**JUNE 2008** 



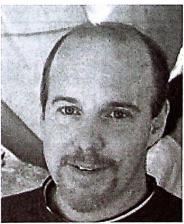
# TFTM news

Tucson Friends of Traditional Music **Volume 8, Number 5** 









Brass, Bartlett, Schneckenberger, and Kenney: It's a BAND, not a LAW FIRM!

## TFTM CONTRADANCE SPRING SCHEDULE

Location: First United Methodist Church, 915 4th Street., Time: 7:30 Free Introductory Lesson 8:00 Dance Cost: \$8 public; \$7 TFTM members; \$6 Student First Timers?: Receive a Second Dance Free card.

May 24 - Open Band - Caller TBA
May 31 - Band and Caller TBA
June 7 - FAMILY DANCE 5:30
(info, Allison Lee 615-9040)
Followed by Pot Luck and
Regular Contradance

Tucson Friends of Traditional Music Contradances
Are 1st, 3th, 4th, and 5th Saturdays of Month
Generally at above location unless otherwise noted.
Look for Summer Dance Schedule in July/August Issue

## oracle community barn dance

Second Saturdays

For specific information and location Of June Dance and summer dances

> Check Events at www.oracletown.com

## Dance in the Desert's 2008 Guest Band

Brass, Bartlett, Schneckenberger, and Kenney: It's a BAND, not a LAW FIRM!

### By Marni Dittmar

This year's guest band is a terrific mix of musicians who have all played with each other, but not exactly in this incarnation. Lucky for the dancers, each member of the band brings a special energy to the whole.

Stuart Kenney, who hails from Massachusetts, lays down the heartbeat of the tunes with his upright bass. He has helped in the founding of many great dance bands, including Air-Dance Greenfield dance. The Sevens. Tidal Wave, and a new collaboration called Undertoe. Stuart toured with the popular Wild Asparagus band for 14 years, and has played for such venues as Prairie Home Companion, the American Folk Festival, and the Ashokan

Fiddle and Dance workshops, to name just a few.

Stuart also plays the Northern style 5-string banjo, and offers workshops on both banjo and bass. He and his wife Alice host the TopHill Music series of Contradance parties at the Guiding Star Grange in Greenfield, Massachusetts. Stop by to dance, on the second and fourth Saturdays, should you find yourself in the neighborhood!

Lissa Schneckenburger grew up in Maine, and has been playing fiddle and singing folk tunes from a very early age. She has a solid formal musical background, having graduated from the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston in 2001. Since then, her travels have taken her all over the world. She has performed in Russia, The Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, and Canada, as well as all over the United States.

Lissa's fiddling has earned praise like "her talent lies in crafting pendulating melodies and innovative freewheeling arrangements" (Dirty Linen), and "Her fiddling is artful, inventive, and full of feeling!"

(Folk Roots). She'll bring a lively and melodic boost to the band, and her music will make your feet leave the floor.

You may know Sam Bartlett from his tours with Wild Asparagus, or his joining with Jay Ungar and Molly Mason at the Ashokan music and dance camps. You may have seen him perform Stuntology. or have one of the brilliant colorful T-shirts he designed. You may have heard his music in one of the many bands he plays with, including (but not limited to) Blue Earth, the Monks, the Half Monks, Rumblestrip. the Kinkston Trio. the Harmonizers, the Monks New Grange, with None. Reckless Ramblers, Uncle Gizmo, Tongue and Groove. Mr. Danger, and the Sevens.

Sam plays banjo, fiddle, mandolin, and any number of instruments that intrigue him. He plays three distinct styles of traditional music- Irish, old-time American, and the everevolving style that encompasses "contra dance tunes". While he loves to innovate within each style, he consciously avoids blending all that he knows into an eclectic mess. Whether on the stage

or in a jam, Sam brings fun and wild energy to each note!

