

FFDC Newsletter

MARCH, 1989

President: Craig Whitehead, 907 NW 11th Ave, Gainesville, FL 32601

Treasurer: Lisa Princi, 1017 Chippewa Trail, Holly Hill, FL 32017

Editor: Debbie Shook, 1234 Leon Lane, Holly Hill, FL 32017

INTERNATIONAL INTRIGUE STRIKES CAMP

The evil, sinister & corrupt Canadian government locked one our teachers, Nicolaas Helfrink, behind their IRON CURTAIN, in order to prevent his appearance at our 1989 camp. The details are sketchy at press time, but the fact was quite evident that he was among the missing. What were we to do? Half of our "New Dance Fix" had been "detained at the border". Oh, woe is us!

SUPER STEVE TO THE RESCUE

Steve Kotansky bravely offered to do double duty, filling in for Nico in his absence. Without trying to represent any of Nico's own dance material, he offered to include some other dances from the same countries. And he did it! He was visibly bedraggled by the end of the weekend, but was still slapping his boots in fine style Monday morning. More cheers to Steve Kotansky, Superteacher, and let's all try to catch his workshop in Atlanta this Spring.

HELP LEGALIZE FOLKDANCING

One rumored theory about the reason for closing the Canadian/US border is that the authorities may have caught on to the addictive nature of folkdancing. After all, we DO get HIGH on the stuff, and we keep coming back for MORE, MORE, MORE, no matter about the PAIN of aching muscles and feet. What fools they are, however, if they think they can cure us by withholding just one weekend fix!

Another rumored theory is simply that they fail to realize that we mangle EVERY country's dances, not just the Canadian, English and French ones. (Well, there MUST be at least THREE French dances, and maybe as many Canadian, that we still do once in a while. And we all know that there are DOZENS of English ones; we just have to learn each one from scratch every time we do it.) If those stupid politicians could only see us hamming up Arkan, or trying to imitate the second half of Floricica Olteanasca, they would give us a standing ovation for our enthusiastic renditions of La Bastringue!

We must stand up for our rights. To be honest, for instance, (wow, this may be heresy!) RUNNING has to be far more narcotic than folkdancing. Why those folks don't even claim to ENJOY it while they are doing it. Pure addiction, that's what it is. If THEIR lobbyists can keep RUNNING legal, surely OURS can prevent the outlawing of FOLKDANCING, if we all stand up and fight together! (Yeah, yeah, I know, that's what they said about legalizing SEX, too.)

NAME CHANGE IN SARASOTA

The Sarasota Wednesday Night Dancers are changing their name to The Grapevine Dancers of Sarasota, and are changing their night of dancing to Sundays at 7:00 PM, effective February 26th. Sydelle Singer is again teaching the group during the season, and will be with us until she leaves for her regular stint in the Catskills, where she teaches during the summer months. - Marie & John Millett

MOUSE MUSINGS
(Orlando Group)

We have somehow been able to increase the attendance at our regular Thursday evening dance sessions, largely through word-of-mouth and weekly "Calendar" section listings in the Sunday newspaper. I thought I would share some information on what we did to attract college students in particular.

We decided to hold a special "(local college) Nite" during one of the dance sessions. An article was written and appeared in the (local college) newspaper some eight days before the scheduled event. Among other points, we stressed that no partner was required, instructions would be given, the location convenient, dress informal, music and dance varied, and that the regular entry donation would be waived for students and faculty. In addition, the club decided to provide light refreshments (Free!) to all attendees.

A week before the event we got permission from the college and placed two dozen posters on campus bulletin boards to further publicise "(---) Nite". On the evening of the Special Nite we did, indeed, have several new people in attendance, who participated with us and seemed to enjoy it. But no one came from the college.

Other noteworthy frustrations: We have written to the co-editors of "The Peoples Folk Dance Directory", in Texas, asking for our money back, pending publication. We have waited patiently for two years; enough is enuff. - Larry Wartell

(Larry is getting suspiciously PROMPT lately. This article even arrived a day BEFORE the deadline. Then I found out that he was actually SKIPPING CAMP to sail on some silly MENSA cruise, cruelly scheduled for the same weekend. I didn't even get a chance to return the new tube of tooth paste he left at my house after Folk Fest. Do you think we should send out a missionary to give him one of our friendly, neighborhood house calls?)

