

Square Dancing

By Jane Ewing

For those of you who read the Yahoo chat page, that NACDS sponsors, you already know that I had a “Square” party recently. If you did not make it to the party let me explain briefly why working parties are necessary for callers like me.

Contra dance calling is, generally speaking, a matter of timing. The caller must finish prompting a move just before the dancer is to start the move.

We all know how enjoyable it is to dance with the music and be right on time! This can be practiced, just about anywhere, by someone learning to call. There are many smaller nuances that are learned by watching or taping and listening to other callers and a variety of bands.

Then there are many small, but very important, items regarding teaching, enunciation, and voice projection that are learned in classes conducted by some of the great callers across the country. But primarily, we hone our skills by calling and working with live dancers.

Square dance calling, on the other hand, can be a different animal than calling contra dances and circle dances. I say “can be” because there are several different types of squares that we as contra dancers do. Two styles, Western and Southern

squares can be a mixed bag of worms. This is kin to a “Rubik’s Cube”. I like to mix it up and then reassemble.

During the first week of August I went to the Augusta Heritage Center in Elkins, West Virginia. I spent all day in class with a caller that has been calling squares for 49 years. There were six callers in class and we had a very busy week learning and

practicing techniques. Once I got home, however, I could not practice unless I had some willing dancers to come and practice with me.

My square party offered that opportunity. I appreciated the dancers’ willingness to show up and participate with me.

We had good fellowship, good food and some very interesting squares forming out on the grass of my yard.

If you would like to learn more about square dancing than is normally covered during a typical Saturday dance, we will be having a

Square Workshop –

for both the caller and the dancers - on Saturday, September 3rd. This workshop will start at 6:00 PM. We will finish at 7:00 PM in time for the regular Beginners Workshop prior to the regular dance. If you are interested, please come join me. I need dancers on the floor, and I promise you will have fun!





Getting to Know You



Shelly Vann	Linda Harman	Linda Singleton McAllister
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NACDS Secretary ▪ Government Contractor ▪ Hometown – Ft. Scott, KS ▪ Arrived in Huntsville in 1997 from Germany for 4 more years of active duty in the US Army. ▪ Something Unique – first female to be assigned to NATO Airborne Infantry unit in Heidelberg, Germany..Allied Mobile Force (Land). However, she was neither Airborne nor Infantry but was executive administrative assistant to the commanding general. No parachuting was required! ▪ Enjoys contra & ballroom dancing and traveling ▪ Began contra dancing in January, 2004 at Gorham’s Bluff...first impression was that it was fun and made her dizzy. She also felt like she would never learn to do it well. (Wrong, Shelly) ▪ She likes the energy at dances when all dancers are doing the same thing at the same time. “It’s really great to be in a square that manages to keep it all together....very exhilarating,” says Shelly. ▪ Shelly often goes to dance weekends – Nashville, Knoxville, and Mentone, most recently. ▪ This gal has a new flame and she said to wish her luck! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NACDS Membership Chair (Replacing Beth Riggs who moved) ▪ Worked at Integraph for 20 years ▪ Huntsville native ▪ Spouse – Max (the one with the green dancing shoes); 3 children – Hill is a graduate student in chemistry at UC, Berkley, Sara is married and lives in B’ham, and Hannah is a 14 year-old freshman at HHS and she loves to dance. The first grandchild is due in October and Linda and Max hope the arrival will not interfere with dance weekends! ▪ Hobbies – sews, quilts, reads fiction, plays hand bells at church and fishes with her dad - catching 20-30 lb redfish ▪ Linda is a newcomer to contra dancing – 2 ½ years but now she cannot imagine not dancing. Her favorite part is the flow of it all – swirling skirts, perfect timing of a balance and swing, the beat of the music, and how it continues to flow even when the caller quits calling! ▪ Linda said, “At my first contra dance, I danced every dance and at the end of the night, I could not walk down the steps. I had to use the handicap ramp! The next morning was painful, but I was hooked.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NACDS Newspaper Editor ▪ Recently retired music teacher and choral director at The Academy for Academics and Arts magnet school ▪ Native of Huntsville but left for 20 years; returned in 1993 ▪ Spouse – Bill, A&M Professor. Linda has 2 children – Melanie and Brett with 6 grandchildren; Bill has 2 children, Suzie and Cliff and 2 grandsons. None live here so they are out of town often visiting them. ▪ Enjoys cooking, entertaining, decorating, reading, gardening, traveling and singing – sings with First Presbyterian Church Choir and the Eugene Brasher Chorale. ▪ Linda began dancing with her late husband in Nashville when they moved there in 1987. She enjoyed the folk music, friendly people, multi-generational and diverse group of dancers and felt she had found a new venue in her music world. She felt doubly rewarded to meet Bill while contra dancing in Nashville! ▪ “I remember my first contra dance weekend in Nashville very well. By late Saturday afternoon I had to take Ibuprofen, a hot bath, and a nap with the heating pad to rejuvenate me for the big Saturday evening dance,” said Linda. “But hey, the dancing was great!”