Mary Cay Brass joins the band from Vermont, where she works as an artist-in-resi-England dence for New traveled schools. She has widely, including a two and a half year tour in the former Yugoslavia, where she studied song and dance on a Fulbright Scholarship. She plays piano and accordion, often with the Greenfield Dance Band in Massachusetts. She also tours with the popular band Airdance, as well and playing with Mosaic, Ruckus, Rodney Miller and and Friends

She is an active member of the New England Dancing Masters, and has made several recordings. Her music has been described as "bright, shiny,and eminently danceable", and she is much sought-after musician who can play well with many others.

DANCE IN DESERT REGISTRATION OPENS JUNE 1 WWW.TFTM.ORG

## TFTM ANNUAL MEETING NOTICE!

This year, TFTM will be having the annual General Meeting on Saturday, July 5th during our regular first Saturday dance and Special Summer Ice Cream Social.

We have closed our fiscal year "in the black" and are

looking at electing a new slate of candidates for the TFTM Board of Directors. We have several new members and, as always, we welcome other interested parties as well.

Keep in mind that some of us have been elected at meetings we failed to attend! Hope to see you there.

- Dale Tersey



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## Tune of the Month Bruce Thomson (LibTNov1@aol.com)

### Composing

Traditional American fiddle music principally evolved from the rustic folk music of the rural south during the latter half of the 19th century. Its popularity was due in part to its simplicity which made it accessible to a large and musically unsophisticated audience, the energy it procommunity vided for dances, and themes of suffering and celebration associated with rural life. With the emergence of and radio broadcast phonographic recording technologies traditional music entered lengthy stagnation period of 30 or 40 years as musicians of increasing skill began developing more modern and intricate styles such as bluegrass, swing, and country western music. In the late 1960's and early 1970's traditional music revivalists such as the New Lost City Ramblers and the Highwoods String Band went into the recording archives of repositories like the Library of Congress, learned the old tunes, and started a traditional music revival that is alive, well and thriving today.

There is one especially notable difference between the music of the revivalists and that of today or of 100 years ago - the bands of the 60's, 70's and 80's did very little composing. I recently went back through my collection of LPs (big round flat plastic things called records) by groups like the Ramblers, Highwoods, Alan Jabbour and the Hollow Rock Stringband, Doc Watson, and the Hotmud Family, and find that nearly all of their music was composed by other folks many decades before. fact, based on the liner notes, it appears that there was a sort of competition among the revivalists to find tunes and songs from ever more obscure sources, and recordings the contemporary took special care to reproduce the sound and idiosyncrasies of the original source. One of the first of the new traditional groups to do significant composing was the Red Clay Ramblers; they've been at it now for over 30 years, but even their first few albums consisted mostly of traditional tunes from old sources.

In the last decade or so many groups have been coming out with original tunes and this has really helped pump new life into the traditional music culture. In addition to well known and prolific tune meisters like Larry Unger (topic of a past column), Jay Ungar, and Mark Simos, there are musicians all around the country who are cranking out excellent, dynamic, and interesting new tunes. A couple of good sources of transcriptions are the two volume Portland Collection and the annual Carp Camp homework assignments (http://carpazon.com/index.ht m).

The idea of composing tunes is intriguing and calls for development of a totally different set of creative skills than those used to play an instrument or sing. I've explored this with a couple of excellent tunesters to learn a little about how they do it.

Larry Unger, whose work was discussed previously, has composed over 1000 tunes, and many have been recorded by others. Generally, he noodles around on one of several different instruments until something comes out that he likes. He writes it down on sheet music and uses that as a starting point. Sometimes he can finish a tune in a few minutes, and sometimes it takes months. He often will start with a specific objective such as create a dark tune or

spirited tune, but sometimes he'll just take what comes off his fingers and go with it.

Two of the most prolific tune spinners in the southwest are Rob Pine and Jim Mullanev from New Mexico. They have written an amazing number of tunes, both individually, but quite often collaboratively. They get together every Tuesday to practice as the Nabobs and frequently spend the first part of the evening working on a tune. Jim says that working together is very productive as one of them will have found a lick that serves as a seed crystal, they fool with it to develop a theme which subsequently "explodes into a whole Their writing process generally involves a lot of editing and they often end up with a tune that's completely different from what they started with. Sometimes a new tune will take 20 minutes to compose, but most take close to an hour. than that and Tom Christiansen, the banjo player, begins to get cranky.

