

# FFDC NEWSLETTER

FEB y '82 FEB

## COMING EVENTS

- February 5th; 6th: Gretel Dunsing - German, Danish and English, Sarasota  
(see article inside)  
February 12-15: FFDC Camp, Karin Gottier, David Henry (see last mo's issue  
or call Mickey Cross (address on back of newsletter)  
April 24: Folkdancefest

## President's Message

We plan to have a FFDC meeting at the camp in February; however, I would like you to be thinking about something ahead of time. I haven't really enjoyed being President, and was elected to a two year term last February (81). Terry Abrahams and I are willing to switch jobs in February, with her taking the Presidency and me the Newsletter. I think the only way this could work would be for us both to resign, and offer ourselves as candidates. Naturally, the members are free to make other nominations and elect someone else should they desire. This wouldn't hurt my feelings--and I don't think Terry's either, however, we wouldn't be leaving you "high and dry" as you have at least one candidate for each position.

Should there be insufficient registration to run the camp, a meeting will still be held; perhaps at the Ricky Holden workshop in Daytona Beach in late January (by then we should know about the camp for sure); or it could be at the Folkdancefest--but hopefully before then (April 24).

Well, just a line to get you thinking-----

ALL SYSTEMS ARE GO - CAMP IS ON!

Keep your best foot forward.

*Mickey*

Please remember to bring your swap items to camp. It should be fun to check over our surplus costuming.

Also, I have received confirmation from Maria that the Thracian Bizarre will be there.

### PART I

### DANCING AS A PART OF RELIGION

by Kathy Dudek

In all the ages since man's tenacy of the earth began human beings seem to have enjoyed and revered the dance. The dance is the mother of the arts; music and poetry, painting and architecture come with time. Dance has been a part of life since the time of ancient civilizations when it was a part of birth, circumcision, the consecration of maidens, marriage and death, planting and harvest, hunting, war, feasts, the changes of the moon and sickness.

In the choreography of the dances there were two kinds; simple - the dancer keeps his original place in the dance, as in a line dance, and complex - he leaves it temporarily or permanently, as in a bridge, arch or star - acting independently of other dancers. One of the oldest of the simple dances is the circle. The spiritual significance of encircling an object was to take it into possession, incorporate it, chain or ban it.

The dance has two basic themes: mimetic or image and the abstract or imageless. The mimetic rigidly adheres to nature depicting the flourishing of animals, important for sustaining life, rich harvests, victory in battle and the dying and resurrection of man. The abstract serves an idea or religious goal, aimed at ecstasy as in rites of passage, encircling the head of an enemy, or the altar.

Ecstatic dancers in their frenzy are possessed in a sense. A devil or a god has taken control of their body. An example of this would be the fire dance of the Bulgarian sect of the Nastinari or the Luceño of California, where they stamp on glowing embers with bare feet without burning themselves. During this hypnotic state the dancers never fully appreciate what they say, but at the beginning and end experience a dizzying affect of nausea and the ground swaying beneath their feet.

cont on back



# CLUB NEWS



## SARASOTA SE2....

A number of us drove up together and camped in the SPIFFS building overnight. All that space becomes marvelously silent as soon as the dancing starts. It was a great weekend: after a full day of energetic Lithuanian, Greek and Ukian dance instruction, there was non-stop line dancing past midnight at the Spartan in Tarpon Springs.

The Mexico International Folklore Festival in Oaxtepec, by comparison, was much less demanding physically. The resort at which it is held is luxurious and so were the meals. We had hoped to learn some new Mexican dances, but the program was almost entirely gringo: Don & Marie Armstrong taught USA squares & contras; Gwen Peacher of Canada led English country dances, the Hiatts of San Diego led Greek lines, & two dance leaders from Germany taught 16th Century court dances and funny little mixers to be used as "ice-breakers." So it was mostly fun & games. For me, the best part of the festival was the remarkable people who attended. On New Year's Eve, Manuel and Odalia Gomez performed Santa Rita with an ease and grace that I didn't think was possible at that tempo. A young couple from New Orleans appeared in exotic costumes they had made and did unique versions of familiar dances. There were many professional-level dancers, which made the evening mixers one delightful surprise after the other. It took a trip to Mexico for us to meet the Armstrongs of New Fort Richey and George & Leone Senyk of Sharves, FL!

