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Cover Image: *Embroidery by Iveta Šidlová on neck and sleeves of blouse from Slovakia.*
Photo: Jan Łętowski. See p. 22.

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The Strings that Bind Us

by Karen Bennett, Acting Editor

As readers will know, I have a deep interest in costumes. It's one of my hobbies. So it was only to be expected that a few related items would appear in this issue (see pp. 22, 23 and an item in the Grapevine, p. 28). Then Bill Russell's delightful article on *his* hobby came in, and it was about string games. *Huh, I thought: more material about various types of strings.* Then, when I was writing to regular columnist Nancy Nies, I said, in jest, "The April issue will have lots of strings attached... i.e., one article will be about a man's hobby of playing string games, and other articles will be about embroidery. I hope I can count on you *not* to write about strings in any shape or form!" And she answered, "Uh-oh... I hope you'll make an exception for stringed instruments, which—along with other kinds—do play a role in my April column!" Oh, all right. Call it a coincidence. And then Nancy's column turned out to be about a band I admire enormously: Chubritza, with whom I had many peak experiences during the years I went to Stockton Folk Dance Camp.

Murray Forbes's contribution to this issue about his trip to Israel is only metaphorically about strings: how one's travel arrangements can become tangled up.

A broken thread for local dancers was the loss in January of well-loved dancer Jorge Leppe. He had several non-dance friends and work companions, but the dance community (IFDC, OFDA and Ontario Folk Dance Camp in particular) was his main social connection. FDO is the only forum for remembering him, as he had no family in Canada, and so our lengthy tribute appears on p. 18.

With this issue, I am pleased to introduce a new column, by Jan Łętowski, a long-time friend and a person with *professional qualifications* on costume. The idea of approaching him came to me when I read his Facebook posts from Europe (where he was travelling in the second half of 2022), such as this one from 19 October, consisting of one captivating photo and a tiny bit of text: "I love old repairs: Detail of an apron from Polissya region, Ukraine. Homespun linen and cotton threads. First half 20th century." His first column concerns Slovakia; future ones promise to range around the world.

Repair to an apron from Polissya, Ukraine. The mender used a joining stitch in the round, starting from the edges and working into the centre. ►



Photo: Jan Łętowski.

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to its Bereavement Fund in
memory of dancer
Jorge Leppe,
who died January 15, 2023.

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The extensive resumés of Tineke and
Maurits van Geel, who'll be teaching
at Ontario Folk Dance Camp in May,
are at <https://www.tinekevangeel.nl/about-us/tineke/> and <https://www.tinekevangeel.nl/about-us/maurits/>.

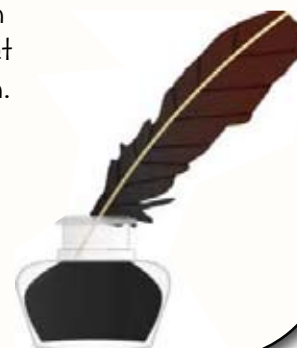
Folk Dancer Online seeks Editor

The December 2022 issue of the magazine was Dorothy Archer's last as editor, and Karen Bennett has agreed to be Acting Editor in the interim.

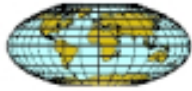
Are you, or is someone you know, a candidate for this volunteer position? The editor is responsible for acquiring copy for the magazine and preparing it for publication. S/he works closely with the production person, who does layout and preparation for printing.

Requires: broad familiarity with the folk dance community, good written skills in English, attention to detail, computer literacy, and ability to meet deadlines. All work is done by email, so can be done from any location.

Further information/inquiries about what the job entails can be obtained by emailing Karen at bennettke035@gmail.com.



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Dance Terminology

From Stefania Szlek Miller (Hamilton):

Dorothy Archer is to be congratulated for editing instructive and entertaining issues from 2014 to 2022. We regret that her vision problems prevent her from carrying on. Kudos to Karen for taking on the editorship again despite having done more than her share in contributing to the magazine. Bev continues to be the foundation of OFDA's major flagship.

A few of us from the Hamilton folk dance group were musing about more inclusive terminology for couple dances. I noted that in one of the dance notes for La Bastringue online, Nick Enge uses the terms "Lead and the Follow" for the traditional terminology of male and female. That struck us as too negative and awkward terminology concerning the "Follow." The best we could come up was, "Lead and the Partner" (no pronouns). We are curious whether other folk dancers are considering changing the way we designate dancers in couple and set dances.

Responses

From Bill Russell (Toronto):



The terminology question [is] a current topic for sure.

For teaching the Cercle Circassien (a.k.a. La Bastringue): I often use "ones" and "twos" with children, saying that the "ones" will do something first and the "twos" will do the same thing after. We count off 1-2-1-2... clockwise around the circle, which puts the "ones" on the right and the "twos" on the left. After everybody goes four steps in and out twice, the "ones" go first while the "twos" clap; then the "twos" go in while the "ones" clap. With children, they go back to their parents to swing and promenade, keeping the "ones" on the right. With older children (and adults), the "twos" will turn to the "one" on their left to swing with (for about a month); then they promenade (for another month) with the "ones" on the outside and remake the circle with the "ones" on the right and the "twos" on the left.

Being a mid-century traditionalist, I let adults and older children/youths know who traditionally danced in each position. However, in agreement with 21st-century sentiments regarding equality and choice, I let people know that they are free to choose their roles. I generally do not use

“leader” and “follower” in square or round dances, as much of the time the so-called “follower” actually takes the lead. I tend to use “ladies” and “gents,” as “robins” and “larks” [insisted on in some dance communities] tend to confuse me too much. Geezerdom in action. Now get off my front yard!

I have also eliminated sexist and racist patter. There is usually something fun to say instead.

Once at a Sundays at Seven Old-time Social, I was explaining the trad roles vis-à-vis choice, and one of the participants said, “We are gender cool.” Made me wonder what “gender hot” might be...

From Loui Tucker (San Jose, California):

I have had a lot of conversation about this topic.

