
PCDC Footnotes

September–October 2024



It's back-to-school season, which in our world means the return of several contra dances from summer hiatus. Fall also brings us cool weather for dancing—and cool dance and music events, such as [Rose City Dance-a-rama](#) and the [Portland English Ball](#). It's a great time to be dancing and playing music!

In this issue...

- **[PCDC's Summer Picnic a Success](#)**: And not just because there were PCDC birthday cakes (lots of them!). In true community spirit, we weathered a downpour with aplomb, barely missing a beat as we moved the music jam and games inside. For more, including photos, see [here](#).
- **[Volunteer Spotlight](#)**: This issue, we focus on [Bette Laucks](#), a generous volunteer whose smooth talking can stop a gun-toting second amendment protester in his tracks.
- In [On the Dance Floor](#), Ric Goldman provides [great tips](#) for adding style to your contra dance moves.
- **[President's Corner](#)**: Kathy Story pulls back the curtain on just how hard your PCDC Board has been working the last several years. This month, she tells us about the latest of the foundational documents the Board has put together: [Guidelines for Event Coordinators Addressing Incidents](#).
- **Four contra dances return from summer break**: With four returning contra dances plus the ongoing Second and Fourth Saturday dances, you can contra dance every Saturday—and other days, too! Add weekly Friday (and Second Sunday) ECD, and our [calendar](#) is quite full! Here are the returning dances:
 - [The First Saturday Dance series returns](#), featuring **The Fiddle Hellions** in September and **The Stage Crew** in October.
 - [The Third Saturday Dance series returns](#), with a varied lineup for fall.
 - [Joyride resumes first Wednesday dances](#) at Polish Hall.
 - [The Contra Remix dances are back](#) at Norse Hall starting September 15.
- **Keeping up with the Jams**: Fight FOMO by attending more jam sessions!
 - [Monday night jams at the Kennedy School](#) (contra, waltz, ECD, and Quebecois)
 - [Quebecois jams](#) at the Kennedy School and in other locations
 - [Second Thursday tune teaching sessions and jams](#)

PCDC Event Calendar

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.

PCDC Summer Picnic a Success Despite Rain Showers

By Kathy Story

Happy 40th birthday to PCDC! More than 80 dancers and musicians came to Fulton on June 29 to celebrate at our annual members' picnic. We enjoyed Mediterranean food provided by PCDC, a potluck, a clothing exchange, an English Country Dance sampler, a music jam, and games, button-making, and birthday cakes. (Yes, many birthday cakes!) Even when it started to rain, the party kept going. Games and music moved indoors, and the rest of us stayed dry under the canopies.

Thanks to Lindsey Grayzel for organizing the flock of volunteers who made it happen, and thanks to those volunteers—as well as all of you who showed up and brought delicious food! 🍁



First Saturday Dance Series Returns for 2024-25

September sees the return of the First Saturday Dance series, hosted by The Stage Crew and featuring occasional guest bands. On September 7, local favorites The Fiddle Hellions will take the stage, along with caller Koren Wake from Seattle. On October 5, The Stage Crew returns, accompanied by the inimitable and irrepressible Noah Grunzweig.



Fiddle Hellions George Penk, Betsy Branch, Sue Songer



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

Third Saturday Dances Resume with a Varied Line-up

The fall line-up for the Third Saturday dance series includes:

September 21: Peter and the Wolf Tones, with caller Tarka Ayres

October 19: Campaign for Reel Time, with caller Eric Curl

December 14*: Countercurrent-Plus, with caller Susan Petrick

December 21: Peter and the Wolf Tones, with caller Lindsey Dono

* Note: November's 3rd Saturday dance will be held on December 14th—which is not a third Saturday, nor in November. The date was changed to accommodate the Rose City Dance-a-Rama contra dance weekend (November 15–17).

Contra Remix Dances Resume at Norse Hall

Contra Remix dances are back! The first dance of the season will be held in the upstairs ballroom of Norse Hall on September 15. The evening starts with an introduction and warm-up at 6:30, and the dance follows at 7 pm. For more details, see [here](#).

Joyride Rides Again: The 2024-25 Season Begins!

By Erik Weberg



After a summer off, Joyride is rested and raring to go on September 4. Our new season begins with the fun (and sometimes funny) calling of our friend Susan Michaels, who is always a joy to work with. Join us September 4 at Polish Hall to start the 2024–25 season with a bang! You can peruse our schedule and download gig flyers [here](#). See you all soon!

