Spokane Folklore Society’s Zoom Holiday Party
Saturday December 12. 7:30—9:00PM

Merry Christmas and Happy Hanukkah!

Please join us as we celebrate forty years of music and dance here in Spokane. While we won’t be dancing together this year, you are invited to our Zoom Holiday Party Saturday December 12, starting at 7:30PM. You are encouraged to wear your Holiday finery, share an ornament, and eat your favorite dessert as we bring you an entertaining evening featuring familiar friends and guests of Christmas pasts.

Penn Fix who has called all but one of our 40 Christmas Contras will host the evening. Do you know who called the one Christmas dance that Penn couldn’t? Find out at our Holiday Party!

Arvid Lundin and Deep Roots will share their lovely jigs and reels interspersed with familiar holiday tunes. A special treat will be Darla Jean German and a couple of her band mates playing Missouri style fiddle tunes. Darla was our fiddler in Irish Jubilee which played for the very first Christmas contra. See a related article about her and the rest of Irish Jubilee in this month’s newsletter.

We want you to participate too! So dress up in red and green or blue and white. Be ready to wave at your friends in our zoom “grand march” where you can show your ornament and the dessert you would have shared with us at the dance. And be ready to dance! Penn will teach his favorite couple dance Canadian Barn Dance. You can dance it even without a partner! We will of course finish the evening with a waltz.

Please invite your friends to join us. If you have received past zoom invites from us, then you will automatically receive one for the Holiday Party. You are welcome to in turn send the invite to your friends but please send the invite via email and don’t post it on social media. If you haven’t received a past zoom event invite or you want us to send a zoom invite directly to your friends please let us know by contacting dancer@moxxee.com

Irish Jubilee playing at a dance in Sandpoint, ID circa 1980

SFS Mission
The purpose of the Spokane Folklore Society shall be to promote a broader community awareness and involvement in cultural folk traditions, such as music, dance, and other folk arts through such social and educational events as concerts, dances, festivals, workshops, lectures, demonstrations, and newsletters.

www.spokanefolklore.org
Are You on the SFS E-List?

By Sylvia Gobel

The SFS E-List is used to send e-mail reminder announcements about SFS events and other folk and international events in the community. We'll notify you about SFS contra dances, and other regional contra dances, the Inland Northwest Bluegrass Association monthly showcase, KPBOX Kids Concerts and many other performance opportunities from our talented local artists.

If you would like to find someone to carpool to a regional dance or a camp please send your request to the E-List. To sign up please send your request to dancer@moxxee.com.

You must be a member of the Spokane Folklore Society to receive E-list announcements.

The Virtual Fall Folk Festival Continues Until December 31

By Sylvia Gobel

Our Virtual Fall Folk Festival will be available for you to enjoy from your living room until December 31.

We have 35 performances along with a Virtual Marketplace for your shopping pleasure. Visit us often over the next six weeks at our website www.spokanefolkfestival.org.

We have a wonderful variety of performances including singer-songwriters, storytellers and dance groups (Bulgarian, Japanese, Indian, and Square Dance). The always popular marimba bands and Taiko drummers are back along with some bluegrass and Celtic bands and more.

We also have a great variety of merchandise in our Festival Marketplace for you to purchase. Check them out for your holiday shopping. We also encourage you to check out the performers websites and if they have CD’s and merchandise for sale please support them as well.

Thanks to everyone for supporting our 2020 Festival. It is our 25th anniversary but we are postponing that celebration until 1 next year when we will have a 25/26th anniversary party.

Editor's notes: I've been enjoying the fantastic music of our own Crooked Kilt while working on this newsletter. I've danced to their music at many contra dances, but never knew that they can SING beautifully. Highly recommended...and all the other fine performances! Also, for your viewing pleasure, I have added hyperlinks to the festival at the top of each page of this newsletter (okay, starting on page 2) so you can easily get started.

One more tip: to go from one delightful performance to another, or vendor, click on the reddish button just under the performance window—otherwise you’ll be at large on YouTube.