I am mostly annoyed by the leaders/followers, larks/ravens, bluebirds/redbirds terminology. I have been dancing the man’s role in couple dances for 40 years and, as a teacher, it absolutely does not bother me to acknowledge that. As a woman, it does not bother me. As a lesbian, it does not bother me. EVERYBODY knows what is meant when that word is used and, 85%–90% of the time, it is a man dancing that role. I’m willing to bet that a lot of dancers mentally translate when they hear the terms. “Oh,” they think, “you mean the Man’s role.”



We use the term “inside foot” and “outside foot” when teaching couple dances, don’t we? Everyone knows (and I often joke about it) that no individual has an inside foot. I look down at my feet when I point this out. “It seems to me I don’t have an inside foot; they are both on the outside!” The term refers to the relationship between four feet of two people dancing together, of course. It’s just terminology; it’s not reality.

I use “Man” and “Woman” when teaching couple dances in my classes. In my main Israeli group, I have been modelling two women dancing together for so long that nobody blinks. There are currently six other couples (out of 35 to 40) that are two women dancing together. Same for my international session and the two other Israeli sessions, one for beginning dancers, the other for couples—and there is always at least one other two-women couple, sometimes two, in the class of 10–12 couples. Everyone knows what I mean. Nobody has ever asked me to change. Is this a California thing? Do we just have more important things to stress over?

Maybe I’m a curmudgeon or an old fart or a Luddite, but it’s just not worth my time and energy.

Bill Russell Fiddles with Strings

by Karen Bennett

Aside from playing way too much [of the game] Civilization on the computer, which you can hardly call a hobby, I have a lot of fun with a loop of string. I think I currently remember 60 or 70 string figures.

When I was in elementary school in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, strings would appear a few times throughout the year. We did not have that many really cold days, so we could play with the strings outdoors during recess. We used plain old cotton string. You would have to tie a knot to make a loop and be careful not to pull too hard when you messed up a figure. That was where I developed a real knack for untying nasty knots. Nowadays, I use nylon cord that has had the ends fused together.

The first string trick I learned as a child was the Cup and Saucer.

One of the more interesting ones is Jacob's Ladder. As an adult, I learned that that trick is done all over the world and probably dates back 5,000 years. It has a number of names: The Fish Net, Four Diamonds, The Sydney Harbour Bridge, le Pont de Québec.

Both the Cup and Saucer and Jacob's Ladder start with what aficionados call Opening A. Well over 2,000 figures start with that opening.

I did also learn Cat's Cradle, but that was what the girls were mostly into; the boys preferred making the solo figures. I liked it all. As a child, I only knew three stages for Cat's Cradle that repeated over and over. As an adult, I learned that as long as you respect the two axes of symmetry, you can do many more. Camilla Gryski's book *Cat's Cradle, Owl's Eyes* (1984) goes into it more deeply. In the 70s and 80s, Camilla and I were volunteers in the Children's Area of the Mariposa Folk Festival. At one point, she decided to learn a few tricks from some of the children, got hooked, and then wrote three books. Nowadays, you can learn many figures online [for example, these, which claim the game originated in Asia: <https://stannswellroad.weebly.com/uploads/2/9/4/9/29499051/howtocatscradle.pdf>].



Cup and Saucer.



Opening A, with which thousands of figures start.



Cat's Cradle.

All photos: Bill Russell.

Back to Jacob's Ladder: There are many steps in making it. We made a little game out of two of them: the Cat's Whiskers and the Bowtie (or Bow). In melodramatic style, one of us would act out the following recitation while the others would make the sounds of an audience:

(whiskers under the nose) The rent! The rent!
booooooo booooooo

(bow on top of the head) I can't pay the rent! I
 can't pay the rent!
aaawwwwwwww

(whiskers under the nose) The rent! The rent!
booooooo booooooo

(bow on top of the head) I can't pay the rent! I
 can't pay the rent!
aaawwwwwwww

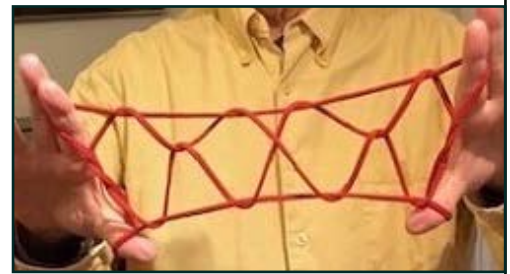
(whiskers under the nose) You must pay the
 rent, or...
booooooo booooooo

(bow on top of the head) Oh no!
aaawwwwwwww

(bow in bowtie position) I'll pay the rent!
yaaaaaay

(bow on top of the head) My hero!
aaawwwwwwww

(whiskers under the nose) Curses! Foiled again!
booooooo booooooo



Jacob's Ladder, with four diamonds.



Whiskers Under the Nose.



Bow on the Head.



Bow in Bowtie Position.

And after we made Jacob's Ladder, we added some pictures of our own: the Eiffel Tower and the Witch's Hat.



The Eiffel Tower.



The Witch's Hat.

Years later here in Toronto, Dr. Ken McCuaig showed me that the Witch's Hat can be turned into Bullwinkle the Moose. That is part of the joy of playing with a loop of string: It can carry you many places in your imagination.

As an adult, I found out that there were books with string figures. For a while, anthropologists thought that the way they were constructed would give them information about the travels of peoples in the Pacific islands.



Bullwinkle the Moose.

One trick I learned from a book was The Flying Bird (a.k.a. A Bird). You can see that it moves from one hand to the other.



The Flying Bird moving from one hand to the other.



Another one is the Lotus Flower. I use that last one in a strung-together story (pun intended) in which the bird winds up in its nest, the flower being the nest.

I admit that I look at my phone (and other screens) way too much, but sometimes it is nice to be able to play with a loop of string. I feel naked if there is not a loop in my pocket. And what is better than doing a number of tricks while waiting in a doctor's office?



The Lotus Flower.

