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Acting Editor Karen Bennett
Production Bev Sidney
Advertising Paula Tsatsanis
Dance Calendar Terri Taggart
Distribution Judy Deri

To contact the Editor, or to send calendar items, articles, and other magazine content:
folkdanceronline@gmail.com

Proofreaders

.....Blima Dreezer
.....Rachel Gottesman
.....Adam Kossowski
.....Shirley Kossowski
.....Kalina Serlin

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Web Design: Noemi Adorjan
friendlyweb@gmail.com
Web Maintenance: Helen Winkler



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Cover Image: *Mongol toddler in traditional costume at the 2019 Naadam Festival in Ulaanbaatar.*
Photo: Marg Murphy. See p. 13.

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[RETURN TO OFDA WEBSITE.](#)

A Lucky Dip Bag

by Karen Bennett, Acting Editor

For the April issue, I had a lovely thread to link most of the content in this space, but the present issue is better described as more of a grab bag.

Marg Murphy's article on her pre-Covid trip to Mongolia in 2019 is not only detailed but features wonderful photos. I found it ironic that, according to Wikipedia, Genghis Khan, of whom Mongolians are so proud, wouldn't allow his image to be portrayed in paintings or sculptures during his lifetime, yet 800 years later, Mongolia is stuffed with representations of him, including a whopper of a statue that Marg photographed. A complement to her article, re Mongol music, can be found in the Videos Worth Watching column on p. 25.

The Hobbies column this month, by my good friend Loui Tucker, isn't really about a hobby, since she gets paid to do it. When I was first thinking about sidling up to Loui to ask for a favour, I thought she was still volunteering to pick up trash for an "Adopt-a-Highway" program (<https://www.louitucker.com/IndexTrash.html>). But Loui's not-really-a-hobby activity is actually *much more interesting* than garbage.

Effective this issue, I am retiring the Recipe feature as (a) cooks can find so many thousands (millions?) of recipes online very easily nowadays, and (b) it's one less thing that I have to transcribe and adapt. But if someone *submits* a recipe, with photo, that isn't a reprint from a previous issue (which fact can be determined by consulting my index under either "Food" or the country/culture the recipe comes from, using the "Index" link on this page, <https://ofda.ca/wp/magazine/>), I wouldn't jib at publishing the occasional one.

Congratulations to Teme Kernerman on the 50th anniversary of the Rikudiyah Israeli festival, which she founded (see p. 19)! And thank you to *all* the contributors to the April issue. They deserve a share in the plaudits I received, both in person and via e-mail (reproduced as received): "Sparkling!" "This is unbelievable fantastic painstaking and time-consuming hard work by Karen Bennett and a team of folk dance enthusiasts. Bravo!" Take a bow, everyone.

By the time this issue is released, summer dancing in the park will have started at many locations, with even more opportunities for greeting old friends than the OFDA Spring Dance Café (see p. 23) provided. Hurray!



A donation has been made
by OFDA
to its Bereavement Fund in
memory of long-time dancer
Nancy Mae Leslie,
who died in February, 2023.

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*Earlier this year OFDA's Executive
Committee created the policy statement below
to describe the association's respect for people
of diverse cultures and for the Indigenous
Peoples who came before us.*

OFDA Diversity and Land Acknowledgement Statement

The OFDA recognizes the population
diversities in Ontario's communities.
We actively promote the exploration of
Ontario's cultural diversity through the
related dimensions of dance and music.

We recognize that our activities take
place on traditional territories of many
Indigenous Nations, and acknowledge this
understanding at our events. Everyone is
welcome to participate in our activities,
with the expectation that their rights and
dignity will be respected.

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.

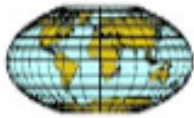
Are you, or is someone you know, a candidate for this volunteer position? The editor is responsible for acquiring copy for the magazine and preparing it for publication. S/he works closely with the production person, who does layout and preparation for printing.

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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Paul Sheldon: From AMAN to Ashland

by Nancy Nies

In the April 2023 issue of this magazine, I described the first half of a road trip that my husband, Paul Gipe, and I took last November, which included the unforgettable experience of dancing with the Humboldt Folk Dancers to the live—and lively!—music of Chubritza. The trip's second memorable evening of dance was to occur exactly a week later, when we would dance with the Ashland (Oregon) International Folk Dancers and meet a dancer named Paul Sheldon.



All photos: Nancy Nies.

Paul Sheldon leads a dance in Ashland, Oregon, 11 November 2022.

Having confirmed that the Ashland folk dancers would be meeting on the Friday evening we would be in the area, we arrived at the appointed time and place. The group had recently begun meeting again in person, after a long dark period due to Covid. Wearing masks, with hands separated from those of the other dancers by colourful bandanas, we all enjoyed an evening

of dancing. Three different people taught and led dances. Between dances, Paul chatted with one of the leaders and learned that he had danced with the AMAN Folk Ensemble—which, it should be noted, was at one time ranked as the #2 dance company in the United States, behind only the Joffrey Ballet. [Here's AMAN doing a Bulgarian suite: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dllG6yM8mDk>. And here they are doing the Canopy Dance from Azerbaijan: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=unJtjKMhDAs>.]

The highlight of the evening came when this same leader brought out his bouzouki, which was a treat to listen and dance to.

When the evening's dancing came to an end, I spoke with the bouzouki player, explaining that I would be writing an article on our evening with the Ashland dancers for *Folk Dancer Online*. I asked his name, which he told me was Paul Sheldon, and requested his permission to use photos I had taken of him that evening, which he kindly granted. It wasn't until Paul and I were headed back to our hotel that we put two and two

together and realized that the two Pauls had crossed paths at least a decade before, in Colorado, at an event that had nothing to do with folk dance—one of Paul Gipe’s lectures on renewable energy policy. The two men—who share not only a first name and a love of folk dance, but also an interest in renewable energy—have since connected once again.

