Dancing is in full swing for October

The fall schedule for dancing at the Woman’s Club offers many of our favorite callers and musicians. Reel Friends, a new configuration of familiar musicians Tashie Dial, Ken Raymond, and Brenden Biele, played for our October 6 dance, while Emily Faulkner called – everybody there enjoyed dancing again after all this time!

Our October 13 dance will feature Nora Scott calling her unique brand of contras. She has been very busy this past summer calling in Moscow and other places. She balances the selection of easy and more complicated dances that makes everyone have fun. Backing her up will be old time fiddler Judy Lungren who has been busy this summer playing tunes at old time fiddle festivals and get togethers around the Northwest.

Dances begin at 7:30 and end at 9:30. Once again, there will be newcomer sessions at 7:15.

Our Member Social was a big hit!

Thanks to everyone who made our annual Member meeting and social so special. Under clear and smokeless skies, nearly forty members and friends enjoyed the chance to see one another at Manito Park on September 1.

Musicians jammed; friends reconnected; board members were introduced. And then we all settled down to listen to the great tunes and songs of the Misty Mountain Pony Club. Over 25 memberships were renewed including some new memberships too. Twenty-six people pre-registered for our dances by showing their proof of vaccinations.

September 29th Dance was great fun!

We opened the dancing season after nearly a year and half absence with a free dance for members and non-members. Twelve musicians from our jam band and three callers entertained over 25 dancers with spirited music and lovely contras. Everyone had fun! Everyone was vaccinated and fully masked. We had eight new members sign up too. We are all looking forward to more dancing.
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.

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About Footnotes

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Copy deadline is the 15th of the month. Articles from the membership are welcome and appreciated! Copy may be edited for space or clarity.

SFS BOARD MEMBERS
President: Brendan Biele
Vice-President: Joy Morgan
Treasurer: Judy Lundgren
Secretary: Penn Fix
Members at Large: Jim Angle, Gina Claeys, Cathy Dark, Sylvia Gobel

www.spokanefolklore.org
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Calendar of Folky Fun

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Memberships are Open!

Renew yours for our 2021-2022 Season at any of the dances or online any time.
Since we have decided not to offer printed newsletters, we will end the choice of printed or digital memberships. The board has decided that individual memberships are $25 and family memberships are $40. Other categories like sustaining remain the same.

Hero Membership

During our Member Social last month, many renewed their memberships and gave over and above their membership dues.
Special thanks to these generous members:
Tom Cline, Jerry LeClaire and Emily Faulkner, Margie Heller, Lisa Hiler, Terry & Margaret Herron, Mary Nabor, Sharon McGrew, Bryan Stamm, Sarah Dugan, & kids, and Kay Rowley and Brad Blegen.
You all truly are our Heroes!

New Business Sponsor

Let’s welcome our newest business violin maker Geoff Seitz who lives in St. Louis. This past spring we featured an article about Geoff. Not only does he make violins but he sells other violins and instruments. Need help or advice just email Geoff at Seitzviolins@sbcglobal.net.

SFS Vaccination Policy for Indoor Dance Events

The board of the Spokane Folklore Society has decided to require the proof of vaccination in order for participants including dancers, musicians, callers, sound techs and anyone else to be involved in one of our sponsored dances. You must bring your COVID CDC card or a copy of it on your phone and show it at the door.
By doing this, you will be registered and will not be required to show it at the next dance. You will not be able to participate unless you have been registered.
As CDC or state guidelines currently require masks to be worn indoors, you will be expected to do so.
This way, we are doing everything we can to get us all dancing and playing music again, whatever it takes. See you on the dance floor!
**Caller’s Corner**

*By Penn Fix*

My favorite contra dance is actually not a contra but instead a dance that I use at the start of almost every one of my dances. Cabot School was written by one of New England’s favorite callers and composers, Ted Sannella, in 1981. The dance was according to Ted, “named for the school in Newtonville, MA where I conducted a biweekly Friday night dance from 1972 to 1984. A lot of good friendships developed from that community-based series.” Ted was a true believer in the community building aspect of contra dancing.

Cabot School is a circle mixer dance with couples standing side by side facing into a circle. This formation allows me to stand in the center of the circle where I can see everyone and all the dancers can see me. As a result, I can easily demonstrate the most important move in contra dancing: the buzz step swing. Cabot School is my preferred circle dance for this situation because it includes five standard moves that can be introduced to beginners before we start dancing contras. They include forward and back, circle left and right, allemande left and right, dosidos, and promenade (plus the swing). As importantly, Cabot School also demonstrates an important key principle of contra dancing—the flowing transition from one move to another; in this case, allemande right your neighbor back to your partner with allemande left and flow into dosido with neighbor followed by a swing your neighbor. While Cabot School is not a contra dance, it allows me to prepare dancers for the contras that follow.

Happy Dancing!