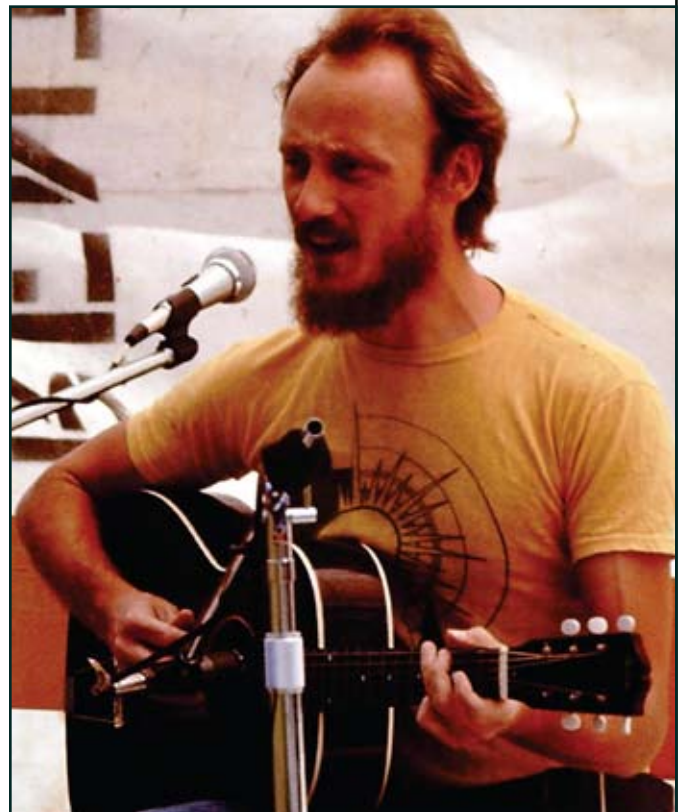
Bill Russell moved from the United States to Canada in 1966 to study at McGill University in Montreal. Graduating in 1970 with a BCom (Bachelor of Commerce), Honours in Economics, he has been a folk-singer ever since. In 1972, backing up the Acadian singer/songwriter Edith Butler on a tour of western French-Canadian communities, he acquired French without translating. In 1977, Bill joined Mariposa In The Schools and the Inner City Angels in Toronto and focused on working with and playing for children of all ages. In 1981 and again in 1986, he represented North

American folk music in both English and French at folk festivals, clubs and schools in Australia and New Zealand—and spread the joy of string games there. Since the 1970s, when friends asked him to call square dances at their wedding, Bill has led and called dances and singing games. Also since the 1970s, Bill has been involved with the Recreation Workshop Cooperative in Toronto, where folks take play for all ages seriously.

In 2014, Bill joined the executive of the Canadian Olde Tyme Square Dance (Callers) Association (<https://sca.uwaterloo.ca/cotsdca/>) and is currently its President. He also participates in Balfolk Toronto's activities—live music, group and couple dances from many regions of France and other European countries. His latest project is the Sundays at Seven Old-time Socials (sundaydancesocial@gmail.com) from 7–9:30 p.m. at Roncesvalles United Church, Toronto, a live-music community dance for all ages for which Bill calls.

Bill doesn't have a website, but Merriweather Records sells his two Louisiana French CDs for children: Zing Zang Zo! (<https://www.merriweather.ca/zing-zang-zo.html>) and Bon Appétit (<https://www.merriweather.ca/bon-appeacutetit.html>).

His connection with OFDA started in the 1980s when he tried getting a community folk festival called Spring Tune-up going. He invited OFDA, the Fiddlers' Green Folk Club, Fat Albert's coffeehouse, storytellers and some other folk-oriented organizations. Unfortunately, just as the singer-songwriters and storytellers weren't much interested in dancing, the dancers weren't much interested in sitting and listening, so Spring Tune-up only happened twice. In 2017, Bill taught a Cajun dance café for OFDA.



Bill Russell doesn't play the fiddle, but he does play the guitar. Here he performs at the Northern Lights Festival Boréal in Sudbury in 1976.

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Chubritza Spices Up First Friday Folk Dance Parties in Arcata, California

by Nancy Nies

In November 2022, Paul and I made our second annual road trip to northern California and southern Oregon, travelling 1,500 miles in our all-electric Chevy Bolt. The 18-day expedition allowed us not only to visit friends and family but also to enjoy varied and beautiful landscapes along the way. On our way north, we hiked in oak woodlands, saw spectacular views of the San Francisco Bay, botanized on an isolated beach, birded in a wetlands preserve, strolled among giant redwoods ... and danced in Arcata with the Humboldt Folk Dancers, to vibrant live music performed by Chubritza!



Photo: courtesy of Chubritza.

Current members of Chubritza International Folk Band are (back row, left to right): Janet Finney-Krull, Derek Shaw and Rick Kruse; and (front row, left to right): Meadow Lo, Linnea Mandell and Craig Kurumada.

In planning our trip, Paul did a bit of research and discovered that the Humboldt group met on Friday evenings, and that on the first Friday of each month, music was provided by the Arcata-based band Chubritza. Needless to say, we planned our itinerary accordingly! The band, founded in Arcata in 1993, takes its name from a Bulgarian table seasoning—a mix of savoury, salt and paprika. According to Chubritza's website (<https://www.chubritza.com/>), its name “reflects the band's variety and mixture of international tastes and textures, while retaining a Balkan and Eastern European emphasis.”

The band members, this year celebrating 30 years together, are Derek Shaw, Janet Finney-Krull, Rick Kruse, Craig Kurumada, Meadow Lo and Linnea Mandell. The band members trained several times in Turkey, Macedonia, Romania and Bulgaria, where they acquired traditional musical instruments.

Each of the talented musicians plays a number of different instruments. These include the accordion, clarinet, flute, trumpet, violin, bass and guitar, as well as traditional instruments with which audiences may not be familiar. Here is a list, along with a description of each, courtesy of Chubritza:

frula: a Balkan fipple flute

gajda: a Balkan goatskin bagpipe
dumbek: an hourglass-shaped hand drum
gǔdulka: a Bulgarian bowed rebec with many sympathetic strings
tamburitza: a family of stringed instruments from Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia, including the *prim*, *brač*, *bugarija*, *čelo* and *erde*
tambura: a long-necked stringed instrument from Bulgaria and Macedonia
tambal mic or *tsimbl mic*: a hammer dulcimer from Transylvania
tŭpan: a two-headed Balkan drum played with a heavy beater and a light stick

And here are the countries and peoples whose traditional dance music and songs make up Chubritza's varied repertoire: Albania, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Croatia, England, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russia, Scotland, Serbia, Spain, Turkey, Ukraine, USA, and the Jewish/Klezmer and Romany peoples.