I asked how they come up with titles. Jim says it's often the toughest part of the process, and is usually pretty random. Sometimes they'll use something that happened that day or some-

thing lying around the house (the title track of the Tom Adler produced CD "Sweet Nell" is named after Paul Newman's daughter whose face is on sacks of snacks ABC Notation at Nabob practices). At the same time, Jim's got a ton of stuff with no names.

David Margolin, one of CH 0246 CD the absolute best old time fiddlers around takes a very differpossibly ent, and unique approach to writing tunes. starts with a name and works from there. He says it's mostly because of his extensive background in linguistics (he's got a Ph.D. in the field). Some of the names include "Sweaty Horses," "Cowpies and Coffee" "Janitor Reel." The names give him inspiration and establish a theme and he works from there. Local lore has it that David accepts tune title suggestions from friends, students, and print and electronic media, and if it's sufficiently clever, witty, stupid, and/or poignant, he'll write a tune around it. He often composes tunes on lengthy car trips and will sing them to himself over and over 'til they're cemented in his synapses.

This month's tune "Snowday Waltz". This and many other tunes by David, Jim and Rob are on Tom Adler's excellent CD "Sweet Nell" (CH 0246).

X:94 T:Snowday Waltz C:David Margolin N:from "Sweet Nell" N:Transcribed by Bruce Thomson N: Published by permission from David Margolin M:3/4L:1/8 K:D z4DE|:"D"F3GA2|"G"B2c 2d2 | "A"e2c2A2 | A3GEG | " D"F3GA2|"G"B2c2d2| "A"A6|E4DE|"D"F3GA2|" G"B2c2d2|"A"e2c2A2|A2 d2c2|"G"B3AG2|"A"Ad3 c21 [1"D" (d4d) e | d4DE: | [2" D" (d4d) e | d4de | ] "D"f3f qf|"A"e2d2c2|"Dm"d3f ed I "F#m"c2B2A2|"G"B3AG2| "D"Ad3F2|"A" (E4E) F|E4 de|"D"f3f gf | "A"e2d2c2 | "Bm"d3f ed|"F#m"c2B2A2|"G"B3A G2 | "A"Ad3c2 | "D" (d4d) e 1d611





Contra Holiday in Ely, England

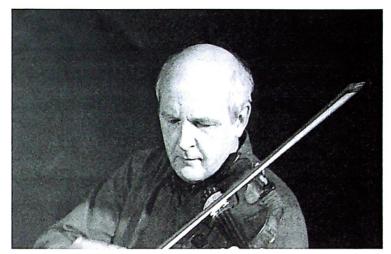
Do you Have a Favorite Dance/ music photo?

## Call for Submissions!

I think it would be great to have some "old" photos of early Dance in the Desert camps and/or other events of TFTM. If you have photos (preferably digitized) please submit them to susiet66@hotmail.com. I'm looking to fill our July/August issue with lots of memories and laughs! Write a catchy caption for your photo...Thanks for your help!



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## Randal Bays House Concert and fiddle workshops

By Sharon Goldwasser

Randal Bays will be performing a concert of music on fiddle and guitar in Tucson, Friday June 6 at 8 pm. Randal is an extraordinary musician, and this will be a very special evening of music in an intimate house concert setting.

Among the many Americans who play Irish fiddle, Randal Bays is one of the few to find serious acceptance and respect for his music in Ire-

land. His 2005 release, "House to House" (with Roger

Landes) was selected by the Irish Times as one of the top five traditional recordings of the year, and the Cork Examiner called him "a rare beast, a master of both the fiddle and the guitar."

Randal describes his music this way: "The real heart and soul of Irish music is the small session in a house or pub, just a few players gathered together for some tunes and fun. You start to play, and the next thing you know, the sun is coming up.

That's the feeling I try to recreate in my concerts."