We left Miami on Dec. 24 and spent Xmas Eve in the Zocalo (main square) in Mexico City, where a local folk dance performing group presented a pageant of dances before a live Mary & Joseph and a plastic Baby Jesus, offering each dance as a gift to the Divine Infant. We attended a Ballet Folklorico performance and saw some of the ethnic variety Mexico offers in its extravaganza version. The dancing we saw at Oaxaca at the Hotel Monte Alban was more folksy. Some interesting dance instructor should go there and bring back the music and directions to some of these Indian style barefoot dances with easy patterns and simple footwork that look like fun to do. The most "authentic" dancing we experienced was joining in with the village youth in Oaxtepec who were dressed in the Morelos costume which satirizes the conquistadors. We took movies that event since our description would be unbelievable. Anyone interested in attending the 1982 Festival should reserve airline seats 6 months in advance in order to get on the direct Tampa to Mexico City flight. They were booked solid by Sept. last year. Caution: the Mexican inflation rate is over 37% and food and hotel prices are high. However, public transportation is low (4¢ for a subway ride) and local phone calls cost less than a penny.

Looking forward to seeing everyone at the Ricky Holden workshop and camp. CHANGE: International club now on Sundays 7-9, City of Sarasota Adult Recreation club, 801 N. Tamiami Trail, 365-4388, \$1.00. Contacts Jennifer Marvin 366-8593 or me, 966-1847. Best wishes for a dance-filled 1982. Shirley Babiak

## ALSO FROM SARASOTA...

Gretel Dunsing, internationally known teacher of folk dancing, will lead a workshop for couples in German, Danish and English dances at Folk House South, Sarasota, Friday evening, Feb. 5th, 8 p.m. - 10:30 pm and Sat. Feb. 6, 10 am - 4 pm (lunch provided) with the evening session beginning at 7:00 pm. Francaise will be taught Fri. evening with a brief review on Sat. Cost is \$15/couple, includes lunch and sleeping bag space. Limit 16 couples. Send reservations to Jeanie Whitehead, Route 8, Box 90, Sarasota 35580 or call 813-755-6212. Jeannie

(Editor's note: Unending apologies for telling you last month that this was to be scottish. Jeannie didn't say, and I made a very wrong assumption. Via culpa to all involved.)

## HEARD ABOUT SARASOTA...

While on the subject, I've heard there is also a new Thursday group starting. If someone would send details, I would be happy to print that information. After all, that is the REAL reason we have this newsletter. Come on somebody - communicate...

## BALLANTRAE

Irish Dance Class - every Monday at 8:00 p.m. at Polk St. Recreation Center, 2030 Polk St. Hollywood, FL, Donations 50¢. Teachers: Mary Borden. Call Broward 929-3584 or 456-4892, Dade: 291-3795.

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## ORLANDO'S MOUSE MUSINGS

Orlando closed out its year with a performance at Phyllis Kelley's Presbyterian church in Sanford for a Christmas program. The group provided us with a delicious dinner and we think we gave them a pleasing evening.

In order to get organized for Orlando's contribution to the performances at the April FFDF we had a covered dish supper at Pat Henderson & Bob Quibodeaux's new home to discuss dances and duties. We got some good planning accomplished, but everything was overshadowed by the food. Everything was SO GOOD we will have to do a lot more dancing to keep off the pounds.

We have a new dancer named Johnny B. Good. You will all have to meet him. (He's very good.)

Frank and Mickey Cross got Chris a puppy for Christmas. Not being dog people, they have become completely captivated with this black labrador retriever. The puppy goes to work with them daily, so has no lonely hours. Only 10 weeks old, she is almost housebroken. WE think that's GOOD. (Chris gets to play with her occasionally, just like the electric train kids get for Christmas.)

We may be starting a beginners group here. A local civic center wants us to do so, and we are trying to clear the time to give it a shot. It looks like it might be a cooperative effort with several teachers splitting the time.

Due to the efforts of Fred Shockey, this same center offered us a room to dance in, Wednesday nights, free. However, the location is not good for most of our people so we were concerned about losing our present attendees. Also it isn't air conditioned, yet, although such service is contemplated. All would have been forgiven had it had a wooden floor, but Mickey investigated and found out that it was tile. So we decided to keep paying rent, but may start a beginners class out there in the near future. If there is interest in the area, we can make it permanent.

We danced the Wednesday's before Christmas, and New Years Eve, but otherwise went our own ways, so there isn't a whole lot to report. I'll close this with one more comment. There is the possibility that Kathy Dudek will be moving in mid-February. Before sending any dues around and beyond that time, please check and be sure to use the address most recent in the newsletter.