Here’s a little teaser from the Fall Folk Festival website—lots of artists and performers are featured there:

**Brittany Jean**

Originally from West Chicago, IL, Brittany Jean is a singer/songwriter in the Pacific Northwest, currently living in a tiny, apple town, Brewster, WA. Brittany’s style is rooted in the folk and Americana music she has loved all her life, and in one way or another, every slice-of-life song she brings with her is a love song.

During the past few years, Brittany’s performances have ventured farther and farther from home — opening for Three Dog Night’s sold out show at the City Winery in New York City, playing the legendary Bluebird Cafe in Nashville, performing at the Kerrville Folk Festival in Texas, taking on her first international tour on Vancouver Island, British Columbia to name just a few of her adventures.

**Help Support Your Folklore Society with Your Amazon Purchases**

*by Judy Lungren, SFS Treasurer*

Here’s a great way for members to support your favorite nonprofit, the Spokane Folklore Society! When you make a future purchase with Amazon, Amazon in turn will donate a percent of your purchase to SFS. Simply log in to [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com), then search for and select “Spokane Folklore Society” from the list of charities. After that, whenever you shop on Amazon, go to smile.amazon.com, and Amazon will donate 0.5% of your purchases to SFS. It doesn’t sound like a lot, but if enough of our members use this service, then it will really add up. Thanks for supporting your Folklore Society.
In 1979, Frank Ferrell, program director at the Centrum Arts in Port Townsend, WA, founded the International Folk Dance and Music Festival. For the next eight years, the festival highlighted music and dance from many cultures including Cape Breton, Ireland, the Balkans, Scandinavia, French Canada and West African. Besides introducing participants to music and dance they had never tried before, the festival also brought in the tradition bearers and contemporary performers of New England style contra dancing, thus helping to lay a foundation that continues to this day. In 1986, Frank left Centrum for Boston where his wife’s family lived. Pete McCracken succeeded him.

In the meantime, Centrum found a new leader in Peter McCracken. He had grown up in Pennsylvania. After learning guitar, he moved to California in January, 1973 to play that “Dylan and John Prime shit.” He took a fiddle class in Santa Barbara and with a bunch of other beginners played old time music all day and night. While living in Pennsylvania he had gone to Galax Fiddle Festival in Virginia upon the urging of fiddler Joe Wilson. Once Peter was committed to old time music, he returned during the summers to the East and searched out the older musicians he had seen at Galax. While in California, he also immersed himself in Mexican and Cajun music. In 1977 he moved to Seattle to attend the U of Washington in forestry. Two years later he moved to Port Townsend to play with a band that “lasted about an hour.” But he stayed in part because of the Fiddle Tunes Festival and over the course of several years he became a carpenter. At the same time, he also continued to be involved with Fiddle Tunes. When Frank left, Peter applied for the position of program manager of the two Festivals. Instead, Centrum hired David Romtvedt but when David left the next year, Peter was hired and continues to be program manager at Centrum.

For the next five years, 1988 – 1992, Peter programmed and managed International Folk Dance and Music Festival later called the Ethnic Dance and Music Festival, relying on his own experience as a musician but also on local supporters. After each camp, he would sit down with an informal advisory committee that included Luther Black, Paul and Vicki Bestock and Alice Nugent to review the week and ask for recommendations. These years were rich with diverse cultures including dance and music from Newfoundland, Finland, Guinea, Spain, Bolivia, Mexico, West Africa, Argentina, Brazil, Quebec, and Scandinavia. Spokane dancer and organizer Sylvia Gobel, who in 1991 helped to start a local Folk Festival that continues to this day, looked forward to these Festival weeks because she was exposed to dance and music traditions not accessible in Spokane. She recounted that the diversity was “unbelievable.”

(Continued on page 5)
Of all the international traditions, Balkan music and dance was most featured at the Festival. One of the highlights for Frank was the musician Alex Eppler who had moved to Seattle in 1979 as a professor of music at the Cornish College of the Arts, a position he held for nearly forty years. Born in New York City to Russian born parents, Alex at first fought their desire to have him embrace their music and instead he learned classical flute. Eventually he found his way to Balkan music, becoming a master of the cimbalom, described by Frank as “a hammer dulcimer on steroids.” With Alex’s recommendation, Frank hired Dick Crum, long time and respected dance leader. Frank fondly remembered the Balkan concert that year as a “jawsmacker.”