I’ve since learned much more about Paul Sheldon, thanks to LinkedIn and the Folk Dance Federation of California, South. He holds BA and MA degrees in human development, and his multi-faceted career has included work in personal and professional development, renewable energy and sustainability, property development and management, teaching, fund-raising, writing and consulting.



Paul plays the bouzouki.

In addition to the above, Paul Sheldon is a master dancer and dance teacher who has studied with dozens of master dancers in the US and abroad. A former soloist with the AMAN Folk Ensemble, he has performed for hundreds of thousands and has taught traditional dances to more than 150,000 people throughout the US and Europe. He directed The Intersection Dancers, co-founded the Admati Israeli Dance Ensemble, and choreographed suites of dances for those groups and others, including those of Brigham Young University, the University of Illinois and Humboldt State University. In the 1970s Sheldon taught and led numerous weekly dance evenings at Los Angeles folk dance coffee houses such as Cafe

Danssa, Gypsy Camp, The Intersection, the Museum, the Red Mill House and Zorba’s. [This 1968 documentary was filmed at Zorba’s Coffee House and at UCLA: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XQKPWhwOWgl>.]

If not for this column, we would never have realized that the two Pauls had met before, or that the masked bouzouki player we saw in Ashland had such an impressive, accomplished career ... in folk dance and beyond.

Nancy Mae Leslie, 1941–2023

by Karen Bennett

Further to Rina Singha's tribute to Nancy in the April issue (p. 29): I am indebted to Rina for much of the information in this obituary. Without her help, this would have been a much shorter and drier article, as I was merely an acquaintance of Nancy's and hadn't seen her in a while, but Rina was a friend. I am also grateful to Helga Hyde and Elisa MacDonald for contributing additional information.

Nancy was born in what was the Township of East York (later amalgamated with Toronto) in September 1941. She had four or five siblings, and one of them—her older sister Pat—used to folk dance and was in Ernie Krehm's performance group, the Settlement Dancers. Her father danced at the Settlement too.

One of her brothers is believed to have survived her.

She served on the OFDA Executive, including on the "Out-of-Town Trip" Committee, which arranged for Toronto dancers to car-pool and stay overnight in sleeping-bag accommodations. She also served on the staff of the newsletter and wrote 28 wide-ranging contributions—the majority in the 1970s, with nothing in the '80s and '90s and eight articles in the 2000s. Her first article (February 1970) was a review (co-written with David Youngs) of Dick Crum's Balkan workshop at the University Settlement House; her last (September 2008) was an interview of Teme Kernerman that chronicled the beginnings of Ontario Folk Dance Camp in 1959—a camp which I believe Nancy attended. She was determined to do whatever she could to keep folk dancing going, even in its heyday. She even served as editor of the morning newsletter of the 1971 Ontario Folk Dance Camp. Her subsequent review of that camp revealed that one of her favourite sessions was arts and crafts.

In the 1990s, Rina told me, Nancy took Teme Kernerman's teacher training course (but never taught anything outside the course, as far as I know). When it came to the course requirement of writing an essay, Nancy said something to Teme along the lines of, "How about accepting my book instead?" And Teme said yes. The book was *Myth, Ritual and Dance Volume 1: Egypt* and was published by Maelis in 1990. Nancy presented a copy to OFDA in May 2000. Her dedication read, "Donated in great appreciation to OFDA for all the many years I have enjoyed the dance, music, fellowship and friends through my association with OFDA. Blest with fine, dedicated teachers, great guest teachers, and many



Nancy Leslie at Ontario Folk Dance Camp 2007.

Photo: Bev Sidney

hard-working volunteers, OFDA is a 'class act.' —Nancy Leslie, May 27, 2000."

From 2010–15, she was a member of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities.

Her day job was with the Ontario Ministry of Health, where she worked in the Assistive Devices Program until retirement.

Nancy loved animals. When a pet bird died, she acquired a lot of cats. In the winter, she fed the feral felines in her neighbourhood.

One morning in early February 2023, she was found in her apartment in west Toronto by her cleaners, having fallen in the night and been unable to get up. Despite being taken to the hospital, she died soon after. She was 81. Rhoda Lawder, a friend living in her building, reported her passing by phone to Rina, whom she had met and known as one of Nancy's friends.

Rina had met Nancy when she joined Settlement House Folk Dance class in the 1970s. At first, she felt awkward because she had not interacted socially with Canadians very much. Nancy took her under her wing and showed her the ropes. She made sure that she was kept informed of all the classes, parties and camps. She also asked her to perform a Kathak piece at a Settlement House Christmas party. When she discovered that Rina's daughter Vinita was interested in horses, she took her to the races. A special treat was the Queen's Plate at Woodbine Racetrack.



Rina Singha in March 2023.

Photo: Karen Bennett.



Photo: Al Katz.

At the conclusion of my interview with Rina in March 2023, she pursued me as I was leaving her building to add, "Nancy was a very loyal friend."

Nancy dances second in line (Marie Hori is the leader) at OFDA's AGM & Camp Review party in June 2012.

Not a Hobby, But Something That I Enjoy So Much That I Should Be Paying to Do It

by Loui Tucker

I am well known in the international and Israeli folk dance communities in Northern California, and in California generally as a dance teacher and leader. What few people know is that I also research and write the history of local historic homes. By “historic homes,” I mean homes built before 1930. These projects are usually commissioned by the homeowner, but are occasionally sought by a relative wanting to give the write-up as a gift to the owner.