Chubritza plays at folk dance events, weddings, bar mitzvahs, cultural celebrations, parties and festivals. They have performed at numerous folk dance festivals throughout California and Oregon, notably as the house band for the Stockton Folk Dance Camp in 2003, 2005 and 2009, as well as at concerts and folk dance events during a 10-day tour of Israel in 2010 that was sponsored by the Balkanitsa Haifa Dance Group in celebration of Balkanitsa's 25th anniversary.

If you plan a trip to San Francisco, there are several excellent reasons to extend your trip by a few days and drive north. Scenic natural beauty awaits you at Ring Mountain Open Space Preserve, Point Reyes National Seashore, Corte Madera Marsh Ecological Reserve and, close to the Oregon border, Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Park. Be sure to include the charming coastal town of Arcata on your itinerary as well, and make it a point to be there on the first Friday of the month. You'll be glad you did. You will find a friendly group of folk dancers, dance to the exhilarating music of Chubritza, and experience what the band calls "the happiness [that] music and dance bring to the heart."



Photo: Nancy Nies.

Chubritza playing for the Humboldt Folk Dancers at the Redwood Raks World Dance Studio in Arcata, California, 4 November 2022.

Balkan Dancing in Israel with a Travel Agent from Hell

by Murray Forbes

Being my own travel agent may not be my innate talent, but not all the errors were mine for the 2022 trip to Israel with my wife, Lavinia.

We arrived at Tel Aviv airport over a day late—a day that included mislaid luggage, endless waiting, and an in-depth study of Madrid airport and its colourless hotel hinterland.

I cannot in conscience absolve myself from some of the other transport issues. We travelled by train and bus, about which Google maps and I struggled inharmoniously on many occasions. Some of these struggles were rewarded by great displays of humanity and unplanned-for adventures, but nearly all of them were highly stressful.

The focus of the trip was a workshop in Balkan dancing in a delightful kibbutz-run hotel on the edge of Lake Kinneret (the Sea of Galilee) by the river Jordan, with the Golan Heights looming across the water. Bianca de Jong, an excellent Dutch teacher, taught dances that were mainly from Bulgaria and Turkey. There are three highly experienced Balkan dance groups in Israel, and many very good dancers who led other dances. It was exhausting but enormous fun, and we met up with a number of Israeli friends whom we have known for years through dance workshops in Greece.

However, you are not reading this article to hear about folk dancing but to learn the finer points of being an amateur travel agent. Our itinerary on this one-week trip was Haifa, Kinneret and Nazareth. By the time our plane eventually reached Tel Aviv a day and a bit late, I had extracted shekels and bought a SIM card, got the train to Haifa, mixed up the address of our rented apartment, and had a gratuitous squabble with the taxi driver—and it was midnight. We, of course, arrived without any food. Luckily we were near a lively restaurant that was open until



Murray in a Palestinian sweet shop in Haifa.

Photo: Lavinia Forbes.

2 a.m.; the waitress became a friend for life when fatigue and shekels came together in a confused and enormous tip.

Israeli bus users have ultra high-tech scanning QR codes linked to their bank accounts. The only other way of paying is a sort of Russian-roulette card that may or may not have sufficient shekels stored on it. Not until the last day did I discover the app that enables one to tell how much one has left on the card; without it, there were some awkward moments. But everyone we met—including, for some incomprehensible reason, bus drivers—were extremely helpful, even to the point of an elderly Israeli man paying for a French tourist on his card.



Photo: Murray Forbes.

At the top of the Bahá'í Gardens in the heart of Haifa. The gardens are comprised of 19 terraces extending up the northern slope of Mount Carmel.

In addition to exploring Haifa, which ascends and descends Mount Carmel at exhausting inclines, we visited King Herod's port of Caesarea (built around 10 BCE). The superb site is located in a park with a very sophisticated infrastructure. Getting there, however, was yet another adventure. In one of the many moments when Google and I miscommunicated, we found ourselves at a train station searching for a nonexistent bus to take us to the park. Also searching were an Israeli woman and her Punjabi husband and two children, who were visiting from Australia. Joining forces, we managed to get a local milk-run bus to somewhere near the park, followed by a half-hour walk in which we discovered that the Kabbalah, of which our companions were followers, was not limited to the creation of golems out of mud but also advocated concepts such as peace, goodwill and harmony. At one point on the bus run, a loud altercation took place between a passenger and the bus driver which, translated for us by our new Israeli/Australian friend, went something like this: "Stop! This is where I get off." "Why didn't you press the Stop button?" "What do you think I am—a prophet or something?"

Some of the other travel nightmares included a wonderful morning in Akko (Acre) exploring the souk (market), Crusaders' castle and museum, and the port in superb weather while our apartment manager was frantically trying to get hold of us. Thursday in Israel is our Friday in terms of weekends, and we needed to have vacated our apartment and been at our dance workshop. By chronic panic and co-operative buses we did actually get out before the next guests got in and reached our

hotel in time for supper.

Throughout our trip we were astonished and impressed at how helpful everyone was. When we were lost in Nazareth, Palestinians went to no end to help us find our rather lovely manger, suitably distanced from the bus herds of Christian tourists and holy sites. Also, when Google tried to send us through an army base to catch our final bus, the guard at the entry was friendly and polite and didn't shoot at us. As it was lunchtime, we followed the soldiers to a food stand where we had one of the best falafel sandwiches I think I have ever had.

Returning from Israel, I became a firm believer in miracles. Just how we managed to make our one-hour connection between flights from the far reaches of Madrid airport is surely proof positive.