Hey, Guess What?...

The Spokane Folklore Society has added a video of Spokane contra dancing to the Virtual Fall Folk Festival. . .

Thanks to Brendan Biele who has created a half hour long presentation with video clips from dances held during the past two years.

Enjoy clips from the weekly dances at the Woman’s Club Hall, monthly Saturday dances at the East Spokane Grange and the yearly dance at the Fall Folk Festival.

This virtual dance will be on the website until Dec 31. Dance along at www.spokanefolkfestival.org.
Spokane Folklore Society Zoom Reunions

By Sylvia Gobel

Thanks to everyone who has joined our Zoom Reunions. They have been a lot of fun and we are planning on scheduling more.

About 30 members and friends have joined us each time. We encourage you to invite your friends to future reunions. When you receive the Zoom link you can forward it to others you would like to invite by email.

DO NOT PUBLICIZE THE LINK ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Each event features some musicians and chat time for those attending.

In October we featured mini concerts with Lyle Morse and Arvid Lundin and Deep Roots. In November we featured mini concerts with Margie Heller, Brad Sondahl and Stuart Bachman and Ken Raymond. In December we will celebrate the 40th anniversary of our annual Holiday Dance. Please see accompanying article.

We plan to have a Zoom event in place of our annual Valentines contra dance in February and another one in March to celebrate St. Patrick's Day. If you would like to perform or have suggestions on how to celebrate these events, please let us know at dancer@moxxее.com.

MEMBERSHIPS

By RD Beck

We are STILL LOOKING for more MEMBERSHIPS for our wonderful society. If you have not had time, energy, nor money to support us, please find time to do so. Membership form is easily printable from the last page of this newsletter or the spokanefolklore.org website. We still need to pay bills, like the storage shed, insurance, and zoom membership. It has been one crazy year but it is lovely to have the memory of dancing and the hope of safely doing it again.

THANK YOU to all our members who have already joined for the 2020-2021 year!

THANK YOU to our Heroes (over $100)
Jerry LeClaire & Emily Faulkner
Carol Pinkerton & Etzel Stripp

THANK YOU to our Advocates ($50-99)
Susan Bracken
Elaine Stevens
RD Beck
Ray Polhemus & Cynthia Hallenger

THANK YOU to our Contributing Members
Stephanie Manczuk
Brenda Burger
Rose & Riley Schultz
Marya J Nowakowski
Dan Gore
Thomas Cline

Support Folklore Society Business Members

Business memberships not only provide valuable support to SFS, but the businesses receive extra benefits. New business members are listed monthly in the newsletter and have links on our website: www.spokanefolklore.org.

David Lohman
Collaborative Lawyer 208-664-5544
DavidWLohman@hotmail.com

KayCee Brennick:
State Farm Insurance Agent

Promoting our Comfort and Security

To promote safety and respect for all, we encourage everyone to become familiar with our Code of Conduct and our Discipline Policy. Both are found on the SFS website home page. Any questions can be referred to our SFS board members.
The Callers’ Corner

By Nancy Staub

Like most of you, I imagine, I have been missing my social life during these COVID-19 times. And for me, a big part of that was contra dancing, both calling and dancing. I was thinking the other day of favorite dancers... not so much personality-wise, but dancing-effortlessly-wise. You know what I mean? That person you come across in the line that makes the dance seem so smooth and sometimes you feel for a moment that feeling of being one-with-the-dancing-community-and-universe feeling? If not, you’re in for a treat when you get there!

Let’s think about what that means. How do some people facilitate dancing and how can you? My first thought was, well what are different parts to contra dancing (the dance itself—ignoring the band and caller and other dancers for a moment)? Remembering though that the end result of dancing can be much greater than the sum of its parts. Here’s my list—well wait, first you think about contra dancing and come up with your own list (there’s my teaching hat showing itself).

Okay, let’s compare lists.

My first thing was Timing—your partner anticipates the transition to the next move—not doing it early and not being late—but being ready for it. How do they do that?

