

The More Things Change – The More TheyChange? Chrissy Davis-Camp

I started going to dances when I was about seven years old – in 1967. Here is my story and some observations I noticed over the years. My dad was the director at Sunset Gap Community Center in the mountains of East Tennessee. The closest town was Newport, about twelve miles away. Just down the road from us was the small community we called “Hippy Holler.” There were folks there that had left their city jobs and gone looking for peace and a more simple life. They found it just down the road from us and settled down. What they brought with them was a desire for gathering together and sharing their lives. Their homes were old school busses, tents – some on wooden platforms, some on the ground, and wood one-room buildings on poles (on the side of the mountain). The homes were too small for getting more than a few folks together, so they came to Sunset Gap about once a month and had vegetarian suppers and folk dances. They got a band from over on the other side of the county in Grassy Fork. The fiddle player was a woman in her mid-70s; the banjo player was about 85; his son played guitar and was probably in his 60s; and his wife always stayed over to the side of the dance floor and did “flatfoot” dancing alone. They played for the dances for several years and then we, the dance group, started getting other musicians who could play the fiddle tunes. A couple of times it was just a fiddle player who showed up, so I was the rhythm guitar player for the evening.

All the dances were easy enough for everyone to dance. The instructions was simple and to the point. No extra words of finesse were necessary. We were there to dance – and socialize, not to see how complicated we could make the dance. The courtesy turns were actual courtesy turns with no twirls. We took our time to listen to the music and use it all with big wide turns when necessary. The hall where we danced was an old school that was consolidated in 1960. It had a big auditorium with a nice big stage and plenty of room for about 50 dancers. Everyone knew most everyone else, so there was usually no shyness about asking strangers to dance. My sister, Becky, and I just jumped right in at the end of the line if no one asked us to dance. No one ever told us not to dance together because it may confuse the adults and we did not even wear a tie to distinguish who was dancing the male role.

I remember going to a big dance in Gatlinburg at the high school. There were probably 200 dancers, the most I had seen at one dance. Becky and I had the best time dancing together and swinging each other, but no twirls. I don’t remember who called or who played the music, but I remember how I felt and the big smile on my face the whole time.

When I was in 9th grade I was in a Music Appreciation class. I taught the class a couple of contra dances and we performed for PTA. No one else in my class had been to the local dances. By then I had been going to Knoxville to Monday night dances for several years.

My dad had staff workers from New England working at Sunset Gap. I don’t know why, but that is where they usually came from to get the “mountain experience.” They were either familiar with contra dancing and wanted to find a local dance to attend or they had heard of contra dancing, but had not actually attended yet. Either way, I got a free ride to the dance!

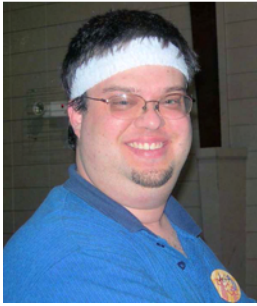
Jean and Lee Schilling, local musicians from Cosby, TN, had a yearly folk festival and they had it at Sunset Gap several times. There were always nightly dances. The Berea College Country Dancers came and held a dance weekend there around 1976. I decided to go to Berea College just so I could be part of their traveling, performing dance group.

So, here it is 2006. I’ve been dancing for 40 years and I can’t imagine my life without it. I am now calling at a little community dance at Flat Creek, about 30 minutes from my home in Bell Buckle, TN. We have 50+ dancers at our twice a month dances. It has become quite the popular place to bring your family both to dance and socialize. The teenagers have discovered it. The dances are easy enough so that anyone can dance at any point in the evening. The band is hosted by Jim and Inge Wood, our local, stellar musicians. It includes many of their students and friends who have a desire to play.

Come dance with us and remember the joy you felt when you first started dancing. It’s amazing how dancing with young people will bring it all back.

Chrissy is a favorite caller in Huntsville and will be calling our August 19th dance. Don’t miss it!