The Orlando Flat Feet

## TAMPA TRIVIA

I can't think of one exciting thing to say about Tampa this month. However, you all must have had the same problem, as Sarasota and Orlando were the only others to send in news this month, and there's a need to fill space. Lots of us are going to Ormand Beach this weekend, lots of us in my new little RV - we used it for Gainesville, and it was quite nice, so hope to have the same good time again. Also trying to scare up more people for the FFDC camp and hope to see many of you there. We're starting rehearsals for the State Fair, one of our annual events and having a terrible time finding days when we can all come. Hope it works out better for the Folkdancefest. Maria Pasetti took a Caribbean Cruise, thanks to a former job, and had a ball, dancing with everyone on board - from the Greek workers up to the Captain - a real belle of the ball! Victor took part in the Spanish Little Theatre production - the only male who knew he had two feet. Jeanette Thompson has switched from teaching Music, to Real Estate to Arthur Murray and loves it. My (Terry) daughter, son-in-law and granddaughter are visiting me and I'm even learning to accept grandmother-hood - altho I swear I'm too young to be one! My little business (consignment shop) is doing well enough to encourage me to continue on altho I got robbed last night (b. and e.) The Gasparilla Distance Classic is coming up next week, Judith and Marian and her daughter Kyra will be running again. I always thought I got enough exercise dancing... Bye!

*Terry*

## ... BITS AND PIECES...

Greetings from MIKE DUGUAY in New Jersey who met many of us at the Gainesville workshop, joined in the fun and joined the FFDC - Mike, a pioneer in solar optics (lenses and mirrors directing a controlled beam of sunlight to be used for interior illumination and solar cell power), ideas are being used at the University of Minn. and recently appeared on Omni.

FFDC sends condolences to MARILYN RATH, whose mother, RUTH E. BAFTLETT passed away on January 8. Many of us spent happy hours with her - we remember her well

JERRY PAZ calls intermittently - travels on his job, managing to folkdance all over the country, collecting a par excellence record collection, his syllabi filling beaucoup notebooks.

BOBBIE WARD has started her settling in process in Germany, sending fun newsy letters. Loves her job, her boss, the country, has seen her sister, the snow, the countryside, the shores, even danced some!



In all parts of the world there are certain types of dances common among primitive people. There are two general purposes (1) to quicken the growing force in nature and induce fertility - such as high leaps serving as symbolic magic for growth of tall food plants, and (2) to frighten away evil spirits with loud startling sounds.

Similar to the harvest dance is the procession of first fruits, in which a few grains from each food crop is offered to the goddess of fertility. As is the case in many dances, the dancer often goes into a trance, believing the diety has taken possession of his body and mind, oblivious to all going on around him.

Instruction of the dances in primitive people was usually given by the family or within the tribe. In the basic cultures of Australia and Africa, the mothers teach the children, whereas in certain tribes in New Guinea the sons are sent to places known for the dance, so that they may perfect themselves, and then return to their villages as leaders and teachers. At one time, in the New Hebrides, the old men would stand with bow and arrow and shoot at dancers who made mistakes. Obviously, it was of great importance to have mastered the dance. Inevitably, dances became a source of pride and personal achievement in addition to the religious function within the tribe.

The chief diety of the Cretans was a great Mother-Earth goddess, a divinity of fertility. Indulging in a variety of amusements, they had music, singing and dancing. To them dancing was of importance as an amusement and spectacle and integral part of their religion. *Continued next month.*

The FFDC NEWSLETTER is published 12 times a year by the Florida Folk Dance Council for its members. Membership is \$3.00 a year for an individual, and \$5.00 per year for a family of parents and children at the same address. Dance groups located in Florida whose meetings are open to visitors and new joiners and whose contact person is a member of FFDC will be listed in the FFDC directory without charge. Other groups will pay \$1.00 per listing (\$3.00 per year). Flyers announcing up-coming dance events will be printed in the Newsletter at \$8.00 per side or included free if 175 copies are furnished. Advertising rates are available on request. Deadline for materials for publication is the 20th of the preceding month. Send all copy to Terry Abrahams 717 S. Edison, Tampa, FL 33606. Send dues and ad money to Kathy Dudek, 719 Rugby Orlando, FL 32804. President: Mickey Cross, 2713 Timberlake Dr. Orlando, 32806.



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