Contra dancing is put together in 16 beat parts (two A parts and two B parts, written as AABB; if you listen carefully you’ll hear the A part is played twice by the band, and then the B part is played twice, then the whole AABB unit is repeated over and over until the end of the dance); your brain will eventually count along automatically. Each 16 beat phrase, of course, is divided into two 8-beat parts; you may have noticed some people count along, 1-8, with the music. A smooth dancer anticipates the change coming up at the end of a move. For example, a “long” swing is 16 beats (or 12 if there’s a balance first) and a short swing happens during 8 beats.

Part of the point of the dance walkthrough at the beginning is for you to get a feel for the timing of the dance. Being practiced at timing means that even if you love to twirl your partner, or be twirled after a swing, if you can’t end on time, you skip it. The best twirling ends a millisecond before the next move and positions everyone so they’re amazingly on time and perfectly in position for that next move.

The next thing on my list is Attentioniveness. It sounds odd, but that’s my term for it. You can tell the difference when someone is good at this or not.

When you’re dancing with someone, they are the center of your dancing universe. If they don’t like to twirl, well, that is just great with you. If they prefer to swing slowly, well, that is just great with you. If they prefer to switch roles at the top of the line, well, that is just great with you. But it is a delicate balance—if you want to switch roles at the top of the line and you sense your partner doesn’t, well then you go along with that. There is a lot of quick navigating of these short dancing relationships—“good” dancers are aware of this dynamic (it takes awhile to develop this sense; when you’re a newcomer it’s enough to just keep track of the dance moves).

These dancing relationships are worth the effort they take. I remember Caller Susan Michaels emphasizing this skill during a dance weekend. You give that person your full attention. This applies to both your partner for the dance, as well as all the new neighbors you meet along the way; you’re making the most of the 64 beats you have with this new neighbor. The point is, you have a few moments dancing with someone else and you make the most of it. Kind of like life on earth….
Forty Years Ago........

Stopping By on a Snowy Evening

By Penn Fix

On a snowy Saturday in late December of 1980, over a hundred folks gathered to celebrate the culmination of a year of discovery and magic. Ten months earlier, many of them had experienced for the very first time contradancing, a long-time tradition from New England but newly introduced to the Northwest. After returning home from teaching in New England, Penn Fix began a contradance series in January 1980 with caller Bob Childs and a Spokane band called Irish Jubilee. Bob had come from his home in Maine to learn to make violins under Anton Smith at the Spokane Community College. After finishing the program in June, Bob returned to the East and Penn assumed the calling duties with Irish Jubilee. The band’s original core members were Darla Carroll German and Judy McClarin, both professors at Eastern Washington University. They along with Dawn Holiday would spend their lunch hours playing music while on campus. At some point Judy who played penny whistle and Darla who played fiddle decided to form a band that included Joe Minx who played bodhran. Ju-
reels, squares, circles, and couple dances. Irish Jubilee played wonderful Irish reels and jigs. The band had expanded that night to include Judy, Darla, Jack, Joe and a couple of other musicians including Nancy Lindberg.

The success of both the Christmas Contra and the spring and fall dance series of 1980 launched a love of contradances that continues to this day in our community. Not long after that first Christmas Contra Dance, the original Irish Jubilee disbanded. Judy left for a sabbatical in California and never returned. Now retired from the University of California system, she has two grandchildren to keep her busy and she still plays some pennywhistle in her home in northern California. Darla also left, moving to Missouri where she fell in love with Missouri fiddle tunes taught by mentors she fondly refers to as “old coots.” After teaching many years in the Maryland community college system, she is retired. With her longtime partner Darla lives in Maryland where she actively plays fiddle in an old-time string band called Darla Jean and the Somethin’ or Others. Jack remained in Spokane for the next twenty years playing for contradances with fiddler Arvid Lundin. He now resides in Pennsylvania where he continues to be involved in the music scene playing both guitar and wind instruments. Joe passed away over 15 years ago.