Bays has performed all over the U.S., Europe and Canada, including appearances at

major festivals such as the Gaelic Roots Festival in Boston, the San Francisco Celtic Music and Arts Festival, the Festival Des Musiques-Vivantes in France, the Willie Clancy Summer School and Festival in Ireland, Catskills Irish Arts Week in New York. the Swannanoa Gathering in Asheville, North Carolina, Augusta Heritage Week in Elkins, West Virginia, the Friday Harbor Irish Music Camp, the Alaska Irish Music Festival. California's Sebastopol Festival and many more. Randal has recorded or performed with many great musicians. including James Kelly, John Williams. Sproule. Daithi James Keane, Martin Haves. and Tony McManus.

Randal is a co-founder of the Friday Harbor Irish Music Camp in Friday Harbor. Washington, and is also an album producer and poser who's created original scores for several award-winning films and documentaries. Randal now lives near Seattle, Washington. He has numerous recordinas to credit, including Katy Bar the Door, House to House (with Roger Landes). The and

Salmon's Leap, to name just a few

Tickets for the house concert are only \$15 in advance, \$1 more at the door, however reservations are required. Please contact Tom Ryan at twmirvan@cox.net or Sharon Goldwasser at azfiddle@mindspring.com or (520) 298-3014 to make your reservation. You make also send a check payable to Randal Bays to Sharon at 7309 E. Princeton Drive, Tucson AZ 85710 You willreceive directions to the concert after making your reservation.

Randal is also highly regarded for his teaching, and will be offering fiddle workshops on Saturday, June 7 in Tucson. Cost for the 2 hour workshop is \$40, and a discount may apply if you attend both events. Please contact Sharon for more details.

Randal is the teacher Sharon studied with last year. She felt it was right to give back to the community and performed a concert upon her return donating proceeds to TFTM. Please support this wonderful musician by attending the house concert and workshops!

# First Family Contra Dance a Big Success

## By Allison Lee

In April, we held our first "family contra dance" in Tucson. We had a great turn-out, about 35 families. People of all ages were on the dance floor. A new mom was dancing with her little baby in her Toddlers twirled around in the middle of the Preschoolers circle. nered with their parents. Kindergarteners partnered with their friends (but looked to grown-ups to know when to do what). Elementary schoolers followed the caller's instructions their on own. Middle schoolers modeled the steps for the little ones. Teenagers played with the steps, elaborating on them. As many dads were dancing Grandparents moms. as joined in. For almost everyone, this was their first time contra dancing. Many people said they want to do it again!

Our band was "Rare Olde Times," featuring Liz Healy playing Irish drum, Bonnie Lo-

hman on the Bass, Russ Healy on accordion, Richard Baker on fiddle, and Fred Feild on piano. We all, the children especially, loved dancing to live music. caller was Kathleen Halstead, who has lots of experience teaching dance to children. Our band and caller did a terrific job coordinating the music with the dancing, which must have been a challenge with all dancers being new and so many excited, noisy children.

From now on, Tucson Friends of Traditional Music will host a Family Contra Dance on the first Saturday of every month (except in July and August) at 5:30 PM in the Social Hall of the First United Methodist Church. There will be a potluck dinner to follow in either the courtyard or the Arizona Room of the church.

I got the idea for a family contra dance when, Saturday night after Saturday night, I wanted to go out dancing with my husband like we used to, before the kids, but it took too much energy to arrange (and money to pay) a babysitter, that I just never did it. I

wanted to find a way to bring the kids out dancing with us. But another problem was, most dancing happens in the evening, of course, after the kids' bedtimes.

When our daughter's 6<sup>th</sup> birthday was coming up, she said she wanted to have a dance party. Since we enjoy hosting parties that include the whole family, we decided to try out this idea of a "family dance party." We decided to make it contra dancing because contra dancing seemed to be the ideal kind of dance for families to learn together.

