



PCDC Footnotes

November–December 2024

From the Editor

What's the best way to shake off the blahs as our days grow shorter, wetter, and colder?

If you're a dancer, it's got to be our special November dances. November always brings great dances to Portland, and this year is no exception. Besides the Portland English Ball (currently full with a waiting list), we've got the mid-week [George Marshall/CounterCurrent dance](#), followed by the [Rose City Dance-a-rama weekend](#) with both Wild Asparagus and our very own Joyride. The Dance-a-rama weekend comes with an [open public dance on Sunday](#), to which all are invited. What could be more fun?

If you're a musician, there are some great jam sessions sure to lift your spirits with tunes and camaraderie. The [Kennedy School jams](#) are a lot of fun, especially with a restaurant on the premises for food and drink afterward. (Simply walking *into* the Kennedy School is mood-enhancing—maybe it's the feeling of going back to grade school with a beer in your hand.) If you're in the mood for something a bit cozier, try the [tune teaching sessions with Betsy and George](#). These warm, welcoming sessions take place in snug, intimate settings. (There are even cookies.) Whichever session you choose, you'll find like-minded folks in a supportive environment!

In this issue...

- Get details on the [November 12 contra dance at Polish Hall](#) with George Marshall and CounterCurrent.
- [No contra dancing at Fulton on November 16](#)—but do come to Norse Hall on Sunday, November 17, for Wild Asparagus and Joyride!
- This year's [special New Year Dance](#) will be held on January 4, 2025. See the [lineup](#).
- The reviews are in: [Northwest Passage 2024 was a rousing success!](#)
- How well do you “know” a tune? Keith Moe lays it out for you in [“The Sundry Ways of Knowing a Tune.”](#)
- PCDC has launched a [new sound apprentice program](#). Meet our [new sound techs!](#)
- Get info on upcoming [Kennedy School jams](#) and [Second Thursday tune teaching sessions and jams](#).
- The PCDC Board now meets on alternate months. See the [new meeting schedule for 2024–25](#).

Stay dry and dance more!

Lori Shaffer, *PCDC Footnotes* Newsletter Editor

Additional resources

For a calendar of upcoming dances and events, go to the [PCDC calendar](#), plug in the month you want to see, and click **Go**. You can customize your view by choosing the category of events you want to display.

For info on the PCDC board and committees:

For a peek into the goings-on of the PCDC Board, see the [PCDC board meeting summaries](#). For a list of board and committee members, see portlandcountrydance.org/board-members.

Northwest Passage 2024 a Rousing Success (once again)

The reviews are in, and Northwest Passage was (once again) a rousing success! Below are some typical responses to the end-of-weekend questionnaire:

- “The setting is gorgeous, so many great dances and dancers, and fun workshops that are both interesting and useful for even better dancing.”
- “It was well run and a great balance of focused learning and just having fun. It was one of the best dance weekends I’ve been to. And I feel like most of the other people who were there felt the same.”
- “Northwest Passage English Country Dance Camp is a fabulous event—tops in the USA. Four days of dance (!), accomplished and friendly dancers, amazing, talented callers who bring dances that are not done all the time, musicians that transport you to the heavens, and the beauty of the Northwest. Not to be missed! Thank you to all the organizers that make this event happen!”



Past attendees of Northwest Passage (and others who have been paying attention) know that the NWP Committee does a great job running this four-day camp. People come from out of state because of its reputation as a well-organized camp with great music, food, scenery, workshops, and dances. The leaders of the NWP committee would love to grow the committee by a few more members. If you’re interested in helping produce this fun and successful annual weekend, contact Cynthia Stenger at chair@nwpdancecamp.org. 🐔

Special Contra Dance Tuesday, November 12, at Polish Hall: CounterCurrent and George Marshall

PCDC presents a special contra dance Tuesday, November 12, with contra dance favorites CounterCurrent and George Marshall.

Where: Polish Hall, 3832 N. Interstate Avenue, Portland, OR

When: Tuesday, November 12, with intro and warmup at 7:00 pm and dancing at 7:30 pm

Admission: Sliding scale; \$10 to \$25 as you are able

Additional info: George will use gender-neutral terms. Masking is admired but not required.



CounterCurrent (Brian Lindsay & Alex Sturbaum) is a powerhouse acoustic folk duo based in Olympia, WA, featuring driving guitar, lyrical fiddle, harmony vocals, and foot percussion. Bringing the deep drive of dance music to every performance, their arrangements blend both traditional and modern influences with astounding musicianship and fluency. CounterCurrent is a genre-bending experience rooted firmly in the traditional music of the Celtic Isles and America: music that lifts you up and charges fearlessly into the future of folk music.