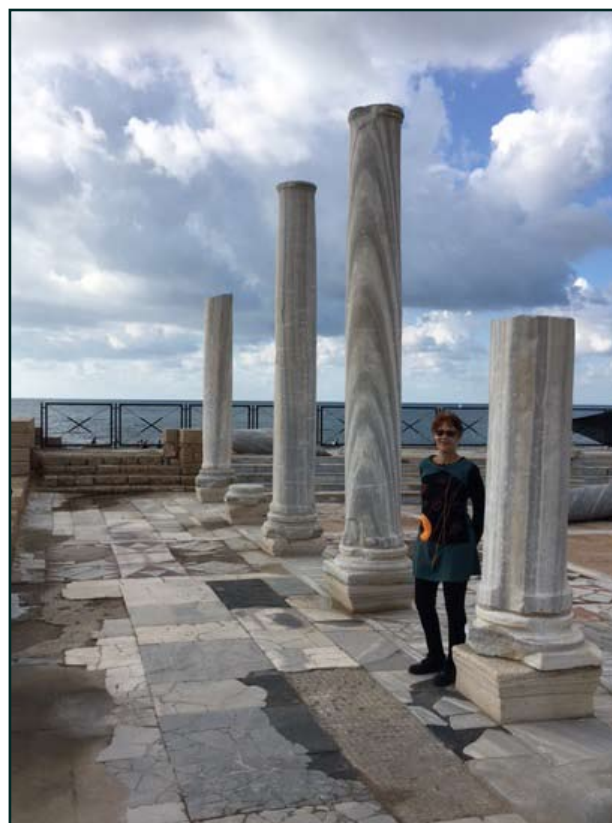


Photo: Murray Forbes.

Lavinia in the partially reconstructed ruins of Caesarea.

MAINEWOODS DANCE CAMP 2023

Fryeburg, Maine

www.mainewoodsdancecamp.org



Session One, Aug 20-26

Sonia Dion & Cristian Florescu,
Romanian

Bruce Hamilton, English

Ercüment Kılıç, Turkish

Musicians: Pixton-Poirier Band

Plus Scottish Country Dance

with Patricia Williams

Session Two, Aug 27-Sept. 2

Aaron Alpert, Israeli

Roberto Bagnoli, International

Gergana Panova, Bulgarian

Musicians: West by Northeast

Plus Novelty dance with Kathleen Mazurek
and Belly Dance with Barbara Merson

Our Friend Jorge (1945–2023)

by Bev Sidney

Photo: from the collection of J. Leppe.



Jorge Leppe.

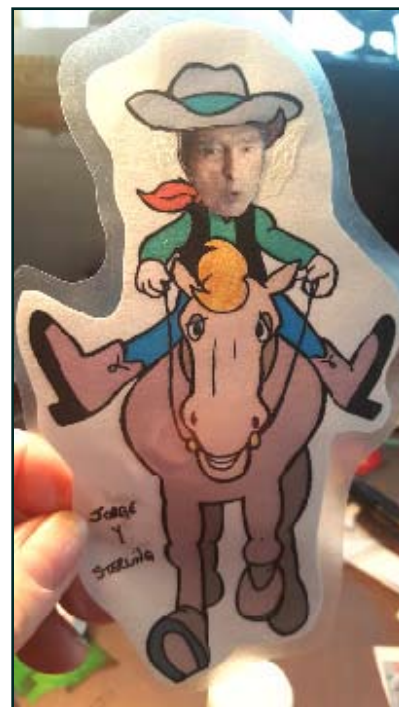
When he wasn't dancing, he might have otherwise occupied himself playing chess (at which he excelled) or Scrabble, doing Sudoku or crossword puzzles, cross-country skiing, enjoying vintage movies, walking, running, climbing the CN Tower, cycling, listening to music (country, especially Patsy Cline; and classical, including classical guitar), tending his houseplants, cannibalizing and rebuilding computers and doing repairs for his friends, capturing images with his 35 mm SLR camera and scavenging great finds at garage sales.

Born in Santiago, Chile, in May 1945, he left his country when it was falling under the influence of Pinochet's dictatorship and violence, embarking on a four-year overland journey north which included a two-year stopover in Costa Rica, during which time he learned the fibreglass trade. He landed in Canada in 1977, living first in

Montreal, where his Spanish gave him a good basis for communicating in French, while at the same time he began to learn English. Then, when he had the opportunity to take a job in the fibreglass industry in Markham, he made the move to Ontario.

But long before that his work-life started in Chile at the age of seven, as houseboy for a well-off family. Jobs that followed included learning butchering and curing of pork, front shop sales and short haul trucking. When he arrived in Canada he drove taxi. Throughout, he continued his education – via night school when work occupied his days. Then, after acquiring machinist credentials at community college, he was hired by the Biomedical Engineering Department of Toronto's Sick Kids Hospital. In this job, which he held until retirement, he was able to use his new skills along with his excellent analytic ability, to produce one-of-a-kind solutions to mechanical and equipment needs for researchers as well as for patient care. He loved and got great satisfaction from this creative occupation, and was well-respected by those who came to his workbench with their (often) unique requests.

In Toronto he found an Indigenous Cultures of the World interest group, and volunteered to help during their



Christmas ornament created by Marg Murphy captures Jorge's zany nature.

Photo: Marg Murphy.

large annual festivals, which drew participants from many countries. And when an acquaintance introduced him to the world of recreational international folk dance, he was immediately smitten. He became an enthusiastic international folk dancer, known to many in the community from the mid-1980s, when he first dropped into the vibrant University of Toronto IFDC group. He became a member of OFDA and volunteered on its executive in the role of Treasurer from 2003-07. Seeking the rich experiences found at dance camps, he attended many, including Ontario Folk Dance Camp (where for many years he volunteered on its committee, coordinating transportation).

Like other dancers, his focus meandered among different dance sub-specialties. At a time when Murray Smith's square dance performance group was in need of a male dancer, Jorge was co-opted, and when he eventually sampled contra dance, that became his new main passion, until knee and back issues put a damper on his dancing days.

He was a warm and giving person and it was fun being in his company because he was witty and there was always laughter. He was an engaging flirt, and although he enjoyed the attention of women, he remained a steadfast bachelor throughout his life.

In the summer of 2020 and in the throes of Covid lockdowns, Jorge's health and wellness declined and when he was hospitalized, he dropped off the radar. With great good luck Marg Murphy – a long-time dance friend and Registered Nurse – located him and stepped in to advocate on his behalf, as failing cognition had ended his ability to maintain his fierce independence. Thanks to Marg's masterful interventions he was able to be infinitely more comfortable in his last 2 1/2 years.