Dear Larry - All I can tell you about the Peoples Folk Dance Directory is that their address is still good. We have been sending them a complimentary copy of the newsletter all these many months, and it has NEVER been among the copies returned as undeliverable. Of course you already knew they had an excellent track record in THAT department, since the last issue they put out STILL has some value, a good half dozen years later! Why else are we trying to get a new one? - David

Larry also asked how to get in touch with Karen Green, now sharing an apartment with her mother in San Francisco. She has been going to school, and is about to start teaching MATHEMATICS. Her address is:

1640 Vallejo #7, San Francisco, California (sorry, no ZIP)

DAVID'S FINAL HARANGUE

This is the LAST issue I will publish. Your NEW editor, Debbie Shook, who was elected at the camp meeting, will take over the job and produce the April issue. Please send her ALL contributions and other communications regarding the newsletter, starting right NOW! I will also give her the Florida Dance Directory I (almost) had ready to print this month, before all the camp gossip came in. - Merry Mayim!

ALMS FOR THE EDITORS MAILBAG!

So WRITE SOMETHING! Support your new editor. Her local group is smaller than Tampa, so she'll have to stretch even harder to fill up your newsletter with local gossip. I prefer to read something about ALL our Florida groups, and also groups in neighboring states that keep in touch with us (only Atlanta, at present), but unfortunately the voters at the camp meeting were unable to confer the gift of omniscience along with the post of editor. So we're stuck with the old fashioned way ... YOU have to write something and SEND it to her, or else she won't have anything to print about your group. The same thing applies to information you may have about workshops and dance performances or other events we might all enjoy attending, IF we knew about them. SOMEBODY who KNOWS has to tell the EDITOR, or else it WILL NOT appear in the newsletter! Sorry, but C'est la vie! - David

IN CASE YOU MISSED A FEW INSTALLMENTS

We have published a pamphlet incorporating all of the various installments and other communications from Tiffany Teardrop, as well as some of the sundry guesses and PREDICTIONS about her that have been passed around. We put it up for sale at the Olga Princi Scholarship Auction. Our new president, Craig Whitehead, was the high bidder for the ONE copy HAND AUTOGRAPHED by Tiffany. He paid \$2. How much would YOU have bid? There are a few (non-autographed) copies left. The first nine people to send \$2 (plus \$.50 postage) may have your own NUMBERED copy of "The Compleat Tiffany Teardrop". Order from:

David Digby, 3303 Price Ave, Tampa, Florida 33611

(Communications addressed to Tiffany Teardrop may be addressed to: "SPPO", c/o the above address. "SPPO" stands for "South Polar Post Office". Tiffany MAY reply to such communications, but remember that mail service to the South Pole is EXCEEDINGLY slow!)

Although several people have ventured to guess or PREDICT who she is, none have put the finger directly upon Tiffany Teardrop. ONE WHO SHOULD KNOW has stated that anyone familiar with the writing style of the REAL "TIFFANY TEARDROP" would immediately recognise her as the author of "As The Opanci Hop-Step-Step". Unless you have carefully preserved ALL of the various installments and letters, you amateur sleuths out there will definitely want THE MAJOR CLUE to her identity which "The Compleat Tiffany Teardrop" represents.

Just to help you warm up your thinking caps, we have omitted at least two "unanswered questions" from the list we compiled at the end of that document. Finding them in the text will assist in directing your attention to the level of detail required.

Don't you just LOVE a mystery?

GARRULOUS GAINESVILLE GOSSIP

Seven of us from Gainesville attended this year's camp. We all had a very nice time, and were much impressed with Steve Kotansky. Many thanks to Bonnie and her committee.

The group has done several local performances during the past six months. One demonstration was a part of the Sports Club Council's festival in the Plaza of the Americas, a large grassy area on Campus.