I particularly enjoy doing the research. Some of it can be done online, but other portions must be done at the Martin Luther King Library in San Jose, more specifically in the California Room, which is full of historic maps, photographs, newspaper articles, city directories and journals, as well as books. It also has a full collection of Sanborn Fire Insurance maps.

The city directories are an important source because I use them to track the occupants of the homes from their mention in the first directory up to the current owners. In some cases, the entries list the occupation or business of the occupants. Knowing the occupation or business has sometimes led me to the address of the employer and the supposition that the owner probably walked to work. If the owner was prominent in the community, obituaries are another source of information.

The directories also give me information about the other homes on the street and in the neighbourhood. I can get a sense of the type of people who first built and moved into the homes, how long they stayed, which houses became rentals, when landline telephones were added, and if and when the houses on the street were renumbered.

I also take the time to write up a general history of the district or area where the house is located. Sometimes the land was part of a large homestead with orchards, which was later sold, divided into lots, and resold to the person(s) would then build the home. In one instance, what was originally the family home of a retired Civil War general became a sanatorium for tuberculosis patients and later enlarged to become a convalescent hospital before being almost completely destroyed in a fire!

I also use my Photoshop skills to create an original-looking, sepia photo of what my research has indicated the original home might have looked

like. I start with a high-resolution photo of the current home, remove fencing and garden walls, trim back foliage, and eliminate outside window treatments such as awnings that I've determined were added. In one case, I removed a second storey that provided a growing family with two more bedrooms. More than one recipient of the finished project thought I'd discovered an old photo in an archive!

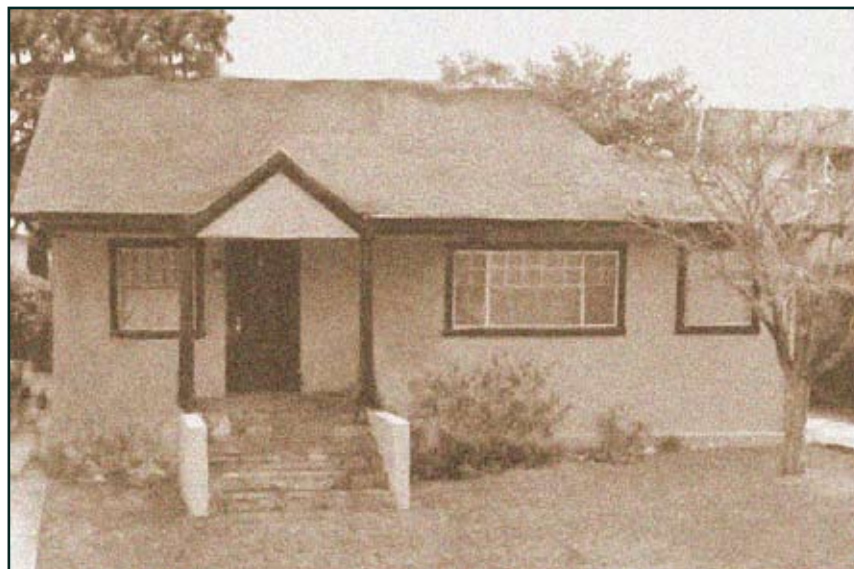
In some cases, I have been able to track down relatives and descendants of former occupants of the homes, talk to them about the time period they lived in the home (great personal anecdotes!), and obtain photographs.

These projects are time-consuming but very rewarding. I am paid well for my efforts, but I enjoy the process so much I often feel I should be paying the owners for the pleasure of doing the research and writing the history.



Photos: Loui Tucker.

An historic home (built before 1930) in the present day.



What the same home probably looked like originally.

Mongolia 2019

by Marg Murphy

Photos: All except map, Marg Murphy.



Top of Genghis Khan's equestrian statue.

The story of some characters that you learn about in school can stick with you for decades. For me, this was the case of the Mongolian Khan family, in particular Genghis Khan, ca 1162–August 1227. Maybe it was just the fun in pronouncing his name (which is Chinggis Khaan in Mongolian) that kept him in the back of my mind, or maybe it was the domination Genghis exerted from the time he was 20, to

eventually conquering a vast empire during his lifetime that crossed Asia from the Pacific Ocean to the Caspian Sea. His descendants expanded this area west to near Vienna by 1241, allowing the Mongol claim to the largest consolidated land empire in history, which was half of the known world in the 13th century. Maybe it was the image in books of this indomitable warrior sitting loftily astride a once wild horse, looking out over vast plains cradled among mountains on every side, attesting to his reputation as a ruthless dictator whose campaigns of massacre left 40 million dead. Or maybe it was the knowledge that, despite his brutality (*are empires ever acquired gently?*), he left an incredible legacy of pride to modern-day Mongolians who celebrate him as a national hero and the leader who established the Mongols as a political and cultural force. For whatever memory, Mongolia has been on my bucket list, and it was finally checked off in July 2019.

To honour their larger-than-life founding father, Mongols erected a larger-than-life statue of a stern Genghis on horseback, wielding the golden whip that, according to legend, he had found 54 km east of the capital, Ulaanbaatar, on the bank of the Tuul River. Made of 250 tonnes of gleaming stainless steel, the statue is 40 metres tall. It's the largest equestrian statue in the world, and houses a two-storey leather boot inside. One can take an elevator up the tail of the horse to stairs that lead to a lookout on the majestic Mongolian steppes. Genghis faces east to his birthplace. Further across the fields and road, a statue of his mother, Hoelun, gazes back at him. I guess one could say that his mother will always be watching him.



