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# PCDC Footnotes

September–October 2025

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This month's issue focuses on building community, starting with Kathy Story's "[President's Corner](#)" article. But as we admire the wonderful work of our committees and super-hero volunteers, let's not forget the one thing we regular folk can do—show up! PCDC is doing a great job recruiting and welcoming newcomers; now it's up to us to get out on the dance floor with them and lead by example. The fall season certainly brings many opportunities to do so, with [four contra dances returning](#) from summer hiatus and several special events on the horizon (such as the [Portland English Ball](#), the [special November dance](#), and [Rose City Dance-a-rama](#)). Hope to see you on the dance floor!

## In this issue...

- **President's Corner:** In "[How We Build Community](#)," Kathy Story talks about how the PCDC Board and committees are working to build community, including these two recent successful examples:
  - Community-led English dances:** The ECD community organized a community-led English Country dance that was so successful, they're going to turn it into a regular fifth Friday event! (Photo [here](#).)
  - PCDC Summer Picnic:** The weather was perfect this year for our annual picnic, featuring a clothing exchange, games, a jam session, an English sampler dance, and, of course, lots of food. (Photos [here](#).)
- **[Contra Committee launches Contra Concierge program](#):** Learn more about this exciting program that empowers newcomers and others to engage more with our community.
- **[Beyond the Hambo](#):** Robert Sisk encourages you to discover the warm community of Scandinavian dance in "Beyond the Hambo: Discover the Scandi Dancing Community,"
- **[Four contra dances return from summer break](#):** You can once again contra dance every Saturday at Fulton, as well as return to Polish Hall for Joyride dances, and head to Norse Hall for Contra Remix!
- **[Community jam sessions continue](#):** Meet people and build musical skills, whatever your level. Find the (free, PCDC-sponsored) jam session that's right for you!



## About PCDC Footnotes

*PCDC Footnotes* is a bimonthly publication of the Portland Country Dance Community. Article submissions are due one month prior to the publication date—the first day of even-numbered months (such as February 1st for the March–April issue). For more information, contact Lori Shaffer at [newsletter@portlandcountrydance.org](mailto:newsletter@portlandcountrydance.org).

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## President's Corner: How We Build Community

*By Kathy Story*



**Callers at the July 26 community-led English dance (L to R): Kelly Tabor, Bill Hood, Donna Belle, Janet Trygstad, Augie O'Riordan, Kathy Holley, Rich Goss, Isabelle Zifcak, and Robert Buchanan-Linebaugh**

Community development—that's what the PCDC Board has been talking about recently. It's part of our vision of "enriching lives and building community by co-creating participatory dance and music events and programs." How do you build community and how do you co-create, and what policy and budget support can the PCDC Board provide to foster both? These are important discussions for the board, and as always, your input is encouraged and appreciated. I want to share two recent examples of co-creating and community building.

Often the best community-building and co-creating happens at the committee level. One great example: the ECD Committee held their first community-led dance and it was a rousing success. There were no regular callers available for the June 6th English dance, so nine community members stepped up to lead the dancing with music provided by Fine Companions (Betsy Branch, Erik Weberg, Bill Tomczak, and Lisa Scott). The callers were coordinated by Cynthia Stenger and Donna Belle. The ECD Committee provided a downloadable booklet of calling instructions for 24 straightforward English Country dances. There were links to videos of the dances to show how the words translated into movement. More than 40 dancers showed up to support the community callers and had a great time dancing to good calling, sublime music, and well-known and beloved dances. The dancers, callers, and musicians enjoyed it so much that the ECD Committee is planning to make it a regular event on fifth Fridays.



Another example happens every year at the PCDC membership picnic and potluck. This year, new board member Becky Griswold coordinated the event held July 26 at Fulton Park. She recruited 25 happy volunteers to set up, clean up, bring supplies, lead games, organize the clothing swap, assist in making buttons, get the jam going, set up lawn games, and call and play music for the English dance sampler. The potluck food filled three long tables and was a treasure trove: fresh-picked produce from folks' gardens and orchards, appetizers, salads of every description, amazing desserts, and even an angel food cake in the shape of the US! The PCDC Board provided falafel, hummus, pita, and drinks. More than 75 dancers, musicians, and callers showed up to have fun and eat. It's always wonderful to see folks who no longer dance with us but don't miss this annual opportunity to spend the day with longtime friends. And it's great to welcome newcomers to an event where we can sit and get to know each other better than we normally can on the dance floor.