Forty years later the Christmas Contra Dance has continued uninterrupted until this year. Because of the COVID pandemic, a Holiday zoom party has been planned that will include Arvid Lundin with Deep Roots and Darla German with a couple of her band members. Penn Fix will host the ninety-minute event. Please find more information in the related article in this newsletter.

By the time of Spokane’s first Christmas Contra Dance, most participants had only danced four or five contras in their lifetimes. Nevertheless, the hall was full of enthusiastic dancers that snowy night on December 20th. There were three contra lines of dancers throughout the evening. Traditions that continue 40 years later were started that night including the grand march and the shared 12 Days of Christmas song, the ornament exchange and potluck desserts served midway through the evening. Penn called a wide range dances including contras,
And this all-American holiday song from Joy Morgan:

"The New-England Boy's Song about Thanksgiving Day" also known as "Over the River and Through the Wood", is a Thanksgiving poem by Lydia Maria Child, originally published in 1844 in Flowers for Children, Volume 2. Child was a novelist, journalist, teacher, and poet who wrote extensively about the need to eliminate slavery.

Although many people sing "to grandmother's house we go", the author’s original words were "to grandfather’s house we go" Many people also mistakenly refer to the "Wood" in the song as plural "Woods" rather than singular. The poem was eventually set to a tune by an unknown composer. The song version is sometimes presented with lines about Christmas rather than Thanksgiving. For instance, the line "Hurrah for Thanksgiving Day!" becomes "Hurrah for Christmas Day!". As a Christmas song, it has been recorded as "A Merry Christmas at Grandmother's". Although the modern Thanksgiving holiday is not always associated with snow, New England in the early 19th century was enduring the “Little Ice Age” a colder era with earlier winters.

The original piece had twelve stanzas, though only four are typically included in the song.

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Over the River and Through the Woods

Lydia Maria Child

Over the river, and through the wood, to Grandfather's house away!
We would not stop for doll or top, for 'tis Thanksgiving Day.

Over the river, and through the wood—and straight through the barnyard gate,
We seem to go extremely slow, it is so hard to wait!

Over the river, and through the wood—
When Grandmother sees us come,
She will say, "O, dear, the children are here, bring a pie for everyone."

Over the river, and through the wood—
now Grandmother's cap I spy!
Hurrah for the fun! Is the pudding done?
Hurrah for the pumpkin pie!

Over the river, and through the wood—
The horse knows the way to carry the sleigh through white and drifted snow.
Over the river and through the woods oh how the wind does blow.

It stings the toes and bites the nose as over the ground we go.
Spokane Folklore Society Membership
(Full Year; Sept 1 through August 31)

I want to support the Spokane Folklore Society. Please accept my membership:
Check one: [ ] New [ ] Renewal [ ] Address Change

Date

Name: ____________________________ Evening phone: ____________________________

Address: ____________________________

City: __________________ State: ________ Zip: __________________

E-mail*: ____________________________ *Email required for electronic newsletter.*

[ ] I have read and understand the SFS Code of Conduct - go to SFS website to review

Memberships:
[ ] Individual Electronic $15
[ ] Family Electronic $25
[ ] Business Membership $100

Please include Business Name & Contact Info for advertising in newsletter

[ ] I want to get the Electronic Event List (frequent listings of current events)
[ ] I would like to help with the following ____________________________

I have enclosed a: [ ] check [ ] money order [ ] cash (don’t send cash through mail, please)

We may be able to print and mail a limited number of copies for members who do not have email or a computer. If that is your situation, you can let us know by emailing mysokanefolklore@gmail.com or by calling (760) 709-1060.

Became a Friend of the Spokane Folklore Society Donor and be thanked in our Newsletter and on our Website. If you would like to make an additional donation, please add it to your membership fee.

Hero - $100-150
Advocate $50-99
Contributing $25-49

Check here [ ] if you wish your donation to be anonymous.

Return this form with your check or money order to:
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