George Marshall (Western Massachusetts) has been calling dances since 1978. He shares his passion for contra dance while touring nationally as well as internationally. George's specialty is teaching and calling New England-style contra dances. He is renowned for his knack of working with bands to match music to dances and for his humorous, smooth, concise teaching and warm presentation. 🐔



PCDC Launches Sound Tech Apprenticeship Program

By Sue Songer

They are the first ones to arrive at the dance hall and the last ones to leave at the end of the evening. They are nearly invisible if all is going well. If the organizers don't remember to thank them, they go through an entire dance unacknowledged—no whoops of delight for them or even intermittent applause. In fact, the most frequent reason dancers speak to them is to report something they don't like. Yet without them, our dances would not have nearly the life and energy we are accustomed to. Callers and musicians would have to work much, much harder, if they were to be heard at all. By now, you might have figured out that these unsung heroes are our sound technicians. We Portland dancers have been fortunate to have had four sound experts for many years. Now, with two of these technicians not able to work as many gigs, we are welcoming two new sound techs into our community. Here's an introduction to these new sound techs, along with the backstory of the extensive planning and collaboration that enabled them to step into these big shoes.



Jennie Davidson

Jennie Davidson moved from Pennsylvania to Portland a year ago and quickly became involved with music and dance communities here. She sings in local choirs and enjoys English dancing. She is grateful to have received on-the-job training by PCDC, and says that getting to know sound technicians John Oorthuys and Rich Goss has been the best part of her job. She strives to serve our community with even further ear training.

Landon Kuhn

Landon is a lifelong Portland resident. Since childhood, he's enjoyed contra dancing and has been passionate about both recorded and live sound. He also loves playing the fiddle and bass guitar. By day, he's an IT professional, but he finds working with live sound a rewarding hobby that allows him to explore different technologies and practice his in-person customer service skills.



The new sound apprenticeship program

When dances resumed after the pandemic, Carl Thor, who had been providing sound at the Saturday dances for years, recognized the need for new, younger talent to run the sound boards. He proposed that PCDC institute an apprenticeship program where prospective sound techs could receive on-the-job training from experienced sound techs. The PCDC Board agreed to this idea and agreed to pay a small stipend to the apprentices. Concurrently, the board began investigating a way to provide a sound system for the upcoming

techs to use, thus sparing them from a cash outlay of the thousands of dollars necessary to purchase sound systems of their own. Carl retired from doing sound before the program started, but beginning last fall, Jennie and Landon worked alongside John Oorthuys and Rich Goss to learn the equipment and the various tricks of the trade—such as getting a good balance of instruments in the hall, modulating the caller’s voice, and satisfying each musician with the on-stage monitor mix. By late spring, both apprentices were starting to provide sound on their own.

While the apprentices were training, the board was overseeing the acquisition of its own sound system. John and Rich both made generous donations of sound equipment to PCDC for this purpose. They purchased missing pieces of gear with funds from PCDC. These funds fittingly came from donations made in memory of Sarah Goss and Rick Piel, both Portland dancers and musicians who passed away recently.

By June 2024, new sound techs Landon and Jennie were ready, and the PCDC sound system was pretty much assembled. However, one issue remained. We needed to be able to store the sound equipment at Fulton so that it could be easily accessed by whoever was providing sound that evening. To this end, Sue Songer and Kathy Story met with and exchanged many emails with Fulton personnel. Sue and Kathy proposed several storage places, but every idea proved to be unworkable. Fulton personnel also made a storage suggestion, but it was untenable. Finally, John, Rich, and Erik Weberg figured out a way to adapt the existing PCDC cabinet so that it could hold the sound gear. Erik set to work constructing a made-to-order addition to the cabinet, designed to perch on top of the original cabinet, and now, PCDC’s entire sound system can be stored onsite.

Carl has now retired from sound, and Rich is living in Texas half the year. Jennie and Landon have begun to provide sound on their own at dances. Thanks to the abovementioned foresight, board support, community teamwork, and generous donations, and despite the notable absences of Carl and Rich, we will now have a skilled sound technician at each of our dances. Consider taking a minute to find them at the sound board and thank them for their very important role in making our dances so much fun. 🦃

No Fulton dance Saturday, Nov. 16: Come dance to Wild Asparagus and Joyride on Sunday instead!

There’s no dancing at Fulton on Saturday, November 16, because many of us will be at the Rose City Dance-a-rama weekend at Norse Hall. But never fear—even if you’re not signed up for this awesome weekend featuring Wild Asparagus and Joyride, with George Marshall and Lindsey Dono calling, you can still get a good taste of the weekend by coming to the public dance at Norse Hall on Sunday night, November 17! For more details, see dancearama.org. Hope to see you there!