Leather boot (guthai) inside the Genghis Khan Statue Complex.

The statue was completed in 2008 as part of the Genghis Khan Statue Complex, and the area is being developed as a tourist destination. Plans are that the statue will be surrounded by tourist *gers* (yurts), the large round felt tents which traditionally house a nomadic family and can be dismantled for transport. There is a fire pit in the centre for cooking, and beds are set up around the perimeter.



Women in regional dress.

Mongolia is a fascinating nomadic-based country, steeped in musical culture, tradition, pride, and beautiful costumes. It is the world's most sparsely populated sovereign state, with 3.3 million people, half of whom live in Ulaanbaatar, where a festival is held every July: the Naadam Festival, a two-day event for the “three manly sports” of archery, wrestling and horseback riding. Naadam represents not only the country's sporting prowess but also showcases its ethnic heritage and history with cultural performances that include throat singing, *biyelgee* body dancing, traditional costumes, festival food, *ger* decor, and a parade of the provinces. Mini, regional Naadams are observed in larger towns and districts and prepare contestants for July's big festival.

This very colourful celebration has shaped national identity over the centuries. It evolved from the selection of warriors for battle and spans more than 800 years. Leaders of the armies in the time of Genghis Khan chose their soldiers based on attributes of strength, movement, flexibility and stamina (seen in wrestling); hand-eye coordination (evaluated through spear-throwing and archery); and patience and bravery (exhibited in horse-training and riding competence). After major battles, these skills were celebrated in organized competitions which later adopted the name Naadam. The festival also formally commemorates the 1921 Revolution, when Mongolia declared itself independent from the Republic of China.

In 2019 I had the opportunity to witness a Naadam festival. It was an amazing experience, with an opening ceremony that could rival those of the Olympics. The vibrant, well-orchestrated spectacle was overflowing with national pride, exquisite regional dress (*deel*) and historical depictions of events that formed the country.



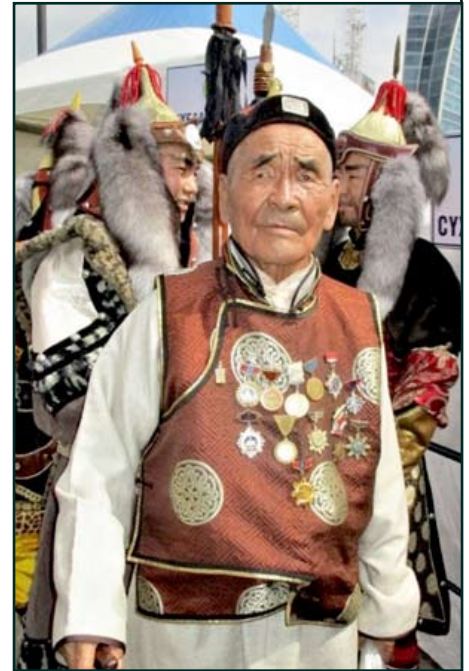
Map of Mongolia and regional ethnic apparel.

Official events started the night before the opening ceremonies with a “Mongolia in *Deel*” festival in the massive central square of Ulaanbaatar, Sukhbaatar Square, located in front of the Government Palace. A large statue of a seated Genghis Khan looks out from the palace’s front stairs. In the centre of the square is an equestrian statue of Damdin Sukhbaatar, who was Mongolia’s revolutionary hero (died 1923). Edging the square were *ger* exhibits set up for the day, as well as vendors of food, drink, jewellery, etc.

A troop of military recruits marched in, resplendent in their new ceremonial outfits. I was told that their uniforms used to be more Russian and German in design but were changed to the current, colourful garb, which has an older Mongolian or Tibetan accent.

Earlier that morning, merit awards in various fields of accomplishment were issued by the President. In the Square, the recipients posed with their awards and accepted gifts. The president then presented a wreath at the centre statue and walked around it a few times, accompanied by many security men and dignitaries, before the afternoon’s festivities officially began.

The pre-competition day had other highlights.



A decorated war hero. Behind him are more traditionally-garbed Mongol soldiers.



Military in dress uniform holding one of the Nine White Banners.



Nomads hold up their bows to indicate their warrior roots.

Presentation of the Nine White Banners (*Yesun Khult Tsagaan Tug*): The banners symbolize great power as well as independence, unity and eternity for the Mongolian state. They are composed of nine flagpoles decorated with white horsetail hairs from 1,000 stallions from each of the provinces, hanging from a circular plate with a flame or trident-like shape on the top. In the 13th century, the Nine White Banners were a peacetime emblem used exclusively by the khans in front of their yurts. A black banner meant wartime. The banners are cleaned only with rainwater because ancient Mongolians used to pray to the sky and believed that water produced from the heavens was clean and pure.

The *Deel* parade: From all corners of Mongolia, representative groups dressed in their regional



More women in regional dress.

apparel proudly paraded around the square. The costumes were elaborate, beautifully sewn and accessorized with magnificent headpieces; the women adorned themselves further with elegant jewellery. Some bands displayed their warrior roots by triumphantly holding their bows high as they rode around on horseback. Others marched to the beat of their handheld leather drums. I was mesmerized.

Festival traditions and foods: Unpasteurized, fermented mare's milk called *airag* or *kumis* is available only from June to September. With between 2% and 5% alcoholic content, this slightly sour-tasting yet wholesome beverage is a highlight of the festival for locals and is consumed warm. It is first filtered through a cloth, stored in large leather sacks and stirred regularly to ensure that all parts of the milk are fermented equally. The taste depends on the characteristics of the feeding grounds and the exact method of production. Hospitality

mandates that each visitor be offered a bowl of *airag*. To reject it right away is considered impolite. It really wasn't bad-tasting (seconds were available!). *Khuushuur* is a deep-fried pancake with meat. An inseparable part of the festival and crowd favourite, it is supposedly only prepared during Naadam.