Peter continued this tradition of hosting Balkan musicians and teachers. One of the most memorable bands was Medna Usta, a band of five women musicians from Santa Cruz, CA. One of its members, Ruth Hunter, remembered her times at the Festival as “magical.” She had grown up in Hawaii as a self-described “language nerd” who played guitar and loved to sing and dance. Her life changed when she participated in an after school folk dance club taught by the wife of her high school German teacher. The music and dance she was exposed to was “exotic” and “so compelling.” And in particular Balkan music and song. She was immediately attracted to “the weird minor keys and the languages.” And “once I realized that real people actually played this music, I just had to learn how to do it.” While living in Hawaii, she became accomplished at playing the tambura, a Balkan mandola. She also began attending the Balkan Dance Workshop, held every year in Mendocino, CA. Her first one was in 1982 and she hasn’t missed one since. In 1985, she moved to Santa Cruz, CA where she quickly found others sharing her passion. Before long she formed an all-woman’s band, very unusual in the Balkan music world. Medna Usta means honey lips; it featured five very talented musicians who also could sing up to three and four part harmonies. In 1988 Peter invited them to the Festival where they made a huge impression. They were joined there by Czech dance master Frantisek Bonus, who nearing 70 years of age was considered one of the world’s leading experts in historical and newly choreographed dances of the Czech Republic and Slovenia. Everyone who attended the festival that year remembered the goat roast hosted by Frantisek and members of Medna Usta. Splayed in a triangle of rebar, three goats roasted all day in a fire pit at the old leftover battlements at Fort Worden. Luther Black remembered fondly the parade that Frantisek led with the remains of the goat carcasses around the bunkers – everyone singing and dancing in line. The experience was “fabulous” and the food “terrific.” Ruth later commented that Balkan music and dance was more about community and relationships, and this was truly reflected in the goat roast. Another strong memory for her was the trip to the underground water cistern. Upon Pete’s urging, their band was led into the old water cistern which was very echoey as well as “spooky and ethereal.” There, the group sang acapella in a moving unforgettable moment.

As she later reflected of her times at the Festival, Ruth had experienced what so many others have done while attending these Festivals: “meraki kefi” she explained was the “feeling of passion and being transported by something you are passionate about; but it is experienced in community with people.” And Pete understood this concept and helped to set the tone that would allow for it to happen. She continued, “Pete was just so open to finding ways to make things fun for everyone and to create a special experience for everyone.”

In spite of the fabulous programing and magic that the Festival provided to its participants, the week was struggling with attendance falling. The decline began before
Peter took over in 1988 but by his first year the week was having to compete with regional festivals and other dance and music opportunities. The Festival was unique in its approach at a time when as Frank noted, "there was a growing dance culture.” The strength and the weakness of the Festival was the focus on four distinct dance and music traditions. Eventually its weakness caught up with the week. The contra dancers were the first to leave. Sylvia remembered that while participants like her took the international dance workshops during the day and danced contras at night, the contra dancers only danced contras; ultimately two contra workshops a day wasn’t enough. Especially when regional contra dance weekends and a week-long festival like Lady of the Lake which started in 1986 offered contra dancing and related dancing like squares and English country all day long. Even the Fiddle Tunes Festival broadened its scope to include other styles of fiddling including Irish and Cape Breton. One year they even had Polish dance music from Texas. And those more interested in international dance increasingly turned to camps like the Balkan Dance Workshop focusing on just one style of dance. In the end, Peter admitted he had no choice: “I killed it.”

While the International Folk Dance and Music Festival has passed away, its influence permeates and persists in the Northwest. Today, Peter continues to program and manage some of the Centrum offerings at Port Townsend. The Fiddle Tunes Festival has grown in stature and popularity as younger musicians are once again driving the energy and love in traditional music. Sue Truman continues to play fiddle and step dance; she has become an expert in crankies. Sylvia Gobel is the director of the Spokane Folklore Society’s Fall Folk Festival, now in its 25th year. Ruth Hunter married a Greek musician and comfortably got lost in Greek music and dance. And Frank Ferrel remains very busy writing, composing, and playing. He often gets calls about playing but found that if he didn’t have a ready-made band, that he wouldn’t get the gig. So he made one up called the Ferrel Cats. When asked who plays in the band, he smirks, “I don’t know. I just put food out and see who shows up.” In reality, he turns to Maine legends, Johnny Gawler, Smokey McKeen, and Doug Protsi.

**Fall Folk Festival 2021 will be Virtual.**

After consultation with Spokane Community College, the Fall Folk Festival and SCC are in agreement that the Live Festival will be cancelled for this year due to Covid concerns in our area.

We will still have a Virtual Festival with performances available on our website starting November 13.

Spokane Public Radio, KPBX 91.1 FM will present a live broadcast from their studio which will air Saturday, November 13 from 11 am to 1 pm.

Check out [www.spokanefolkfestival.org](http://www.spokanefolkfestival.org) for details on the Virtual Festival and the KPBX Broadcast.

Thank you for your understanding and continued support.

**Donations are Important in 2021!**

Expenses for the Festival have gone up so donations are high on our priority list for 2021. Donate online on Festival website at [https://www.spokanefolkfestival.org/donate.html](https://www.spokanefolkfestival.org/donate.html). A donation form can also be downloaded from the website. Without your assistance, the Festival would not be able to maintain the high quality we have enjoyed in past years.

Regardless of the circumstances that we face, the Fall Folk Festival committee continues its commitment to provide a venue to showcase traditional music, dance and the arts to Spokane and the surrounding area. State mandated restrictions at the time of the Festival will be observed.