In the early morning of January 15, 2023, on a day that was to be a bright and sunny contrast to previous weeks of dark gray skies, Angel Jorge Enrique Leppe slipped away. He was 77. It was a quiet, peaceful, sad end of the road he'd travelled, with Alzheimer's and metastasizing prostate cancer finally taking their toll. He will be missed by those whose lives he touched along the way.



Photo: Marg Murphy.

One of Jorge's Chilean wall hangings.

News from Hamilton: A Welcome Challenge

by Stefania Szlek Miller

With people away, January is usually a slow month of Friday night dancing, so we were surprised when seven McMaster students joined us on the 13th. Anita Millman and Adam Kossowski quickly reshuffled their playlists and, with the help of the membership core, ran an energetic and joyful evening for all. As expected, the newcomers were more comfortable dancing to relatively simple line dances, such as Mamma Maria, a dance that Adam introduced to our group, than to our more exotic and complicated Balkan fare. The students were very gracious and complimentary about the experience and said that they would join us again in two weeks.

Three of the seven returned along with five new McMaster people on 27 January for the club's 39th anniversary party. Anita and I were responsible for running the program for the 34 participants, Adam and Shirley Kossowski being on vacation in Florida. This time we were prepared with various playlists to choose from, including many relatively simple social dances as well as more challenging ones such as Adir Adirim. Even with careful preparation, Anita and



Photo: Helena Adamczyk.

The refreshments on 27 January marked not only the Hamilton group's 39th anniversary but Stefania's birthday.

I were often only one or two dances ahead of the group as we quickly tried to figure out what would work with the mood and energy of the dancers. We extended the evening to 11 p.m. to do some set dances such as Canadian Breakdown, one of Dale Hyde's dances. The celebration was a success, with a delicious cake, made by Helena (Halina) Adamczyk, and good food provided by our regular members. Our thanks to Kathryn Ferguson, a relatively new member of our club who has become the Social Director and is responsible for organizing the refreshments for half-time break every week.

It was a pleasure to dance with the young people. They added a spark to dances that many of us have been doing for years. Even when they were not sure of the choreography, the new participants had a good sense of direction as well as balance. One student indicated that we were "cool," which is a compliment considering that many of us are old enough to be their grandparents.

The first Friday in February, we only had one person from the previous week join us. He offered an anecdote that may explain why it is so difficult to attract new members to our activity. At the end of the evening, he indicated that our dance session was a harder work-out than a marathon race (he is a runner). I suspect it was the mental energy required to follow all the different styles and choreography that tired him out as much as the physical exertion. What we do is challenging, but that is what attracts us to international folk dancing. For many of us, it is the only show in town.

Our Valentine party on Friday 10 February again attracted more than 30 people. We were delighted that two of the McMaster newcomers from our anniversary party returned; both have the potential of becoming regular participants. An undergraduate student who had come to Canada from Romania as a child was wearing a lovely Romanian blouse that her grandmother had embroidered for her. She wants to learn Romanian dances. Now, that is an incentive to return, especially since Adam and Anita incorporated many Romanian dances into the evening. A McMaster post-doctoral fellow from Argentina also joined us, and he can dance! Apparently, he has taught dancing in his home country. Maybe he will introduce some of his dances to our group. We will see.



Photo: Anita Millman.

Six of the seven McMaster students (the seventh had left before the photo was taken) who survived the 13 January class.

OFDA MEMBERSHIP ENTITLES YOU TO

- Significant preferred fee structure to OFDA events. In 2023, Dance Café fees will be \$5 for members and \$10 for non-members. Similar reduced fees for other OFDA events (New Year's Eve Party, workshops) and for Ontario Folk Dance Camp can pay for the already modest cost of a membership.



Preserving the Culture of Western Slovakia

by Jan Łętowski

Jan Łętowski is a specialist, researcher and curator of European ethnographic dress who lives in Pittsburgh, PA. Jan's ancestry is Polish, and he writes in and speaks several languages fluently. From August to November 2022, he visited eastern Europe and frequently posted on Facebook about where he'd been and what he'd seen. On 15 September, he was in western Slovakia; the following is an expansion of a post.

I am always excited and inspired by people who research and preserve the culture of a specific region as they are able to delve into details and minutia in a way that a general researcher rarely can. It was therefore high on my list this year [2022] to meet with Iveta Šidlová and visit her workshop near Zvolen, Slovakia [website, in Slovak, at www.sidlova.sk].

Iveta has family ties to the villages of Hlboké (near Senica) and Cetuna (near Lubina) and has recently begun an intensive undertaking of recreating historic clothing and embroidery from the Lubina area. During my visit, I had the pleasure of seeing old and new folk designs and discussing the future of handcraft with Iveta. She will be moving to Cetuna and plans to



Ends of antique headdress ribbons from the village of Hlboké.



hold craft workshops for village children in order to help them appreciate the skills of their ancestors and perhaps inspire some to continue the traditions. I wish her lots of success in the revitalization of embroidery and folk dress in the Lubina/Bzince region.

◀ *Decoration by Iveta Šidlová of a collar, also from Hlboké.*

Photos: Jan Łętowski.

Short of Energy for a Dancing or Walking Tour?

by Karen Bennett

Sarah Pedlow (<https://threadwritten.com/>), an American-born woman now based in Amsterdam, organizes needlework and thread art classes and tours that entail lots of sitting down. She posts on Facebook as “ThreadWritten Textiles.” Her bio says, “I support women artisans, traditional textile practices and the preservation of cultural heritage through research, education and the cultivation of a global community of makers.” One of her tour descriptions says, “Non-stitching spouses welcome!”

Online classes: <https://threadwritten.com/workshops-online>. One such class, on April 15, is about the wool embroidery of Hungarian shepherd mantles (<https://threadwritten.com/workshops-online/szur>).

Some upcoming events:

—May 7–13: a week of creative stitching, from traditional craft to contemporary art, at the John Campbell Folk School near Brasstown, North Carolina. Register at folkschool.org, searching for Drawing With Thread in Needlework and Thread Art.

—June 6–14: Hungarian embroidery in Transylvania (Romania) and Budapest (<https://threadwritten.com/transylvania>).