Getting To Know You



Jeff McClure

Jeff is a relative newcomer to our Huntsville dance group. He hails from Waterloo, AL where his parents still reside and he is married to Amy Qualls-McClure. He works at Adtran, Inc. as an embedded systems design engineer. He says that his hobbies change often but most involve gadgets of some kind. In the category of “something unusual you’d like to share” he says that once a year “I’m part of the volunteer technical operations staff for Dragon Con, a large sci-fi/fantasy/comics/gaming/etc. convention in Atlanta. You’ll see my chin hair go away after the convention. I dye it bright blue for the event.”

Jeff’s first impression of contra dancing was “What a rush! People were so friendly and willing to help me learn.” He just began dancing in the fall of 2005 after Atlanta friends told him about contra dancing. He says he likes to “step outside myself” every once in awhile and cut loose. “This allows me to connect with people,” Jeff says.

Our NACDS group is excited to have Jeff not only because he’s an enthusiastic dancer but also because he’s volunteering to work the sound system and help Stevie. Welcome!



Nancy Evans

Nancy, a regular Huntsville dancer, has recently moved to Birmingham to begin a new job as a medical coder at Baptist Princeton Hospital. We are happy, however, that she has found time to continue dancing with us in Huntsville.

She has 18 years experience as a hospital unit secretary with a BA in Business Management and an Associates’ degree in Health Information Technology. She was RHIT credentialed in 2005.

Nancy began doing contra dancing in 2004 when invited by another active member of our group. She enjoyed the friendly, fun atmosphere and the fact that the group is not clique-ish. “It is excellent exercise and a way to break my social isolation,” she said. She also discovered that it was somewhat similar to square dancing with simple steps, and walk-through instructions prior to each dance – thus helping her and everyone else to feel comfortable.

Nancy said that she celebrated her birthday in 2005 by dancing in Chattanooga. “It was my first time to dance with another group. I also went alone to Berry College in Rome, GA in late February and was thoroughly blown away by Red Mountain White Trash.”

Since they are from Birmingham she will surely be hearing them more often, but we hope she’ll continue to come back to Huntsville to dance.

Common sense and a sense of humor are the same thing, moving at different speeds. A sense of humor is just common sense, dancing. William James

Dancing is the loftiest, the most moving, the most beautiful of the arts, because it is not mere translation or abstraction from life; it is life itself. Havelock Ellis

Huntsville Calendar

- Huntsville dances are the 1st & 3rd Saturdays of each month in the gym at Faith Presbyterian Church, 5003 Whitesburg Dr., South, (corner of Whitesburg Dr. & Airport Rd.). Beginners Workshop is at 7:00 PM then the regular dance is from 7:30 – 10:30 PM.
- Admission is \$7 (\$6 for members), \$4 for teens, free for ages 12 & under.
Remember to bring comfortable, **non-scuffing shoes** for dancing. Bring someone new to a dance this month.
- Contact Bryan Walls (256) 837-0656 or email: bwalls@pobox.com or visit <http://secontra.com.NACDS.html> for more info.

Date	Caller	Band
Aug 5	Harry Delugach	Maple Hill
Aug 19	Chrissy Davis-Camp	Jim & Inge Wood
Sept 2	Jef Hodge	Crosstown Traffic
Sept 16	Jane Ewing	Wolves a Howlin'



Area Dance Gypsy Calendar

Date	Location	Caller	Band
Aug 8 & 22	Flat Creek, TN	Chrissy Davis-Camp	Inge Wood & anyone who wants to play
Aug 27	Sewanee (Sun afternoon - See back page)	Jane Ewing	Fiery Gizzard Old Time Stringband
Aug 4	Nashville (See below - new location.)	Ed Wilkinson	Kaleidoscope
Aug 11	Nashville	Susan Kevra	Russ Barenberg & David Coe
Aug 18	Nashville	Adina Gordon	Small Time String Band
Aug 25	Nashville	Emma Rushton	Contrarians
Aug 12	Birmingham	Chrissy Davis-Camp	Crosstown Traffic
Aug 26	Chattanooga Waltz Workshop 6:30 Additional admission	Seph Tepfer	Nashville Ceili Band

FoOTMaD (Birmingham) dances 2nd Saturdays at the YMCA, 3rd Ave & 23rd St, 7:30 PM. <http://www.bamalong.com/bcds.htm>.