This turned out to be very true. We found that the adults who said they "don't know

how to dance" were persuaded to try, because they got step-by-step instruction from the caller. The older kids who said they are "too big for that" were made to feel useful by modeling the caller's directions for the little ones. Yet what best motivated people to dance was the sight of so many children dancing, laughing and having so much fun. They were so cute that you just could not resist joining them

I hope that, by giving our friends and children a regular time and place to learn to dance, they will grow up loving to dance, which is how it should be.

Contact Allison at 615-9040



Teaching Contradance in the streets of Havana, Cuba

## Pickin' in the Pines Festival in Flagstaff

The **Del McCoury Band** will headline **Pickin' in the Pines Bluegrass & Acoustic Music Festival** in Flagstaff this year, along with **Nashville Bluegrass Band**. We're well into planning our third annual festival, which will take place September 12-14, 2008. Early bird weekend tickets are now on sale for \$50, a savings of \$20 over the gate price of \$70. Children 16 and under are free!

In addition to the Del McCoury Band and Nashville Bluegrass Band, we'll be featuring Valerie Smith and Liberty Pike, with Becky Buller (valeriesmithonline.com and beckybuller.com), Carolina Chocolate Drops (carolinachocolatedrops.com), Steve Smith and Hard Road (hardroadband.com), Burnett Family Bluegrass (burnettfamilybluegrass.com), Bluegrass (springcreekbluegrassband.com), The Creek **Pilgrims** (billypilgrims.com). Road Billy Sawmill (sawmillroad.net). Muskellunge The Bluegrass, Knockabouts, and Springfed Band. Del's website is delmccouryband.com. and information about Nashville at Bluegrass Band is cmt.com/artists/az/nashville bluegrass band/artist.jhtml

Besides the performances, the festival will include workshops, contra dancing, a band contest, jamming, and children's activities, all out in the beautiful pines at the Pine Mountain Amphitheater just south of Flagstaff. Camping is available at the festival grounds with other lodging nearby.

For more information about the festival, please visit our website pickininthepines.org or phone our message line at 928-525-1695.

Check out the websites of the performers! And get your discounted early tickets!

Officer Committees	Name Telephone	Email Address
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Newsletter	Susie Tomlinson 544-2137	Susiet66@hotmail.com

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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 organization. For more into visit <a href="www.tftm.org">www.tftm.org</a> or call us at 520-408-6181



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Ongoing Activities Of Traditional Music and Dance Irish Jam Session at the Auld Dubliner, 800 E. University Blvd (Southeast corner of Euclid and University): Traditional Irish jam session every Sunday from 4-8 PM. First hour is for beginners/intermediate. Tunelist can be found at (www.tucsonirishsession.org) Info: (520) 206-0323

Scottish Country Dancing: Thursday, 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. **Rincon Market**, 6th St. At Tucson Blvd. Set up in the Deli area

- <u>Slow Jam</u> from 7-8:30 PM. 2nd, 4th, 5thTues. Contact Jamie Massey (er4az@aol.com) with questions and for playlist.
- <u>Fast jam</u> from 7:30-9:30 PM. 1st and 3rd Tues. Contact Dave Firestine 440-4716. Tunes from the TFTM Tune Book and some other sources.

**Shape Note Singing:** First and third Saturdays, 3-5 PM, Sonoran Co-Housing Common Room, 501 E. Roger Rd. Info: (520) 682-6201

Second Saturday Acoustic Music Song Circle & Singalong: 7 PM 3071 W San Juan Dr. Lead a song, perform a song, or just sing/play along. Lyric books supplied, bring a snack if you choose. Contact Fred Grosvenor for directions Fdg\_sd@yahoo.com.

Monthly Pot Lucks (for TFTM members and friends) - 4 pm-9pm, typically 1st Sundays, but sometimes on the 2nd Sunday. 3227 E. Glenn St., 906-0352.

Tucson Area Slow Session - Celtic: Open jam on the second and fourth Tuesdays, 7 to 10 pm at 2035 North Sahuara. Learn Irish Session Tunes by ear or "dot". Beginners welcome. Tunes played about half speed or slower. Contact 722-9485, or (sharonsmalley@webtv.net)

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