There was a somewhat unusual event during our show. A beautiful white dove alighted on the clasped hands of two of our dancers, stayed there for almost the whole dance, and then flew off. We have no idea where it came from, nor where it went, but some of us wondered if it was an omen - an auspicious sign for our group.

The group has also performed at a retirement home in Gainesville, and most recently at the Daystar Celebration. The Florida Museum of Natural History no longer sponsors the yearly International Festival, and Kanapaha Gardens hosted (and renamed) the festival this year.

From all of the above, one could well surmise that all is fine with Gainesville and wonder why our group has been inactive on the state level before our unusual turnout for camp. I will attempt to explain. We have a very small group of dancers who show up every Friday night - perhaps six or seven. Some others show up every two or three weeks, or as infrequently as once a month. Then there are those newcomers, who join us on a Friday night, seem to have a wonderful time and promise to come back, but of whom we never see hide nor hair again. Some long-time dancers have simply dropped out of the group. We lost at least three promising dancers because of health problems.

Add to all this the fact that only about four of us can teach or perform intermediate to advanced dances, and perhaps you will begin to understand our frustrations. Because even the interested dancers show up sporadically, the teachers are forced to limit the level to mostly beginning - with a pinch of intermediate - and to reteach even these. As many of you are aware, it is difficult to retain dances if you cannot add them to a groups repertoire and then do them together.

Partly as a result of some of these frustrations, and because I did not want my increasingly jaundiced feelings to affect the group, I took what I refer to as a sabbatical: I did not dance all summer. Much to my surprise, I found that I was not that unhappy about not dancing. Let me put that into perspective. I have been a folk dancer now for 22, going on 23 years, and have rarely missed Friday night folk dancing - aside from necessary times, such as the two occasions on which I went to the hospital to give birth.

I think that some other leaders are also becoming unhappy about these problems. I have no solutions to our group's dilemma. One cannot force people to show up for dancing every week. I sent this long-overdue information to the newsletter, however, so that you would know what has been happening with folk dancing in Gainesville.

On the plus side, we have had help from some very fine and dedicated people. Julieta Brambila, for instance, our student president, has done a marvelous job with publicity, and has intervened on our behalf with the Sports Club Council (which sponsors clubs such as ours.) Tom McDonnell, our faculty advisor, has helped with many of the administrative tasks as well as with programming and running the tapes. Jack and Linda Seltzer, besides being fine teachers, are excellent dancers, and have put much time and energy into the group.

Jean Larson, incidently, who did a fantastic job for two years as our past faculty advisor, was recently married in Pennsylvania. We attended a very nice open house hosted by Jean and her new husband when they returned to Gainesville.

Happy Dancing - Joyce Dewsbury

(Whoops - one more lovely princess has escaped! And I beg forgiveness from Joyce for rearranging some of her words and paragraphs.)

Do you recognise any of these problems, folks? Right, we ALL have them. The only solace I can add to Joyce's lament is that we NEED that flow of newcomers through our groups! Every one of US looked just like THEM when we first tried folk dancing. We didn't KNOW we were going to stick around until after we tried it, and THEY don't either. We are doing well when we attract a lot of POTENTIAL folkdancers, because only SOME of them are going to like it well enough to actually BECOME folkdancers. We have to be philosophical about those other nice people who prefer other fanaticisms. - David