Biyelgee dancing: *Biyelgee* dances originated in the nomadic way of life. Since the dances were typically confined to the small space inside a *ger*, many are performed while half-sitting or cross-legged. Important characteristics of the dance are hand, shoulder and leg movements that express aspects of the Mongol lifestyle, traditions and spiritual characteristics. The dancers' clothing, accessories, colour and pattern combinations also reflect a unique community. The dances promote family unity and are performed at special events, weddings and other festivals. The art of *biyelgee* is transmitted to younger generations through apprenticeships or tutoring within the family. Unfortunately, as younger people leave their nomadic



Even more women in regional dress. The one on the left is playing a one-stringed instrument called a numan khuur (see video on p. 25).

lifestyle for urban areas and careers, this art form is fading.

In the evening, the National Cultural Performance was held. The orchestra, playing on traditional instruments and featuring the bowed, two-stringed *morin khuur*, elicited such dulcet sounds that we were all entranced. We also listened to renowned throat singers and watched a variety of time-honoured *biyelgee* folk dances from different regions. The men's dance from the eastern part of Mongolia was exceptional for its dynamic energy and spirited movements.

The opening ceremony of the festival proper started at 11 a.m. at the main outdoor stadium of the city. Tickets sell out months ahead. Entering the arena first are the Nine White Banners, carried by honoured guards on horseback. The banners are set in the middle of the stadium, where the President of Mongolia officially opens the festival. Participants representing various eras, traditions and roles enter the arena and parade on the outside track. Performers play out important historical events on the centre platform, highlighted with music and techno effects and to the background of a crowd roaring with pleasure. After the two-hour ceremony, the games began.



Boys carried on a yak during the opening ceremonies.

Although traditionally competitions were limited to men due to their historical role as warriors, women are now able to participate in archery and horseback racing. But wrestling remains a man's domain.

Wrestling is by far the most popular competition. There is no cut-off time for the wrestlers, no space restrictions, weight limits or categories; whoever touches the ground first with anything except the palms of their hands or soles of their feet is the loser.

There are four main parts of wrestling costumes: a four-sided, pointed-top hat; a shoulder vest (*zodog*) with long sleeves; snug shorts (*shuudag*); and leather boots with upturned toes. There is also a cloak for afterwards. It is said that the costume has an open-chest top to ensure that no woman can disguise herself and compete, which, according to legend, happened once in the past.

Archery is a symbol of strength, vision, patience, sense and concentration. During the festival, archers wear their regional costume, with leather

bracers up to the elbow on their outstretched arm so that the costume cuff doesn't interfere with shooting.

Mongolia is said to be a nation born on horseback, and every child who grows up in the countryside learns to ride a horse when they are three to five years old.

Naadam horse races are cross-country events, covering distances of 10–26 km depending on the age of the horse. Up to 1,000 horses from any part of Mongolia can be chosen to participate. Children aged five to 13 are chosen as jockeys and train in the months preceding the races. A special song, *Giingoo*, is sung by the children before and after racing.

From the several mini-Naadams in each town or district, horses qualify for entrance into the main race in July. Since the purpose of the races is to test the skill of the horses, it is the horse that moves on to the final race, not necessarily the jockey; that is up to the discretion of the horse's owner.

In the steppes 35 km from Ulaanbaatar, the main race takes place. It attracts thousands of spectators, whose vehicles blend into a silver metal sea up to the nearby hills. When not hosting the race, the area is pasture land for cattle. Not all of the cattle leave when the cars start moving in, so one will see cows grazing around the parked vehicles.

The few viewing stands overflowed. Most spectators could only clamour nearby, hoping to catch a glimpse as the winning horses crossed the finish line. Those on horseback had a better chance to see, while one family of five, balanced atop two Bactrian (two-humped) camels, could see well beyond most of the crowd.

Mongolians revere the ankle- and knucklebones of livestock, which are used in religious rites, plays, fortune-telling and traditional games. One popular game is knucklebone shooting, which develops precision and accuracy in the shooter. It is fast becoming the fourth main sport of the festival. Teams of six to eight players flick a domino-like tablet (*soum*) made of deer horn or marble towards a target of stacked sheep knucklebones. In 2014, UNESCO added this game to its list of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The festival as a whole had already been added in 2010.

The Naadam Festival was just the beginning of a journey around central Mongolia. As per their toast to their bountiful freedom and blessings: Thank you to the sky, thank you to the mountains and thank you to the fire. Cheers! It was an amazing trip.



Appreciation for Teme Kernerman

by Karen Bennett

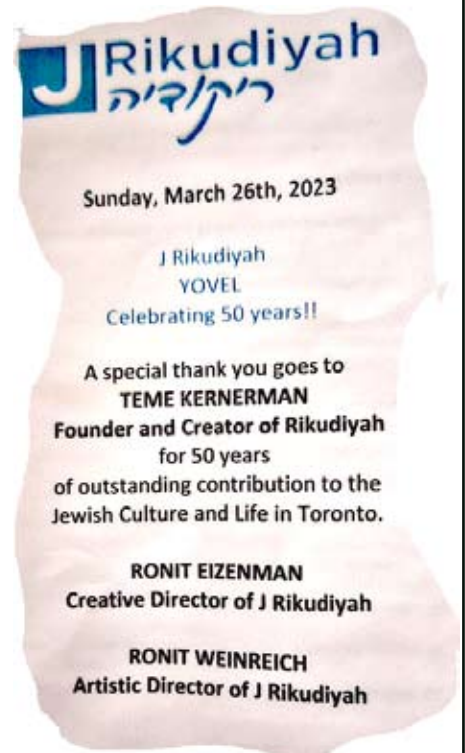
Early in April, Naomi Fromm wrote, “I visited Teme recently, and took photos of the 50th-year Rikudiyah (that she started) brochure and plaque that Ronit and Andrea presented to her (in her apartment; she didn’t go to Rikudiyah this year).”

