traveled from coast to coast and north to south, calling at dances, parties, weddings and community celebrations. I

also perform as dancing mistress for 18th Century reenactor events in New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

"I am known for enthusiasm and good humor, for an extensive repertoire representing the best of the old and the new, for clear and

efficient teaching, for a rhythmic calling style, and for my work with novice dancers.

"In addition to my work as a caller, I am passionately devoted to the promotion and performance of historic English ritual and ceremonial dances in American communities. I am the founder and foreman of a sword and garland dance team, *Shandygaff Longsword*. I am also the foreman of a molly dance team, Handsome Molly, who appeared at the *Whittlesey Straw Bear Festival* in Whittlesey, U.K. I am a former member of the rapper sword dance team, *Griggstown Lock*, and for many years have directed mummers plays in central New Jersey."

About Rick

Mohr: "By profession I am a software developer/architect for Pageflex.

Our software creates variable documents, and I can tell you in intimate detail how every last letter, picture, and line gets positioned (always a big hit at parties).

"Much of my creative energy is devoted to traditional music and dance, particularly New England Contra Dancing but also harmony

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Continued from page 13

singing, Morris and rapper dancing, playing fiddle and melodeon.

“Many weekends find me traveling around New England and beyond to call and play my fiddle for contra dances.

“Some may also know me as a dance composer; one of these days I will surely publish a book of dances. A recent enthusiasm is squantras and contrares.”



ONGOING ACTIVITIES of Traditional Music and Dance. These are not TFTM events.

♫ **Irish Jam Session at The Auld Dubliner, 800 East University Blvd** (Southeast corner of Euclid and University): Traditional Irish jam session every Sunday from 4-8 PM. Info: (520) 206-0323

♫ **Scottish Country Dancing:** Thursdays, 7:30 pm, First United Methodist Church, 915 E. 4th St. Info: 520-299-5566.

♫ **Celtic & Old-Time Jam:** Open Jam session on the first and third Tuesdays. Slow Jam from 7-8 pm. Fast Jam from 8-10 pm. Rincon Market, 6th St. at Tucson Blvd. Set up in the Deli area. Tunes from the TFTM Tune Book and some other sources.

♫ **Shape Note Singing:** First and third Saturdays, 3-5 pm, Sonora Cohousing Common Room, 501 E. Roger Rd. Info: 682-6201.



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Dance Camp Contra Dances Special Events

UPCOMING DANCES

Location: First United Methodist Church, 915 4th Ave.

Time: 7:30-Lesson, 8:00-Dance. **Cost:** \$8 Public, \$7 TFTM, \$6 Student.

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