"SPECIAL EVENT" ANNOUNCEMENTS

- January, 1989 - The Duquesne TAMBURITZANS were here, but your editor was not told about it until camp. Next year tell sooner!
- March 10 - Happy Birthday to Gretel Dunsing, one of our founders!
Our first meeting was held at her St. Petersburg home in 1971.
- March 11-12 - Orlando, Yankele Levy workshop (Israeli), \$25 JCC/GF,
851 N Maitland Ave, Maitland, FL - Debbie Meitin (407) 788-7277
- March 15 - DEADLINE for April issue. Send to Debbie in Holly Hill.
- March 24-26 - Oleno State Park - Vernal's Equinox All-night Dance. \$55
Kris Williams, 317 SE 51st St, Gainesville, 32601 (904) 373-5701
- April 7-9 - Atlanta - GEORGIA RANG TANG, starring Steve Kotansky. A
chance to review! Liz Numan, 1237 Valley Brook, Decatur, GA 30033
- May 26-9 - Wheeling, Oglebay Camp, with Tom Bozigian, Michael Ginsburg
& Bob Howell. Oglebay Inst, 1300 National Rd, Wheeling, WV 26003
- June 9-11 - Vancouver, BC, Bulgarian Festival, Yves Moreau & Steve
Kotansky. Vanc. IFD, PO Box 2452, Vancouver, BC, Canada V6B 3W7
- June 16-17 - Salt Lake City - Utah-Slavia! '89 - Polka under the stars
c/o Zivio, PO Box 624, SLC UT 84110-0624. Craig, (801) 596-1957.
- June 17-July 11 - Turkey Tour w/ Dancing Group: \$285 deposit by Jan 5.
ARKADAS, 132 Viola Ave, San Jose, CA 95110. Leman, (408) 947-1657.
- June 21-July 10 - Yugoslavia Tour with the Babiaks (813) 966-1847
- June 30-July 4 - Polish Dance, Music & Folklore Camp, w/ Andor Czompo,
Bryn Mawr Col, nr Phila, PA. Basia Dziewanowska (305) 296-6099
- July 14-21 - Mendocino, CA - Hungarian Retreat @ Mendocino Woodlands.
For information, write: Baratsag, PO Box 3193, Oakland, CA 94609.
- July 15-22 - Seven day Folk Dance Cruise on the St Lawrence Seaway
via Melvin Mann, (415) 526-4033
- July 23-29 or July 30-Aug 5 - Stockton Folk Dance Camp w/ 10 teachers!
Bruce Mitchell, University of the Pacific, Stockton, CA 95211.
- July 30-Aug 13 - Fourteen day Alaska Folk Dance Cruise
via Melvin Mann, (415) 526-4033
- September 1-4 - Oglebay Camp with Steve Kotansky, Mark Finlay, Bill
Alkine. (See May 26 address.) Telephone: (304) 242-9700

THE CARPATHIAN MOUNTAINS - POLAND - HUNGARY

Hungary and Poland historically coexisted peacefully for centuries and even shared monarchs. Court dances of the two cultures include Mazur and Palotas. The Carpathian mountains both joined and separated these highly creative, proud and passionate people. This is the area we are focussing upon at this years Polish Camp.

- Basia Dziewanowska

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REPORT OF THE 'CAMP MEETING' and other LOWDOWN CAMP GOSSIP

We decided to make membership renewal automatic for campers. We also re-approved the first class mailing of the newsletter. And we elected new officers, Craig Whitehead, Debbie Shook and Lisa Princi.

After establishing his reputation at last year's camp with the LEEGWATER TANGO, and a local Tampa sensation, SANTA RITA DEL CONWAY, Ernesto Baizan finally met his match when Steve Kotansky led HIM in a unique rendition. Ernesto was DEVASTATING in his borrowed SARI!

The last I heard, Steve Kotansky was going to dictate the missing notes to John Karras on the way to the airport. John would then type them up and supply them to the editor for inclusion in the newsletter. In the meantime, in between time, keep on dancing from your own notes!

Edwina Scinta surprised me with a gift of dried fruit at camp, in appreciation for my service as editor, she said. Or was it guilt for joining the crowd of folks who declined to accept the nomination for president of the FFDC? No matter, it's very good stuff, and she's a great addition to the Orlando dance crew. Maybe another year she'll be ready to become our fearless leader? She's got the right stuff!

THE PLOT THICKENS

Only now, after the dirty deed is done, has it been revealed to me (and even to Tiffany, herself) that "As The Opanci Hop-Step-Step" was nothing but an SEP plot to get rid of CERTAIN MEMBERS of the FFDC. A ringleader of this plot boasted that their targets have refused to renew their memberships, and that the conspirators, who remain to keep an eye on us, are very careful to throw each issue away before looking at it, so as not to be infected by whatever virus it might contain.