—August 12–19: Portuguese embroidery in Viana do Castelo (<https://threadwritten.com/viana>).

—August 20–27: Portuguese embroidery in Évora, Arraiolos and Lisbon (<https://threadwritten.com/evora>).



Textile from Évora, Portugal.

Piperki So Domati (Peppers with Tomatoes)

from a recipe by Olga Sandolowich

This Macedonian recipe is adapted from the cookbook issued by the Don Heights Folk Dancers on the 20th anniversary of their group in 1993. It's a dish synonymous with summer, when fresh peppers and tomatoes are abundant.

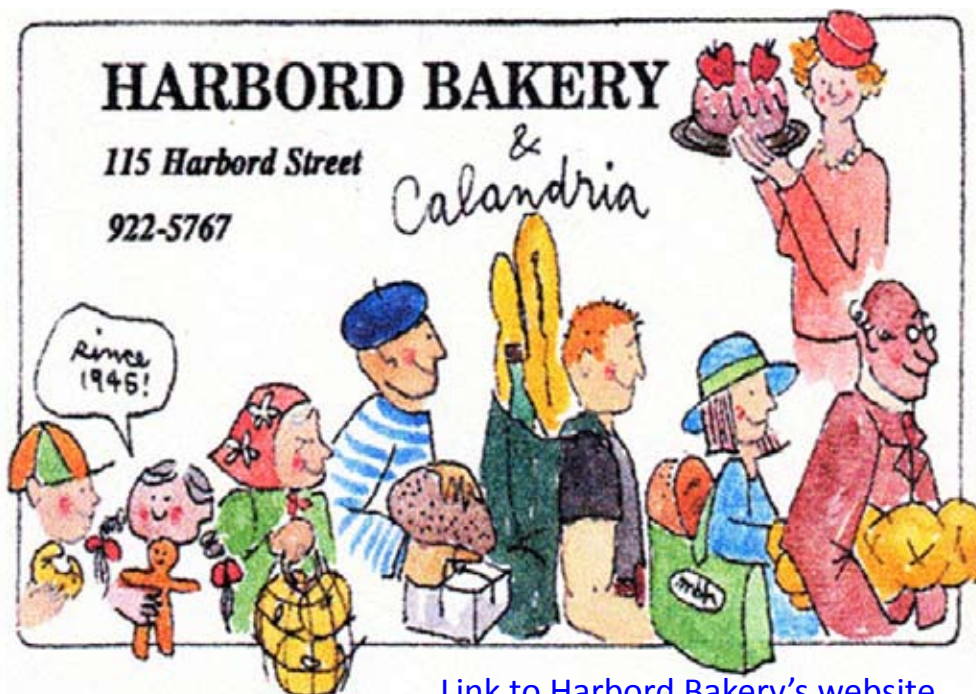
Ingredients

- 3 or 4 Tbsp vegetable or sunflower oil
- 3 large bell peppers, de-seeded and chopped into bite-sized pieces
- 1 28-oz. can of whole or stewed tomatoes, mashed



Place oil in frying pan and fry peppers until soft. Add tomatoes and let simmer for approximately 30 minutes.

Six beaten eggs are often added as well, once the peppers and tomatoes are fried and the liquid starts evaporating; keep stirring until cooked. To spice up the dish, add hot banana peppers or a sprinkle of crushed peppers. The dish can be served with crusty bread, feta cheese, *kofte* (meatballs) or sausages.



[Link to Harbord Bakery's website.](#)

Videos Worth Watching

by Karen Bennett

Further to my VWW column in the February issue, I found a choreographed stage dance to the Kazakh waltz-rhythm song Ana Zhuregim: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XCtFZWwNHGE>. The headdresses of the dancers proved a distraction from the grace of their movements, but it was a very pretty dance.



A Kazakh dance troupe performs to the song Ana Zhuregim.

I'm a huge fan of the way Finnish women sing, so I was delighted to discover the four-member ensemble Tuuletär (TOO-leh-tahr). In this video, the group performs the Estonian song Meie Elu (the Estonian language is a close relative of Finnish): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6gU_7no1yeE. I also enjoyed the fifth entry in their Sofa Live series, Suven Ahava: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yvxMIQrGLkM>.

Two years ago, there was a TikTok craze for a sea shanty called The Wellerman, sung by a four-man group of Scots led by Nathan Evans. It's a whaling song from New Zealand, and despite its wonderful harmonies, I'm unhappy with the lyrics as my sympathies are with the whale. But here's an even better version than Nathan's, with five-part harmony by the group The Wellermen: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=90Oc9XI5Aps>. (What's a Wellerman, you ask? Look under the heading "Folklore" here: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wellerman#References>.) I've found another in the genre that's not, strictly speaking, a sea shanty, since such were rhythmical work songs sung by sailors as they laboured in coordinated group efforts in either a pulling or pushing action, including weighing anchor and setting sail. Here's a group of eight men (I believe they're all Scots), The Wellermen & The Longest Johns, rendering One More Pull: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WGfu_smRQJw.

The harmonies raised the hairs on the back of my neck. Another song, just by the The Wellermen, is My Mother Told Me: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jDQuRYN9_Fw. Both songs are on The Wellermen's first album, issued on 10 February 2023.

The South Indian instrument called the Saraswati veena (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saraswati_veena).



The Wellermen performing The Wellerman sea shanty.

org/wiki/Saraswati_veena) is a descendant of the lute. Musician Indu Balachandran plays and discusses it here: <https://fb.watch/hKF17FcTns/?mibextid=6aamW6>. (The video can be watched without a Facebook account.) Indu's narration included these words: "This veena has passed from my grandmother to my mother to me. My mother and grandmother forced me to learn regularly till I was 16—every two days, an hour; sometimes two hours on a weekend. I was a reluctant student, like my children are at the moment. I'm so grateful, actually, for those years of torture that I went through when I was a child. I had children and I realized how important intergenerational transfer of culture and music is."



Indu Balachandran plays the veena.