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

Photo: Anita Mortimer

Spotlight on Volunteer Bette Laucks

By Kathy Story

Several folks suggested I interview Bette about all her work as a volunteer for PCDC. Anyone who knows Bette knows she has a generous spirit and is a lot of fun, so I jumped at the idea!

Kathy Story: How did you start contra and English dancing?

Growing up in the South, I was exposed to square dancing. Although I moved to D.C. and then to California, where contra dancing was big, I didn't know anything about it at the time, unfortunately. Then when I lived in Asheville, I went to dinner with friends at



Bette and the 40th birthday cake she made for PCDC

The Grey Eagle. I heard the band and saw all these interesting people coming in. They invited us to join them, so we went in after dinner and tried it. They didn't have a lesson and they were all very good. I didn't succeed and they kept kicking me out. So I went to Warren Wilson a couple of times, but they had no beginners' lesson and it was a long drive. I moved to Portland in 2010 and at some point in 2013, a friend had been invited by Jack Newlevant to a contra dance and I asked if I could come along. Several regular people at the dance welcomed me with open arms and helped me learn. I was encouraged to go to contra dance weekends, so I did, and now I know so many dancers up and down the West Coast.

I began English country dancing soon after I started contra dancing, but I was exposed to it a lot more at Lady of the Lake, the first time the camp was held during Covid, when one dance was contra and the next was English. I got more intrigued by the dance steps and the music is so fantastic. Then during Covid, it was the only option much of the time in Portland.


KS: Why do you volunteer?

I just like people and I like to work. I can't stand to sit around when there's something to do. When I was on the contra committee, from about 2014 to 2017, I hosted half of the meetings at my home. I've helped with Raindance in so many roles, organized the tribute to Kim and Christine Appleberry, regularly worked the contra registration table as we returned to dancing after Covid, sat at the door for English, and baked a 40th anniversary birthday cake this year for the picnic.

KS: Tell me a favorite memory as a volunteer with PCDC

Oh, the crazy incident of the guy with a gun! I was new to volunteering at the table and Brian Woodward was training me. A guy came in with a dancer I recognized. He had this piece of paper in his hand, and he had a gun on his person but I didn't see it. He said, "I just wanted to know what your gun policy was." I asked Brian, but he was speechless. The guy had a piece of paper showing that he had the right to carry. I think he was testing his rights. I just looked at the guy and said, "That's not going to happen. Think about this: if you're dancing and somebody knocks your gun out of your holster and it hits the floor and goes off, do you want to be responsible? Take the gun out to your car." So he did. [Author's note: When Christine tells this story, which she loves to do, she emphasizes Bette's great southern accent and her way with people, both of which I imagine helped smooth over this dilemma.] We didn't have a gun policy, so we immediately printed up signs. Everybody heard about this incident and somehow I became famous. Then Kim asked me to be on the contra committee and I was on the committee for several years. But actually, I don't like committees. You can ask me to clean the toilets or sweep the floors, but don't ask me to be on a board (or to vacuum at Norse Hall)!

KS: What do you do when not dancing or volunteering?

I enjoy gardening in my yard, meeting with my garden group, reading, and traveling to dance weekends. 

On the Dance Floor: Contra Dancing with Style

By Ric Goldman

Looking for a better experience for yourself and those you dance with? Try these ideas to add a little style and technique.

The basics: Hands four

Let's start with the basics, just to establish terminology. Hands four is the usual starting position: Starting at the top of the line (closest to the band), each set of four dancers (two couples) joins hands. Couple 1 faces down the hall, away from the music, while Couple 2 faces up the hall. This continues down the line until all couples are matched up in sets of four dancers. (There may be one couple left out at the bottom.) Within each couple, the dancer on the left is referred to as the Lark and the person on the right, the Robin.

The essentials: Dancing with style and technique

Glide, don't bounce. Seek to glide smoothly in your movements, especially during the swing, as though you are balancing a book on your head. Otherwise, it can be jarring and tiring for your partner and neighbors to hang onto you while you bounce around in circles!

Make eye contact with the person you dance with to acknowledge a connection with your fellow dancers (this is not a come-on or proposition). Eye contact also enhances balance and reduces dizziness during swinging. If eye contact is uncomfortable for you, try to look at the person's nose or their ear.