CTDS (Chattanooga) dances 2nd & 4th Saturdays at All Saints Academy, 310 E. 8th St., downtown, 8:00 PM.

Contact Steve at (706) 937-4991, Claire & Bryant at (423)876-7359 or <http://contranoooga.org>

Misty Mountain Dancers (Sewanee, TN) dances at the Legion Hall in Sewanee, TN. For details, call (931) 598-0814 or check <http://mistycontra.zoomshare.com/>

NCD (Nashville) dances almost every Friday at 8:00 PM at **NEW LOCATION – July through August** - Second Presbyterian Church on Belmont Blvd one block south of Woodmont – on the corner of Graybar.

Contact Chrissy at (615) 210-6808 or John, email: DanceFools@aol.com or <http://dancenashville.org/>

Flat Creek dances – 2 & 4th Tues, Flat Creek Community Center <http://www.nashvilleoldtime.org/Dances/flatcreekcontradances.htm>

A Bit Farther Away, But Well Worth The Travel

CCD (Atlanta) dances on Fridays & alternate Tuesdays. <http://contradance.org>

KCD (Knoxville) dances every Monday. <http://www.kornet.org/kcd/>

MCD (Memphis) dances on the 1st & 3rd Fridays. <http://hometown.aol.com/horselovers/index.html>

Sautee Community Dances (N. GA) once a month from Sept – May. <http://sauteecontra.home.mindspring.com/>

★★ **Mark your calendar now – Music City Masquerade in Nashville! Oct. 27-29 with George Marshall & Nightingale** ★★
A contra weekend featuring one of the country's most sought after callers and couple dance teachers, George Marshall. A member of Wild Asparagus and Swallowtail, George will be joined by one of the finest, Nightingale – Jeremiah McLane (piano, accordion), and Keith Murphy (guitar, mandolin, foot percussion, vocals). They have charmed audiences for 10 years with vibrant and imaginative explorations of musical traditions. Workshops will include contras, Scandinavian couple dances, French bourrées with Susan Kevra and a workshop – “Putting Drama in Dance Music.” On Thurs night Nightingale will perform at Station Inn in downtown Nashville.

Take A Sunday Afternoon Drive To The Mountain

The Misty Mountain Dancers in Sewanee, Tennessee will be holding a contra dance on **Sunday afternoon**. This is being done to give all dancers, especially those within a three hour drive, an additional chance to dance during August!

The dance will be at 3:00 – 5:30 PM (Central Time) on Sunday, August 27th. Beginners' workshop will be at 2:30 PM. This means that even if your carload of dancers is a three hour drive from home, everyone can be back in their dwelling before 9:00 PM! What better way to spend a Sunday afternoon. Oh yes, the Fiery Gizzard Old Time Stringband will be playing and our own, Jane Ewing, will be calling.

There will also be available a buffet dinner at the University Student Cafeteria (McClurg Hall) after the dance if you want to grab a bite before heading home.

See ya there..... For further info: <http://mistycontra.zoomshare.com/>

North Alabama Country Dance Society
4304 Holmes Ave, NW, Huntsville, AL 35816
Address Correction Requested

Please Join Us!
Or Renew Your Membership!

Send just \$10 for one, or
\$15 per family, to the address above.

Make checks payable to NACDS.
(mailing label shows renewal date)

Members receive monthly newsletter,
2 guest passes, and a \$1 DISCOUNT to
each regular dance!