Here's to more community building and co-creating! 🍁



**Foreground: Picnic-goers jam and socialize. Background: People check out games, food, and the clothing exchange.**



**Sue Songer (off-camera) leads a group in games**



**Ric Goldman calls for the English Country sampler dance**



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## First and Third Saturday Dances Return to Fulton Hall



*The Stage Crew: Lori Shaffer, Lanny Martin, Sue Songer*

September sees the return of every-week Saturday dances at Fulton Hall. The First Saturday Dance, hosted by The Stage Crew and featuring occasional guest bands, returns September 6 with caller Kelly Tabor. The Third Saturday Dance, hosted by George Penk, returns September 20 with a guest band featuring Heather Pinney, Jesse Schafer, and guest fiddler Shari Ame, with caller Eric Curl.



*George Penk*

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## Joyride Drives the Start of the 2025-26 Season!

*By Erik Weberg*



Joyride begins the season of first Wednesdays at Polish Hall with renowned caller Koren Wake on September 3. Koren is a young, dynamic caller from Seattle who will be working with Joyride at the Chehalis weekend later in September, so you'll get a taste of that upcoming dance weekend. Come help us party in the new 2025-26 season! For details, see <https://joyride.erikweberg.com>.

***Joyride: George Penk, Jeff Kersson-Griep, Erik Weberg, and Sue Songer***

*Photo: Anita Mortimer*

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## Contra Remix Dances Resume at Norse Hall

Contra Remix dances are back! The first dance of the season will take place on Sunday, September 21, in the upstairs ballroom of Norse Hall. The evening starts with an introduction and warm-up at 6:30, followed by the dance at 7 pm. Contra Remix dances are held on the third Sunday of every month, except for November's dance, which will be held on the fourth Sunday. For more details, see [here](#).

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# Introducing the Contra Concierge Program

*By Carissa Albin*



***Contra Concierges at a recent PCDC dance: Lindsey Grayzel, Cayley Buckner, and Carissa Albin***

If you've attended a PCDC Saturday night dance recently, you might have seen these colorful fringed vests and extra-smiley faces on the dance floor. The new Contra Concierge program supports dancers who are new to our community. Contra Concierges wear brightly colored vests so they can be spotted easily on the crowded dance floor. They show up to welcome new dancers and to dance with or talk to anyone who seeks them out. There is a designated space behind the admissions table where dancers can sit if they'd like a Contra Concierge to ask them to dance.

Contra is already known for its friendly and welcoming dancers. Experienced dancers regularly seek out newcomers to ask them to dance and to welcome them to the community. Concierges support what our community already does by specifically volunteering to be available for dancing, questions, and extra support. And it seems to be working: Newcomers have been eagerly asking concierges to dance, seemingly more comfortable to do this with a designated volunteer. Concierges note that newcomers are dancing more and sitting out less. Concierges are getting asked a lot of questions about our community and other contra events. These early results look promising for building a stronger community in which newcomers are more engaged, enthusiastic to dance, and excited to return.



# On To The Next

Come dance, dine, and dream about our future together

October 18, 2025, 11am - 11pm

9 hours of dancing with 2 hours  
of community dinner social

Sliding Scale \$35 - \$75+

Masks Encouraged

Queer Normative

Non-gendered calling



*Peter & The Melt Jones*



*Campaign for Real Time*



*Noah Grunzweig Calling*



*Brian Lindsey + Friends*



*Lindsay Deno Calling*



[ontothenthe.next.pdxcontra.org](http://ontothenthe.next.pdxcontra.org)

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# Beyond the Hambo: Discover the Scandi Dancing Community

By Robert Sisk



"Everyone enjoys a good hambo," proclaims one long-time contra dancer. A dance teacher calls the hambo one of the most satisfying dances of her wide teaching repertoire. Indeed, Sweden's national dance has long been a favorite after-the-break dance at contra dances coast-to-coast. With its lilting steps and smooth, graceful turns, all timed to the rhythm of lyrical folk tunes, the hambo is most contra dancers' first exposure to Scandinavian dancing.

While many Portland dancers learned hambo basics at the annual Hambo Fest held by the area's primary and oldest (42 years) Scandinavian dance group, Norske Runddansere (NR), others have discovered other Scandinavian dances (both partner and group) that are also a wonderful complement to contra dancing. At Norske Runddansere's Monday dances, dancers enjoy a wide range of Nordic dances just as satisfying and poetic as the Hambo. Partner dances that originated in tiny Scandinavian villages, such as the Boda, Bingsjö, and Roros Polskas, are taught and danced year-round, most often to live music that might include traditional instruments like the Nyckelharpa and Hardanger fiddle.

***Matt Jolley and Terri Baker enjoy Scandinavian dancing at Nordia House in SW Portland***

The instruction season goes from mid-September to mid-June. Simple, lively dances, such as the Schottische and Snoa, help kick off the lesson season, building steps and confidence as the season progresses to more advanced dances. Even then, the most challenging dances are taught in two lessons. Each Monday's hour lesson is taught by experienced instructors who have learned the dances in Scandinavia or at workshops around the country. Open dancing follows the lesson with a variety of dances, sometimes requested from a list built on past lessons, but always including the dance taught that evening. Interspersed are easy, spirited mixers that bring people together to foster group socializing and a strong sense of community.