PCDC New Year's Dance!

Saturday, January 4th

Two Bands! Two Callers!



Electrically charged duo Countercurrent (Alex Sturbaum & Brian Lindsay from Olympia) will open the evening, with fellow Olympian, Jesse Partridge calling. They'll be followed by our own Noah Grunzweig calling with The Fiddle Hellions Big Band, headed by Betsy Branch, George Penk, Sue Songer and Bill Tomczak. You won't want to miss this!!



Where: Norse Hall, 111 NE 11th Ave, Portland

When: Lesson at 7:30, dancing 8pm-12:15am

Cost: \$15-35, sliding scale

Covid Protocols: Though not required, masking and up-to-date vaccination is recommended to help keep our community healthy.

Dessert Potluck: Yes! Bring something to share!

Note: We'll be contra dancing in the main floor big ballroom – no blues or waltz this year.

Kennedy School Jams Continue: Contra, Waltz, ECD, Quebecois

By Kathy Story, PCDC Board President

The Kennedy School Monday night slow jams continue! These jam sessions draw musicians at all levels. Whatever your level, there's always room for more—come make music with us!

What: Jams for all acoustic instruments and all levels of musicians, whether you read music or play by ear

Where: McMenamins Kennedy School, 5763 NE 33rd Avenue, Portland (off-street parking available)

When: Contra and waltz jam: 1st and 3rd Mondays, 7–9 pm

ECD jam: 2nd and 4th Mondays, 7–9 pm

Quebecois jam: 5th Mondays, 7–9 pm (other months, location TBA: email pdxqjam@gmail.com)

Additional details: At contra and waltz jams, we play tunes from the *Portland Collection* and Bill Matthiesen's waltz books. At ECD jams, we play tunes from the Barnes books. If you don't have these books, we're happy to share.

Questions? Contact Kathy Story at board-chair@portlandcountrydance.org.

Second Thursday Tune Teaching Sessions & Jams

Learn contra dance tunes by ear the second Thursday of each month with George Penk and Betsy Branch! These sessions are now free, thanks to the generosity of PCDC. (To become a member or renew, see portlandcountrydance.org/membership.)

Once each quarter, instead of learning new tunes, the session turns into a community jam. Here's the upcoming schedule:

- November 14, 7–9 pm: George Penk
- December 12, 7–9 pm: Betsy Branch
- January 9, 2025, 7–9 pm: Community jam

All acoustic instruments, all levels, are welcome! To see current and past tunes that have been taught and played, check out the recordings on our [webpage](#). For location and other info, email [sharonjeanallen\(at\)yahoo\(dot\)com](mailto:sharonjeanallen(at)yahoo(dot)com).



The Sundry Ways of Knowing a Tune

By Keith Moe

“Do you know this tune?” This common query from musicians and dancers can be downright confusing because there’s quite a continuum of how someone might “know” a tune. Here’s a handy checklist to carry with you for responding to such inquiries. Check all that apply. If you’re graphically inclined, feel free to adapt this into a flowchart!



Do you know this tune?

Never pay attention to the tunes or their titles, just trying to remember the dance.

Never heard the tune before and...

never want to hear it again.

wouldn't mind hearing it again.

want to hear it until my ears bleed.

Heard the tune before...

maybe.

for sure.

Can hum/whistle/sing a bit of the tune...

when hearing it.

after hearing it.

when told the title.

Can hum/whistle/sing the whole tune...

when hearing it.

after hearing it.

when told the title.

Recognize the tune and...

have never known the title.

used to know the title but forgot it.

definitely know the title, but let me think a minute.

the title is _____.

Recognize the tune but don't know its title, and...

despise it.

used to like it more.

like it more than I used to.

have always liked it enough.

it's one of my favorites!

___Recognize the tune and know its title and...

__despise it.

__used to like it more.

__like it more than I used to.

__have always liked it enough.

__it's one of my favorites!

___Have played the tune with sheet music...

__pathetically.

__passably.

__quite well.

___Can't recall the title, but have played the tune by ear...

__pathetically.

__passably.

__quite well.

___Know the title, and have played the tune by ear...

__pathetically.

__passably.

__quite well.

___Composed/published/recorded the damn tune. 🐓

PCDC Board Sets New Meeting Schedule for 2024–2025

The PCDC Board meets the second Tuesday of every other month at 7:00 pm on the following dates. These meetings are open to all PCDC members. If you're interested in attending, please let Kathy Story know at board-chair@portlandcountrydance.org.

2024 meetings

October 15

December 17

2025 meetings

February 18

April 15

June 17 (Joint meeting of old and new board)

August 19

October 21

December 16