Ronit Weinreich is Artistic Director of Rikudiyah and Andrea Daiam is the Jewish Community Centre Program Supervisor.

The 50th-anniversary event of the Rikudiyah festival took place on March 26, 2023.

Naomi continued, “Ronit Weinreich was the MC. A week or so prior to Rikudiyah, she and Andrea ... visited Teme and presented her with flowers and the plaque. Teme gave Ronit the message below to read on her behalf at Rikudiyah, since she didn’t feel comfortable going (she’s in a wheelchair now, in case you don’t know):

“I’m sorry that I am not able to attend in person. I started this Israel Dance Festival of Rikudiyah 50 years ago and I am so pleased to see my dream continue for half a century. It’s wonderful to see children participating in the joy of Israeli dance and music. I want to thank you for keeping my dream alive.”



Cover of the brochure from Rikudiyah, 2023.



Plaque from Rikudiyah, 2023.

The plaque’s inscription reads:

**RIKUDIYAH
50TH ANNIVERSARY**

*In recognition of your outstanding
contribution to Jewish culture and
life in Toronto*

**TEME KERNERMAN
FOUNDER OF
RIKUDIYAH**

Lost Treasures of Norway

by Jan Łętowski

It's often not an object itself, but the history and stories behind it that elevate it from a mere curiosity to a cultural treasure. Sadly, these invaluable stories are frequently lost and forgotten over generations, and recreating them is hard, if not impossible, work. On lucky occasions there are clues and related material that can be used to breathe life into historic artifacts and restore part of their storytelling power. Here are two such instances, both related to Norwegian immigrant dress, from my recent past.

The following is a combination of two Facebook posts: from January 6, 2021 and November 17, 2022.

[From January 6:]



Embroidered purse/pocket from the Sunnmøre district of Norway.

In September 2020, I purchased an embroidered purse/pocket that was being sold in Washington State as a Middle Eastern embroidery. At first glance I thought it might be Swedish, but with help from friends we quickly determined it to be from the Sunnmøre district of Norway. I do not typically go out of my way to collect Norwegian pieces, but something this charming and old was undoubtedly worth saving from obscurity. The back of the hardware was signed with initials and the year 1839. I was delighted to be the new caretaker of this historic piece and did not expect any further developments in the story.

Two weeks ago, I saw a “possibly Spanish” brooch for sale from a jewelry vendor in New York State. I was so taken with it that I purchased it immediately. I recognized the work as Norwegian, but I didn’t look into the specifics. After receiving it, a Norwegian-American friend recognized it as coming from the same district as the purse, i.e., Sunnmøre. There are hallmarks on the solje, but I was unable to identify any of them at the time (besides 830 for silver). I joked in passing to my friend that it would be nice if the solje were



Back view of solje (brooch), also from the Sunnmøre district.

All photos except two women in full Sunnmøre fig: Jan Łętowski.



Two women from Sunnmøre in full fig. They're wearing a different style of solje than the one Jan discovered.

from the same era as the purse so that they could be friends. I did not expect that to be the case. Remarkably, with further research I was able to identify the regional hallmark as being in use from ca. 1800–40. My heart skipped a beat.

Within a period of five months, while confined to my home during a worldwide pandemic, I acquired two pieces from the same era and place, made in Norway nearly 180 years ago. My mind is tempted to write a shared story for them: brought over as prized possessions by a Norwegian emigrant in the mid-19th century and passed down through the generations as family heirlooms from the Old Country until they were devoid of their sentimental value, split up, sold off, and misidentified on the second-hand market. There is joy in my heart that these two pieces are together today, perhaps again or maybe for the first time. Either way, their origin has been restored to them, which validates what I do and motivates me to continue my work. I'm honored to hold history in my hands and share these treasures with you now.

[From November 17:]

The newest addition to the immigrant collection is this late-19th-century embroidered collar from Hardanger, Norway, along with some related memorabilia and photos from the same family. I am happy that these items came to me together, because the collective whole is more historically significant than the individual parts. As a grouping, we can create links between the items with greater certainty than had they been combined later. And given the large number of Norwegians that emigrated to the Midwest [US] at the turn of the last century, we can then use their shared immigration story to put these objects into a larger cultural context.

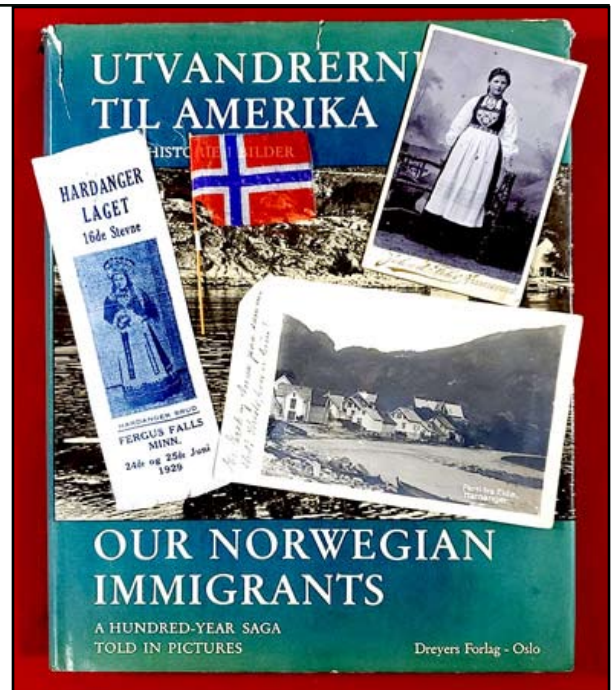


Collar and dickey of woman's Hardanger costume. The collar is fastened with special metal buttons.

