

## OUR READERS WRITE

I sent us an enlightening note, quoting Ann Morrow Lindbergh  
*A Good Relationship Has a Pattern Like a Dance*

A good relationship has a pattern like a dance and is built on some of the same rules. The partners do not need to hold on tightly, because they move confidently in the same pattern, intricate but gay and swift and free, like a country dance of Mozart's. To touch heavily would be to arrest the pattern and freeze the movement, to check the endlessly changing beauty of its unfolding. There is no place here for the possessive clutch, the clinging arm, the heavy hand; only the barest touch in passing. Now arm in arm, now face to face, now back to back -- it does not matter which. Because they know they are partners moving to the same rhythm, creating a pattern together, and being invisibly nourished by it.

## MENTONE WAS TERRIFIC!

Several of us from Huntsville drove up to Mentone for the Old-Time Music and Dance Weekend in Mentone August 15-17. The weather was so cool and the dancing was so good I overheard one person say, "I'm never coming back here again -- I don't see how it could get any better, and I want to remember it just like this!"

On the third weekend in August each year Birmingham FOOTMAD puts on its annual Old-Time Music and Dance Weekend at Camp Riverview in the resort town of Mentone, Alabama. Riverview has a beautiful open-sided, wooden-floored dance hall and a waterfront on the Little River, whose chilly waters feel great in August.

For the past 22 years the weekend has featured great old-time bands and musicians such as James Bryan and Norman Blake, Lotus Dickey, Ralph Blizzard and the New Southern Ramblers, the Freight Hoppers, the Red Hots, Big Hoedown, Red Mountain White Trash, the Monks and many more. The core activity of the weekend is dancing, but also on the schedule are jams (slow and regular), a concert by the

featured band, a late-night swing or Cajun dance, Sunday morning gospel singing, a clogging workshop, swimming, and a wacky waterfront drama or pageant. The Kate and Gus Show, a special program for children ages 5-12, keeps them busy and happy while their parents dance.

Campers stay in cabins or bring their own tents. Some also stay in bed-and-breakfasts and or rent chalets in the area. FOOTMAD furnishes two breakfasts and campers are asked to bring a contribution to the Saturday night potluck and any other food or beverages they need. Everyone at the camp is expected to volunteer for a congenial bit of cooking or cleaning during the weekend, which helps FOOTMAD keep costs low.

The Old-Time Music and Dance Weekend is extremely popular and usually fills up within a week after the flyers go out early in June. Registration is limited to 280 persons on a first-come-first served basis, with gender-balance taken into consideration. Those who would like to attend should request to be placed on the mailing list by writing FOOTMAD, 1452 Milner Crescent, Birmingham, AL 35205 or [ptfoster@bellsouth.net](mailto:ptfoster@bellsouth.net). If you request a flyer, be warned that it may come as a brochure for a bird-watching retreat, a Y2K seminar, a religious tract, a publishers-clearing-house-type drawing or an advertisement for a miracle dance diet. Don't throw it in the recycling bin if it says FOOTMAD on the return address.

FOOTMAD sends confirmation letters to those whose registrations arrive in time and returns the checks of those that come in too late. No drop-ins for portions of the weekend or unregistered guests are admitted. Once past the hurdle of registration, you'll find the Old-Time Music and Dance weekend an incredibly fun and friendly affair.

## HUNTSVILLE CALENDAR

• Huntsville dances are the 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturdays of each month in the gym at Faith Presbyterian Church, 5003 Whitesburg Dr., (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!

• For more info Contact Bryan Walls (256) 837-0656 or email: [bwalls@pobox.com](mailto:bwalls@pobox.com) or visit <http://secontra.com.NACDS.html>

### SEPTEMBER 6 : HUNTSVILLE

CALLER — VICKI HERNDON  
BAND — WOLVES A HOWLIN'