Give weight. Be present: let others know you are there. Giving weight refers to the firm physical connection or counter-balance (but not a grab or clutch) between dancers, whether in a swing, balance, or courtesy turn, and especially in an allemande or butterfly whirl. Think of helping a sitting person to their feet. Or try locking elbows with someone and swinging around each other. Each person counter-balances their weight with fellow dancers to propel each other through the figures. When done properly, giving weight keeps the center of gravity balanced between the dancers, enhancing grace, flow, and continuity. You don't want to give your partners limp noodle arms, but neither should you be rough or a dead weight.

Keep safety in mind. Never apply excessive force, squeeze with an inescapable grip, or push a fellow dancer beyond their comfort level. Not only will this spoil the fun, but it may also risk serious injury.

Swing with style and sensitivity. There are lots of swing variations, but here's a good guideline: square your shoulders parallel to your partner and hold your arms firm but not rigid. Give weight so that you and your partner move as one. (Here's where the "Glide, don't bounce" tip really helps.) Don't squeeze too tightly or bend your partner's wrists. Even if you and your partner choose to swing vigorously, always maintain balance, control your space, and respect the spatial needs of the dancers around you. It's perfectly okay to do a walking swing instead of a buzz step, or some other alternate method that feels right.

To twirl or not to twirl: "Twirling the Robin" is a popular embellishment at the end of a swing or instead of a courtesy turn. Though the Lark typically leads the Robin into the twirl, it is the Robin's prerogative to follow the lead or override it. If the Robin does not wish to twirl, a little downward pressure on the connected hands should be a sufficient signal.

Note the timing. Dance each figure within its musical phrase, usually a count of 4, 8, or 16 steps. All dances are designed and timed so that the figures flow seamlessly from one pattern to the next. Try to anticipate the upcoming figure so you can make a smooth transition and maintain the flow for those around you. Avoid swinging too many times or adding too many twirls.

Better never than late. If you get behind the music, drop a figure to catch up. Otherwise, you get later and later and the effect ripples out.

Know your recovery options. If you lose your place and all else fails, find your partner, wait for the inevitable partner swing, and pick it up from there. If you're totally lost, just go to the progressed place (for new neighbors) and wait for the dance to start again. Remember, what happened in your set of four, stays in your set of four. It's only a dance, so don't sweat it.

Make a graceful exit (only when necessary). In the rare case where you must drop out mid-dance, please try to hang on until you reach the end of the line. From there, you can usually step out without disrupting the other dancers in the line. Leaving in the middle destroys the couple formations of 1's and 2's and can require a lot of creativity to repair.

Stay tuned in when you're out—manage the end effects. When you are out at the top or bottom of the line, don't turn off your brain. If the entire dance progression (that is, once through all the figures) takes place within only your group of hands four, then all you need to do at the end of the line is exchange places with your partner and wait for the next progression of the dance. However, if the dance progresses in the middle of the sequence, or if you interact with a shadow or with a previous or next neighbor, you may be back in the dance sooner than you think. For dances using a Becket formation, or dances that include chains on the left and/or right diagonal, you need to be aware of how the dance is flowing and when you need to get back in. If you're at the very top or bottom of the line and there's a neighbor interaction but you have no neighbor to interact with, try using your partner as a temporary neighbor (this works most of the time).

The extras: Setting an example and building community

Initiate contact and welcome newcomers. If you are an experienced dancer, show newcomers the ropes and help share the enthusiasm. Encourage and give quick positive feedback afterwards.

When the caller is teaching, silence should prevail. Pay attention, position yourselves into hands four promptly, follow the instructions, and be patient while others learn. This makes walk-throughs go faster and gets everyone dancing sooner.


Don't co-teach while the caller is teaching. This teaches folks to ignore the caller. If there's confusion, get the caller's attention so that the question can be addressed by the caller. If the caller is not able to answer your question right away, check to see if the issue works itself out. If it does not, raise the question again.

Respect other dancers' personal space. Smiling and eye contact are part of the fun, but not required. Don't read more into a gesture than is intended and if something bothers you, let your partner know. Use common sense and discretion.

Try to keep clean and dry. This can be a challenge in the heat of the dance or in hot weather. As part of your contra survival kit, consider packing a hand towel, fresh shirts, breath mints, and fragrance-free deodorant or antiperspirant.