Although the dance repertoire has expanded over time, the message at the door stresses that neither partner nor experience is necessary to join in. Newcomers to Scandinavian dancing are coaxed by experienced dancers into the joyful mixers and easy partner dances sprinkled through the evening, reinforcing that "all are welcome and anyone can dance something!"



***December's magical  
Snoa Dance in the Gorge***



Norske Runddansere meets in the Great Hall of the beautifully crafted and spacious Nordic Northwest Center at 8809 SW Oleson Road in Portland. The center features a hand-carved front door, abundant natural light, and an immense artistically-rendered troll on its park-like grounds. With rare major holiday exceptions, doors open every Monday evening at 7 pm for sign-in, with lessons starting up on September 8 this year. The lesson goes from 7:15 to 8:15 pm, with open dancing following until 9:15 pm. Non-member drop-in fee is \$10 (\$6 for students), but an annual membership at \$125 covers nearly 50 nights of dancing. NR also sponsors fall, winter, and spring special event dances, as well as December's magical "Snoball in the Gorge" (see accompanying photo). For more information, visit [norskerunddansere.org](http://norskerunddansere.org) or call 503-560-5773. 🍁

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## Space Still Available for 2025 Portland English Ball Weekend

*By David Macemon*



Space is still available for the Portland English Country Dance Ball weekend! You can register at [portlandecdball.info](http://portlandecdball.info).

### **PORTLAND ENGLISH COUNTRY DANCE BALL WEEKEND**

November 7, 8, and 9, 2025

Oaks Park Dance Pavilion

**THE BALL:** Saturday, November 8 (Ball registration required)

**Caller:** Laura Hatch (using a mix of positional and gendered calling)

**Music:** Fine Companions (Betsy Branch, Bill Tomczak, Erik Weberg, and Lisa Scott)

**Sound:** John Oorthuys

**PRE-BALL DANCE:** Friday, November 7 (Open to all; admission not part of Ball registration)

**Callers:** Dilip Sequeira & Rachel Pusey (calling positionally)

**Music:** Laura Kuhlman, George Penk, Jenny Peterson

**Sound:** John Oorthuys

**SUNDAY BALL BRUNCH:** Sunday, November 9 (Ball attendees only)

## Calendar Listings, plus PCDC Board and Committee Info

**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/](http://portlandcountrydance.org/board-members/).



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## Monday Night Kennedy School Jams Continue into the Fall

By Kathy Story, PCDC Board President

The Kennedy School Monday night jam sessions are going strong and continuing into the fall—join us!

**What:** Jams for all acoustic instruments and 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: for details, email [pdxqjam@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:board-chair@portlandcountrydance.org).

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## Second Thursday Contra Tune Sessions Going Strong

Second Thursday Tune Teaching Sessions (free, courtesy of PCDC) are going strong, with a dozen or more musicians gathering each month to learn and play tunes together. George Penk and Betsy Branch lead the teaching sessions, which are interspersed with quarterly jams. To see the tunes that have been taught and played over the years, check out the recordings on our [webpage](#). For more info or to receive announcements about the sessions, email [sharonjeanallen@yahoo.com](mailto:sharonjeanallen@yahoo.com).



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## Special Contra Dance Tuesday, November 11, at Polish Hall: CounterCurrent and George Marshall

PCDC presents a special contra dance Tuesday, November 11, with contra dance favorites CounterCurrent and George Marshall.

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

**When:** Tuesday, November 11, 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.





# Rose City Dance-a-Rama

An In-town Contra Dance Weekend



**November 14 - 16, 2025**

Norse Hall, Portland, Oregon  
111 N.E. 11th Avenue



*Wild Asparagus*



*Engine Room*



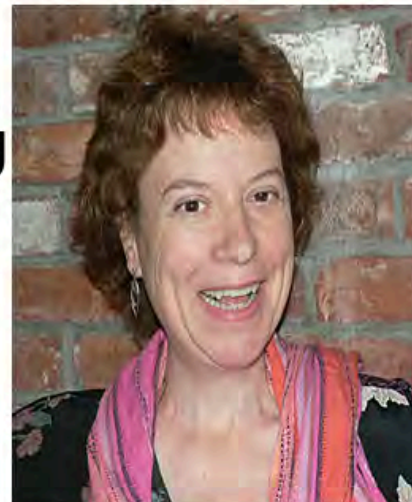
*George Marshall*

**[www.DanceaRama.org](http://www.DanceaRama.org)**

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*We saved a place  
for you*



*Lisa Greenleaf*