### SEPTEMBER 20 : HUNTSVILLE

CALLERS — JANE EWING  
BANDS — ED BAGGOTT AND ELSIE PETERSON

## AREA DANCE GYPSY CALENDAR

### SEPTEMBER 5 : NASHVILLE

CALLER — DWAYNE JOHNSON  
BAND — NASHVILLE WEATHER

### SEPTEMBER 9 : FLAT CREEK

CALLER — CHRISSEY DAVIS-CAMP  
BAND — JIM & INGE WOOD WITH VARIOUS & SUNDRY

### SEPTEMBER 12 : NASHVILLE

CALLER — SUSAN KEVRA  
BAND — ED BAGGOTT AND ELSIE PETERSON

### SEPTEMBER 13 : BIRMINGHAM

CALLER — ROBBIN SHAFFER  
BAND — JUST ADD WATER

### SEPTEMBER 13 : CHATTANOOGA

ALL SAINTS ACADEMY

CALLER — DOUG SINGLETON  
BAND — TO BE ANNOUNCED

### SEPTEMBER 19 : NASHVILLE

CALLER — JOHN SHARLET  
BAND — THE CUMBERLAND TENDERFOOTS

### SEPTEMBER 23 : FLAT CREEK

CALLER — CHRISSEY DAVIS-CAMP  
BAND — JIM & INGE WOOD WITH VARIOUS & SUNDRY

### SEPTEMBER 26 : NASHVILLE

CALLER — CHRISSEY DAVIS-CAMP  
BAND — JIM & INGE WOOD AND FRIENDS

### SEPTEMBER 26 : SEWANEE

CALLER — EDDIE DOSS  
BAND — GLORY IN THE MEETING HOUSE

### 27 : CHATTANOOGA

RINGGOLD UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

CALLER — TO BE ANNOUNCED  
BAND — MAPLE HILL BAND

### SEPTEMBER 28 : BIRMINGHAM

CALLER — BECCA IMPELLO  
BAND — FIDDLE IN THE PARLOR

### OCTOBER 31-NOVEMBER 2 : NASHVILLE

MUSIC CITY MASQUERADE AT COHN ADULT LEARNING CENTER

CALLER — SUE ROSEN AND SUSAN KEVRA  
BAND — RAZ DE MAREE (TIDAL WAVE) FROM QUEBEC

### NOVEMBER 14-16 : DECATUR, GEORGIA

ATLANTA DANCE WEEKEND

CALLER AND BAND — TO BE ANNOUNCED

**FoOTMaD (Birmingham)** dances 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturdays and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays at the YMCA, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave & 23<sup>rd</sup> St, 7:30 PM.  
<http://www.bamalong.com/bcads.htm>.

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

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

**Misty Mountain Dancers (Sewanee, TN)** dances at the Legion Hall in Sewanee, TN, 8:00 PM. For details, call (931) 598-0814 or check <http://mistycontra.zoomshare.com/>

**NCD (Nashville)** dances almost every Friday at 8:00 PM at 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](mailto:DanceFools@aol.com) or [www.nashvillecountrydancers.org](http://www.nashvillecountrydancers.org)

**Flat Creek** dances – 2 & 4<sup>th</sup> Tues, Flat Creek Community Center – seven miles south of Shelbyville, TN.  
[http://www.nashvilleoldtime.org/Dances/flatcreekcontra\\_dances.htm](http://www.nashvilleoldtime.org/Dances/flatcreekcontra_dances.htm)

## HOW TO BECOME A GREAT DANCER IN FIVE EASY STEPS

*Quoted from [danceambassadors.googlepages.com](http://danceambassadors.googlepages.com) (no author is attributed).*

### 1. LISTEN TO THE MUSIC

You heard some wonderful music at the dance. Now, listen to more at home or in the car or on your iPod, too. Traditional dance and music can't be separated. It's essential for dancers to hear the musical phrases that provide the foundation for the dances. The more you listen to dance music, the sooner you'll reach the time where your body "learns" the dance and your brain can just rest and relax and enjoy the experience.

For a few dance music recommendations and places to find them, [Click Here](#).

### 2. PRACTICE

Go to dances. Learning to do this kind of dancing is just like learning any other physical skill. It takes practice.

You're probably exercising some new social skills, too, as you enter this world of traditional dance. That takes some practice, too. So at your next dance remember: keep moving, smile and look around.

Did a friend who encouraged you to come to the dance? Did you come with a friend who is also a newcomer? Talk about the experience. How did you feel? What are your concerns? What was the most fun? When is the next dance?

On both the physical and the social sides, it takes a few repetitions to get familiar with the basics. Then, after a few more dances, you'll discover that you've become proficient. You know the ropes, what to expect and how to do things. And then - every time after that - it gets easier and more wonderful. You will be amazed!

### 3. DANCE WITH EXPERIENCED DANCERS

The best dancers will help you get where you need to be without your even realizing that they've done so. Other dancers will offer just the slightest visible hints; perhaps a small hand gesture or a nod of the head to indicate a direction. Dancers who are not quite as skilled may try to help you with a slight tug on your hand or a gentle hand in the middle of your back, steering you in the correct direction. Stay alert and be open to all these offers of help. When you meet someone who makes it easy for you to succeed, be sure to seek her or him out to be a partner.

It's likely that you will be asked to dance by experienced dancers. Many of the best dancers come with the intention of helping out newcomers, especially early in the evening. When someone asks you to dance, your first reaction might be to protest, "I'm new at this, I really don't know what I'm doing." You don't have to say that - they already know it. That's why they asked you to dance. After all, that's how we all learned to do this kind of dancing, through the kindness of strangers.

For some more thoughts about learning from experienced dancers, [click here](#).

### 4. THINK SMOOTH

No, actually, you want to think smooooooth. If you dance with a lot of up and down motion it becomes more difficult to be in sync with other dancers. "Bouncy" dancing uses more energy and may make you tire more quickly. Most of the time in traditional dancing, the goal is to be relaxed and feel like you are gliding.

But . . . there are exceptions. Some dances call for skipping. Some steps and balances are done with a hop or a bounce. When the dance calls for a sashay or a gallop – that's a time when "smooth" flies out the window. Leaps of exuberance and all kinds of improvisation are enjoyable aspects of our dancing – but always safely under control and timed to fit into the cooperative whole of the dance.

And most of the time . . . you will want to keep your dancing smooooooth.

### 5. DON'T PANIC

Remember the advice in *The Hitchiker's Guide to the Galaxy* – even when it seems like the world is coming to an end – don't panic.

It's only a dance. Don't worry about going wrong. Everybody goes wrong at some time or other – usually a couple of times every night.

Relax. Have fun!

And if someone really needs the answer, just remind them that it's 42.

## **GET CONNECTED, STAY CONNECTED**

Visit the NACDS web site:

<http://secontra.com/NACDS.html>

There is an announcement list for everyone and a Yahoo Group discussion list for those more involved. E-mail [nacds@pobox.com](mailto:nacds@pobox.com) if you'd like to be on either.

Yahoo group:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NACDScontraCommunity/>



**North Alabama Country Dance Society**  
**162 White Elephant Road Grant AL 35747**

*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!*