Wear appropriate clean-soled shoes and comfortable clothes. Some folks enjoy dancing in skirts or kilts because twirling is simply more fun in a skirt!

Make it a practice to thank guests for coming, instructors for teaching, program leaders for leading, bands for playing, and sound engineers, organizers, and everyone else who made your evening a pleasant one.

Be part of the action. Show up early to help with setup, or stay late to help with tear-down. Look for volunteering opportunities. Help make the dance more of a community activity. 

The President's Corner: Guidelines for Addressing Incidents

By Kathy Story

In my May-June column, I introduced two new documents: our [Code of Conduct](#) and our [Community Standards](#). In this issue, I want to share the last piece in our foundational documents, our newly adopted [Guidelines for Event Coordinators Addressing Incidents](#). Through these three documents, along with our revised [Bylaws](#) and our [Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals](#), we hope to create and sustain a welcoming, fun, inclusive, and safe community for those who love traditional dance and music.

The *Guidelines for Event Coordinators Addressing Incidents* were created to help organizers at any PCDC event deal with incidents that violate our *Code of Conduct* or *Community Standards*. Usually, when a complaint is received, an honest and empathetic conversation is sufficient to handle the situation. But on those occasions when more is required, we now have a fair and consistent process to keep our community safe and welcoming.

The work on this project began four years ago under the leadership of PCDC Board co-chairs Christine Appleberry and Sue Songer, as our community was dealing with a very serious incident. As Christine recalls, "At our April 2020 Board meeting, the Board was still dealing with a dancer who had been banned—whether to ban him until some conditions were met or ban him permanently. Sue and I agreed to follow up with the larger topic of dancer behavior issues with our friend Eliza Romick, a recently retired HR


director. We first met in April 2020. I think it was just the three of us for the first few months. During that time, Sue contacted an HR lawyer with a series of questions and concerns. Noah Grunzweig had input on creating the questions we asked our lawyer. [A Zoom meeting was held with the lawyer in June 2020.] This was also the beginning of our dealing with Covid and dancer safety policies concerning Covid. There was a lot on our plates.”

Sue, Christine, and Eliza developed an outline and flowchart for thinking through and responding to these situations. In the summer of 2022, they facilitated two training sessions for committee members on how to respond to incidents at dances. Committee members gave feedback on the training, outline, and flowchart.

The Board’s attention then turned to revising the *Bylaws* and developing our *Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals*. Once these were in place, a safety task force turned its attention to developing the *Code*, the *Community Standards*, and these new *Guidelines for Event Coordinators Addressing Incidents*.

Over time, the volunteers on the task force included Sue, Christine, Eliza, Ash Goren, Ric Goldman, Cynthia Stenger, and myself. Later, Norman Farrell and Yosef Trachtenberg joined. The task force studied incident policies of other dance organizations, wrote many drafts of the *Guidelines*, and presented a preliminary draft to the PCDC Board at the June meeting. The Board gave oral and written feedback and a revised draft was sent to the Committees for feedback. Based on this feedback, a final draft was presented to the Board at our July meeting and approved without any changes.

The task force is now planning training on the new guidelines for the PCDC Board, committees, and event coordinators. If you are interested in joining a training session, please contact me.

Many hours of research, deep conversations, and wordsmithing sessions were put into these documents. Along the way, we got to know each other better, appreciate each other’s strengths and experiences, and celebrate each step as it was completed. This is the beauty of serving on committees and task forces: a smaller community comes together in a focused way to make our larger community a better place. Many thanks to all the voices that were involved in the process. I am immensely grateful to the leadership of Christine Appleberry and Sue Songer, who shepherded all of these documents through four challenging years for our organization. As with all of our policies, the *Guidelines for Event Coordinators Addressing Incidents* is a living document. Suggestions, questions, and comments are always welcome. 

Kennedy School Jams: Contra, Waltz & ECD, and Quebecois

By Kathy Story, PCDC Board President

PCDC is grateful to the Concordia Neighborhood Association for allowing us to hold jams in the Kennedy School Community Room as one of their Community Partners. It’s been so much fun to gather with other musicians and play our favorite dance music. Our Monday night contra and ECD jams draw musicians at all levels. Some experienced folks play in local dance bands, while others are just getting started on their instruments. We’ve had folks playing fiddle, guitar, mandolin, ukulele, cello, flute, clarinet, oboe, recorder,

concertina, and more. No matter how many musicians show up, there's always more room in the circle. Come make music with us!