Since this lot came from an estate sale, the names and details are unfortunately lost to time, but there is a possibility that this magnificent

collar belonged to one of the girls in the photos. Still, without its full story it remains a guess. What a treasure it would be to have its history written down by a previous caretaker, a story that cannot be recreated today. Objects such as these can serve as reminders of the importance of writing down family stories about objects in our care. Not only is it important for related garments and jewelry to stay together as sets, but their stories should be written down and physically stored with them.

As these stories demonstrate, there are clues that ethnographers and historians can use to attribute a place of origin, time frame or other basic information to objects, but personal details about the owners, their journeys and lives cannot be reproduced. Take a moment to write down what you know, regardless of how insignificant, so that future stewards can properly honor the history of your costumes (and other artifacts) and keep their story alive.



Family memorabilia that accompanied the Hardanger collar at the estate sale.

JOIN US ON SATURDAY **AFTERNOON** FOR OFDA'S 2023 AGM & DANCE CAFÉ

Date: June 10, 2023

Time: 2:30 – 5:30 p.m.

Place: Willowdale Presbyterian Church

Door Fee: \$0



The program will be flexible and will include some teaching of new dances from Ontario Folk Dance Camp

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

See full details on [Flyer](#).

- Our world class Annual General Meeting Get-together
- The GTA's favorite folk dances
- Food, Folk, Friends, Fun ... Free!

COVID PROTOCOLS FOR THIS EVENT

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

OFDA's Spring Dance Café

by Bev Sidney



On Saturday April 15, the Willowdale Presbyterian Church in Toronto was the site of our first café of 2023. Until some days prior, the spring had been dismally dreary and cold, but the weather was sunny and warm on the day of our dance, and about 50 people made their way, by car or from the nearby North York Centre subway station.

Shortly after 3 p.m., early in the afternoon's event, Marylyn Peringer delivered a précis of the Association's newly minted Land Acknowledgement (see p. 5) in recognition of Canada/Ontario's indigenous peoples.

Helen Winkler and Riki Adivi shared the challenge of programming for the diverse group, a good number of whom were new folk dancers. Thus, many of the dances chosen were fairly easy to follow, and Riki and Helen were joined by several others eager to assist the newbies by demonstrating/leading/coaching throughout the afternoon.

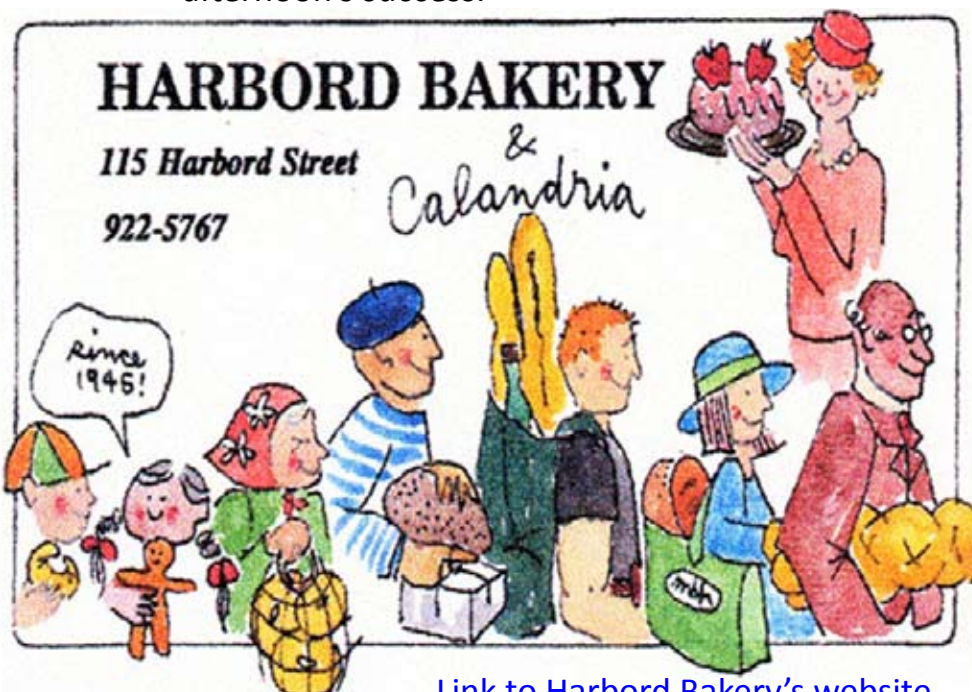


About midway through the event, dancing was paused and Rita Winkler and Marylyn held the Membership Draw. On this occasion the prize had been donated by the Winklers, with Gary McIntosh winning a collection of Rita's artwork—an assortment of some of the items for sale on her website store. Then followed an opportunity to socialize and partake of the OFDA-provided refreshments (which included always-enjoyable donations from the Harbord Bakery).



Helga Hyde, on the cusp of 80.

Just before dancing resumed, those gathered sang a Happy Birthday wish to Helga Hyde (pictured left), who was to turn 80 the next day. Helga was given her choice of next dance, which she then led, and the final hour of dancing continued until 5:30 p.m. Most people stayed until the end—a sure indicator of the afternoon's success.