Guest Passes (All members – bring new folks!)

<p>Presented to _____</p> <p>By (NACDS member) _____</p> <p>This guest pass admits bearer to any regular Saturday night dance (1st & 3rd Saturdays) of the NACDS. All dances are at 7:00 PM at Faith Presbyterian Church (corner of Airport Rd. & Whitesburg Dr.) Call Bryan 256 837-0656 or Doug 256 882-6378 for more info. \$7 value Good thru November, 2005</p>	<p>Presented to _____</p> <p>By (NACDS member) _____</p> <p>This guest pass admits bearer to any regular Saturday night dance (1st & 3rd Saturdays) of the NACDS. All dances are at 7:00 PM at Faith Presbyterian Church (corner of Airport Rd. & Whitesburg Dr.) Call Bryan 256 837-0656 or Doug 256 882-6378 for more info. \$7 value Good thru November, 2005</p>
--	--

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 & 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! **You will find 2 free guest passes in this newsletter.**

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

Date	Caller	Band
September 3	Jane Ewing Special Squares Workshop 6:00 PM	Kaleidoscope -Chuck & Katrina Weber, Mike Bush
September 17	Harry Delugach	Biscotti Boys - Chip Gulbro , Steve Nix, Eric Torstenson, & Jim Holland (an eclectic mix of tunes and instruments)
October 1	Seth Tepfer	Ed Baggott & Elsie Peterson
October 15	TBA	Kaleidoscope – Chuck & Katrina Weber, Mike Bush



Area Dance Gypsy Calendar

DATE	LOCATION	CALLER	BAND
Sept 10	Birmingham	Doug Singleton	Smoke & Mirrors – Sandy Goldring & Ann Whitley
Sept 10	Chattanooga	Nick Boulet	Nashville Weather
Sept 22	Sewanee	Barb Kirchner	Ed Baggott & Elsie Peterson
Sept 23-25	Chattanooga	George Marshall	Wild Asparagus & others (Dance Weekend – see Web site)
Oct 28-30	Nashville	Robert Cromartie	String Beings (Dance Weekend – see Web site)
Oct 28	Sewanee	Bryant Haynes	Fiery Gizzard Stringband

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 dates, call (931) 598-0814 or check

<http://www.mistycontra.zoomshare.com/>.html

NCD (Nashville) dances almost every Friday at 8:00 PM at Woodbine Community Center, Burbank & Oriel.

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

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/>

Upcoming Dance Weekends

Chattaboogie - Chattanooga's 1st ever dance weekend. Sept 23-25. <http://chattaboogie.com/>

Music City Masquerade - Nashville's weekend. Oct 28-30. <http://mistycontra.zoomshare.com/0.html>

Balance the Bell -Louisville's fall dance, Sept 23-25 - Joseph Pimental and Grand Picnic

Dance Tapestry – Atlanta's 29th annual dance, Nov 11-13 - Robert Cromartie, Cis Hinkle, Airdance, Elftones & Smoke & Mirrors

Tips for Contra Dancers

Old Timers or Newcomers

- **Have fun!** Do not be nervous about mistakes. Everyone was once a beginner – listen, laugh & enjoy.
- Callers generally do a “walk through” and it is **very important to listen** – even if you know the dance, someone else may need the practice. Ask for help if you do not understand something
- **It is customary to change partners for each dance and it especially helps newcomers learn quickly.** It’s also okay for women to ask men to dance or if there are not enough of one gender, be brave and try dancing another part. If you are a woman and you’re dancing the male part, it helps to wear a tie to indicate which role you are dancing. We don’t have any hair ribbons yet for the guys who dance the women’s part.
- **All dances happen because of volunteers.** NACDS has had a faithful few doing all the work for years. So, jump in and help. Members who helped August 20 realized how much the faithful few had been doing all these years! Thank you.
- **Eye contact is important and flattering!**
- **“Give weight.”** Hold your arms firm but flexible. Guys, when you swing the gals give the gals support with that hand on the back; otherwise, they feel like they are falling. Gals, lean back a bit. Giving weight helps the dance to flow smoothly.
- **Have a firm hand grip but don’t squeeze the hands** (arthritis- ouch). You may want to leave big rings at home.
- **Remember – no alcohol, smoking or perfumes** in dance hall, but yes to breath mints and deodorant!
☺
- **Timing is important.** The music for most contras and squares has four beats per bar and the dance moves are generally multiples of four. Generally the moves are eight beats. For example, circle left eight, circle right eight, swing eight beats, etc. Occasionally, there is a lucky sixteen beat swing. Practice being on time for each move even if you have to skip a move to catch up. Fancy twirls and footwork are fine if you and your partner are comfortable with the extras and are on time for the next move.

NACDS

North Alabama Country Dance Society
4304 Holmes Ave., NW, Huntsville, AL 35816
Address correction requested



*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!*