(Boy, we'd better not let those Canadian marks hear about THIS one!)

The Last Hurrah!

How do you spell relief? Well, as far as this ex-president is concerned, it ain't R-O-L-A-I-D-S. It's Craig Whitehead. Yeahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh! Yup, Craig is your new fearless leader, and believe me, I know that we are all happy that Craig is willing to shoulder the responsibilities of FFDC so that we can have another fabulous camp next year.

That's right, this year's camp was fabulous! We owe much to Steve Kotansky whose abounding energy and enthusiasm carried the whole camp through fantastic dances from several countries, through jokes and shenanigans, and through his personable involvement in all the camp merriment. In addition, he provided the auction item of highest bid...a dance with him that will go down in the sizzling annals of folkdance history. If you weren't there, words would only be inadequate to attempt to describe the Hungarian-Pasodoble suite performed by Steve and our one and only Spanish ham...Ernesto Baizan. I'm still not sure which of them looked better in the saree but then I guess that will give me something to ponder now that I have some spare time to myself.

Thank you Steve for such a marvelous weekend and for dances that the Florida "folks" will enjoy for years to come. Maybe some of us will be able to travel to Atlanta in April to experience another dose of your charm and teaching.

I must apologize for the fact that Nicolaas Hilferink was unable to attend our camp this year. This sad event could not have been anticipated. I hope that he will iron out his problems with the Canadian customs officials and be able to come to Florida in the near future. If his absence in any way caused a problem for you, please accept my apology.

I also want to thank the Florida folkdancers who attended camp. ...first for supporting FFDC, second for being so understanding and flexible during the weekend, third for the energy, friendliness, and optimism they displayed, and fourth for all the helping hands that they gave to make our camp so successful. I applaud you all! "As they say, we've come a long way, baby." A special thanks to our newest scholarship student, Adam Martin, who did his jobs with a zeal that was refreshing. He fit easily into our folkdance village, and I for one hope that we will attract many more new young people like him in the near future.

Now, what else do I need to include in this last missive? Let's see...hmmm. The dance notes which were not in the syllabus will be forwarded through the mail or through the newsletter as soon as we receive them...probably next month. Through our auction, we collected just over \$300 for the Olga Princi Scholarship Fund. Hurray! I believe that Sarasota has offered to handle our next Folkfest (I hope this rumor was true.) Our members voted to make membership inclusive in camp membership; others will continue to pay \$8.00 yearly per individual. And...can you believe it; for heaven sakes, how could I almost forget? A big congratulations goes to our new editor, Debbie Shook, who will publish her first issue of the FFDC newsletter in April. I know that I'll miss David's issues but am curious about what the new administration will bring. Everyone has his/her own style and so I look forward to the change and growth which is bound to happen with the new personalities which now take charge. We have given our monies into the capable hands of Lisa Princi. How nice that the treasury has been kept in the family so to speak. Thanks, Rita Princi for your support and conscientious handling of the treasury over the past year and congratulations to Lisa Princi, our new treasurer; I know that she will do a super job, too. Her generous offer to handle this office was the catalyst that helped us find our other officers. Give yourself a pat on the back, Lisa, you deserve it.

Well, friends, this is it. My mailbox will seem a bit empty without all the FFDC mail, and my months a little less harried without the newsletter dead line, but my life, I assure you, is richer for this experience and my memories will be those of your support and friendship. I'd like to think that I gave more than I received. That certainly was my intent. Until we meet again.

Happy Dancing!

Bonnie

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(address correction requested)

ALL EDITORIAL MATERIAL SHOULD BE SENT
TO THE NEW EDITOR:

Debbie Shook
1234 Leon Lane
Holly Hill, FL 32017

Membership is \$8 per year. To join
now, pay \$6 for April-December, 1989,

to: Lisa Princi, FFDC Treasurer
1017 Chippewa Trail
Holly Hill, FL 32017

Ad rates: \$15 for full page
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