What: Monday night Kennedy School Jams for all acoustic instruments and all levels of musicians, whether you play by notes or 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 in Sept. and Dec., 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.

Bonus jam on 5th Mondays: The PDX Quebecois jam has started up again after the pandemic. This jam session meets at the Kennedy School on 5th Mondays and at members' homes in months without a 5th Monday; see "[Quebecois Jam Sessions Starting up Again.](#)"

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

Quebecois Jam Sessions Starting up Again

By Ron Swick

The Portland Quebecois jams are inclusive, learner-friendly sessions where you can share and learn the energizing and joyful traditional dance music of Quebec and Acadia. If you play or are interested in learning this kind of music, this session is for you! The session is geared toward folks who already play their instrument, with all experience levels and all acoustic instruments welcome. Tunes are played several times through so that folks can get their fingers around new tunes and really enjoy playing the ones they know.

We meet at the McMenamins Kennedy School (see the [Monday Night Jams](#) article) on 5th Mondays,, but during months without a 5th Monday, we gather at members' homes. If you'd like to receive invitations or host a session (or have questions), email pdxqjam@gmail.com.

Resources: For common session tunes, sheet music and performance links may be provided via the mailing list in order to build a repertoire of common Quebec session tunes. Other resources include *The Portland Collection* (Vols. I, II, and III), the *1000 Airs du Quebec* tunebook, and online performances.

2024 Schedule:

On 5th Mondays: Sept. 30 and Dec. 30, 7–9 pm, at Kennedy School, 5763 NE 33rd Ave, Portland

In September, October, and November: Locations TBA; email pdxqjam@gmail.com

Second Thursday Contra Tune Sessions Still Going Strong

By Sharon Allen

The Second Thursday Tune Sessions are going strong, with a dozen or more musicians gathering each month to learn and play tunes together. The July and August sessions were both backyard jams, taking advantage of the warmer weather. It's such a joy making music together in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. Non-musicians are also welcome to come listen.

George Penk and Betsy Branch lead the teaching sessions, which are interspersed with quarterly jams:

September 12, 7–9 pm: Betsy teaches in SE Portland

October 10, 7–9 pm: Jam session, location TBD

November 14, 7–9 pm: George teaches in SW Portland

December 12, 7–9 pm: Betsy teaches in SE Portland

We learn tunes commonly played at contra dances, so that we can more easily join in jams and Open Band events. Teaching is all by ear, with plenty of repetition for successful learning. You don't have to be an accomplished musician to join in. (I started attending these sessions with only one month of experience on fiddle!) If you can sing along to a song on the radio, you can learn to play tunes by ear.

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. 🍁



Rose City Dance-a-Rama



An In-town Contra Dance Weekend

November 15 - 17, 2024

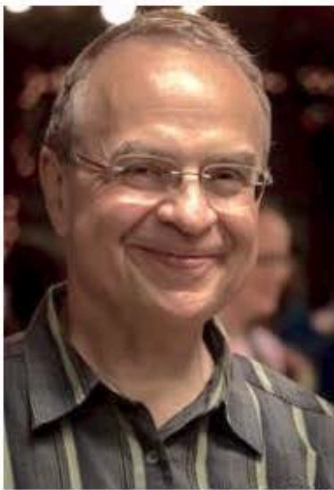
Norse Hall, Portland, Oregon
111 N.E. 11th Avenue



Wild Asparagus



Joyride



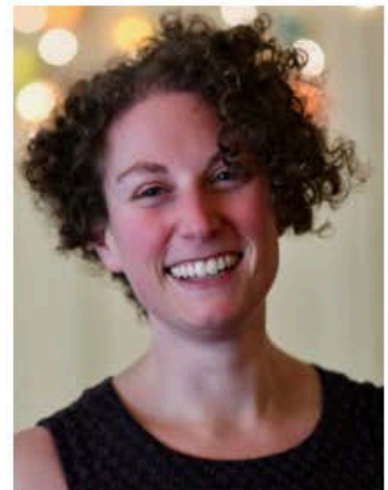
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*We saved a place
for you*



Lindsey Dono