OFDA MEMBERSHIP ENTITLES YOU TO:

- Five issues of the *Folk Dancer Online* each year. Members have the option of receiving a notice when the newest issue is available, or can choose to receive the magazine .PDF file by email.
- Join the OFDA members' email list. Upcoming Events emails (the Dance Digest) are posted every two weeks, with wide-ranging notices of (mostly local to Ontario) dance classes and workshops, performances and concerts.
- Members are eligible to apply for the OTEA Scholarship Fund, which assists aspiring dancers and leaders in developing folk dance-related programs and activities.



The Grapevine

Tineke and Maurits van Geel have announced the cancellation of their September tour to Turkey due to the earthquakes in Syria and Turkey in February. Tineke wrote, "Unfortunately we are cancelling our tour to Turkey in September due to the devastating earthquake that has hit this country. It exactly covers the region we planned to travel and has affected thousands of people.... We also feel that it would be inappropriate to celebrate or dance with people who have undoubtedly been confronted with deaths and casualties in their families only months before our visit." Since some people who booked the Turkey tour had also booked the preceding tour to the Netherlands, the Dutch tour has been cancelled as well, due to insufficient registration.

Congratulations to the Don Heights Folk Dancers (Toronto) on reaching their 50th anniversary in 2023. Yes, the group was founded in 1973 by Olga Sandolowich, and there's a cookbook cover to prove it, with a design by Jean McAdam. See Olga's recipe from the cookbook on p. 24.

In February, Marg Murphy took a cruise to Antarctica. In June, Rachel Gottesman will be travelling to Italy for an opera tour.

Mirdza Jaunzemis, Stefania Szlek Miller and Anita Millman are planning to attend the 55th anniversary of the International Folk Dancers of Ottawa on 29–30 April 2023. Dutch teacher Wijnand Karel will be offering workshops, and the Pinewoods Band

will play at the Saturday night party. Wijnand graduated from the Rotterdam Dance Academy and then danced in the Folkloric Dance Theatre in Amsterdam.

He teaches at the Nova College Haarlem and at the Dospovo dance group in Utrecht. He is also the artistic director of Folklor Dansemble Amersfoort (<https://fdamersfoort.nl/>), which was founded 50 years ago and has an international repertoire. In April 2021, he was introduced to a North American audience (including Ye Acting Editor) when he did a Zoom session featuring Macedonian and Dutch dances for a multi-teacher event arranged by the Folk Arts Center of New England. As part of Wijnand's session, he presented some Macedonian costumes.



Wijnand Karel.



Helen Kirkby's copy of the DHFD 20th-anniversary cookbook.

Photo: Karen Bennett.

In addition to the peripatetic threesome of Mirdza, Stefania and Anita,

Denise Colton and Helga Hyde have signed up for an adventure tour in Morocco in September.

For a number of years, Athens photographer Georgios Tatakis has been exercising his considerable creativity on the subjects of traditional Greek female costumes (a project he calls Caryatis) and of Greek customs and events (a project he calls Ethos), both of which he explores while promoting Blue Star Ferries. His impressive site (in English) includes stories as well as photos: <https://www.tatakis.com>. A book to be issued this year is titled *Olympos: From Karpathos Island to Byzantium* (Olympos is a village on Karpathos) and can be ordered on his site.

Anita Millman, having taken some workshops on Russian and Ukrainian dance from Dutch teacher Hennie Konings in Germany and England, received a message from him at the end of January announcing his retirement from teaching due to osteoarthritis that afflicted his knees and big toes. Said Anita, "He is a great teacher with wonderful dances, and I am so sorry his ailments won't allow him to continue teaching."

Hennie's announcement read, in part, "For me, the year 2023 is all about saying goodbye to the last remaining groups I was teaching Russian dance lessons to: in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. Sixteen years ago, I had taken the step of no longer intending to make those intercontinental flights to the USA and the Far East.... I will turn 78 this year and my current physical condition shows it. That is the reality I have to deal with. Although saying goodbye hurts, it is inevitable that it will come to a goodbye one day. I have fond memories of all those courses all over the world. Those beautiful memories, no one will take away from me. All those participants from all countries who attended my courses I thank from the bottom of my heart for their participation."



Hennie Konings, wearing the comfortable red Ukrainian boots he preferred to teach in, at a workshop in Dresden, Germany, in 2008.

Ye Acting Editor took classes from Hennie once, at a Montreal dance camp in the 1990s, and thereafter learned his dances from Radboud Koop, who was willing to travel to North America. Some of her favourite Hennie choreographies: Kakpo Logu (from Russia): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rFovi2qAgxQ>; Lenochech (Russia), with Hennie wearing a long white T-shirt and black Russian boots: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=49WrWW095Eo>; Pod Dilikanye (Russia): <https://www.youtube.com/>

[watch?v=xQyC1T-excc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xQyC1T-excc); Posadila Rozu (Russia): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fyOCPf4jC1I>; and Ya Da Kalinuschku Lomala (Russia), with Hennie in a white T-shirt and red Ukrainian boots: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gVn8A7nAyc&t=7s>. (No videos could be found of the few Ukrainian dances that Hennie or Radboud transmitted.)

Rina Singha reports that Nancy Leslie died in early February in Toronto. Said Rina, "Nancy was very involved with new people at OFDA, at the Settlement House and at Ontario Folk Dance Camp. She made sure I came. She was very much a people person. She became like a family member to me. When she visited India, she visited my sisters. She went out of her way to get me adjusted to recreational folk dancing when I had only been used to performing on stage. She had a special gift." A full obituary will appear in the June issue of FDO; anyone who wishes to contribute reminiscences and photos of Nancy may send them to folkdanceronline@gmail.com.

JOIN US ON SATURDAY **AFTERNOON** FOR AN
OFDA spring DANCE CAFÉ

Date: April 15, 2023

Time: 3 – 5:30 p.m.

Place: Willowdale Presbyterian Church

Door Fee: OFDA Member - \$5

Non-Member - \$10



Celebrate **Spring by dancing!**

The program will be flexible and will include some teaching of new dances that everyone can do.

Snacks and beverages will be served (you're encouraged to bring your own mug).

See full details on [Flyer](#).

COVID PROTOCOLS FOR THIS EVENT

- Masking is optional.
- Please, do not attend if you feel at all unwell.