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

Videos Worth Watching

by Karen Bennett

All screenshots: Karen Bennett.



The band Du Bartàs and young members of the public express their joy in their culture in 2013.

In the Occitan language from the region of Languedoc, southern France, the band Du Bartàs performs the song Qual es que ten [la belugueta]? (“Who has the little spark of life?”) while dancers do their thing (mostly, variations of a conga line) in someone’s cozy apartment: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zLyaprtiHFY>.

Further to my VWW column in the April issue, here are a couple (of the scads) of dances choreographed to The Wellerman sea shanty: first, an advanced line dance, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZDjOQBoqY94>, and second, a less challenging dance but presented in a more highly produced video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GxM0kJmTKBQ>.

Marg Murphy’s article on Mongolia (p. 13) mentions the *morin khuur* (a.k.a. the horsehead fiddle), considered a symbol of the nation. Naizal Hargan, a musician from Inner Mongolia, gives an entertaining and informative discussion (in English) on the basics: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OK-Jp0iDZic>. But there are many other instruments, plus, of course, the voice. The next video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BE6XeCGdDSU>) shows only some of them, with the Chavkhdas quartet demonstrating, in order, the *tömör khuur* (metal mouth harp); then the *numan khuur* (musical bow), while the other musicians play the *tuur* (drum), the *ikh khuur* (double bass) and the *shigshuur* (rattle); throat singing (*khoomei*), while the double-bass musician sings overtones and the drum musician plays either the *khulsan khuur* (bamboo mouth harp) or *booglin* (shaman mouth harp) and then the *morin khuur*; and finally, three *morin khuurs* and the *ikh khuur* play.



The Chavkhdas quartet.



The Grapevine

Judith Cohen has shared a photo taken of her leading the last dance, to a Greek song, at the 8 March 2023 concert in the Women in Song series, which her daughter Tamar Ilana created during the first Covid lockdown to celebrate International Women's Day.

We have an expansion of material about Marg Murphy's trip to Antarctica in February, which was very briefly mentioned in this space in the April issue. Marg's cruise went from Buenos Aires to Chile via Cape Horn and then back, visiting Antarctica and the Falkland Islands on the return trip. She reported, "Antarctica was very interesting and I learned a lot from the three lecturers who were on the cruise. They gave presentations twice a day for a week. The evening entertainment was also fabulous and quite varied, from contortionists to aerial performers (Cirque de Soleil) to magicians to dancers to singers (especially the tenor) to full cast productions. All in all, a good trip." Marg's good trip to Mongolia in July 2019 is a highlight of this issue.

Heidi Williams has news of the London group. In January, she reported to members of the Hamilton group that London's "first 'regular' dance was on January 9. It turns out that the best day for our group is Monday.... There were eight of us kind of filling up the room, and everyone enjoyed the social and physical activity very much (even with everyone masked and not holding hands)." In mid-March, Heidi provided the address and time of the classes: a hall rented from "Elmwood Avenue Presbyterian Church, located at 111 Elmwood Ave., from 1:30–3:00."

Christine Linge and Walter Zagorski had "Perils of Pauline" tales to tell after the North Toronto Players finished their production of the musical *The Millionaire* at the Papermill Theatre in Toronto in March. The musical was originally supposed to run in March 2020, but all of the performances except opening night's were cancelled because the first Covid lockdown took effect. When the play was revived for a 2023 run, problem after problem raised their heads. A partial list: Some of the cast were no longer available; five cast members tested positive for Covid, necessitating the cancellation of some performances and rehearsals; four performances were put on during the second weekend, but the



Judith Cohen leads a Greek dance in March 2023 at the Lula Lounge, Toronto.

Photo: Cassandra Popescu.

power went out on the March 25 performance and didn't come back on until it was time for Act Two (see photo at right for how Act One was managed); and somebody mistakenly unplugged the pianist's electronic piano and thereby lost its computer settings, and it took a while for the pianist to reset everything. Chris professed herself relieved (yet also sad) that the production was over.



Photo: Barb Scheffler

The cast of The Millionaire sings Act One around the grand piano in the lobby of the Papermill Theatre using the flashlights of the audience's cellphones on 25 March.

In early April, Gloria Mostyn took a three-week tour of Turkey and Israel.



Ann Smreciu in front of her maternal grandmother's house in Nanaimo, BC, in 2021. (Ann was born in BC.)

Also in early April, Ye Acting Editor communicated with Romanian teacher Ann Smreciu, who lives in Edmonton. Ann said, "Good to hear you are still active! I too am still dancing but at a much slower pace. I have had two knee replacements, and the first one (done 13 years ago) needs to be done again. I am still teaching at Edmonton International Folk Dancers, but slower dances with no jumps! I am still the Artistic Director of Balada Romanian Folk Dance Ensemble and we will be celebrating our 50th anniversary this year. I have been with them for 44 years. I have been attending many of the online dance events and am going to a workshop in Calgary in two weeks." Ann taught at Ontario Folk Dance Camp in 1992, and her delightful dance Hora ca la Caval is still widely done. Other than at OFDC, Ann "did teach for a couple of years at Mainewoods but when my children were young it was difficult....

I continued to teach in western Canada and managed to get one teaching trip to Japan too." In 2019, Ann took a trip to Romania with Sonia Dion and Cristian Florescu "and managed to visit family and did a tour of the Danube Delta to bird-watch and study plants (don't know if you knew I am a botanist)." Here's a video snippet of Ann's Balada ensemble performing the dance Clopotelul ("The Bell") from their Bucovinean suite at the Edmonton Heritage Festival in 2011: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZT02K50UzNw>.

Speaking of Romania, our “On Costumes” columnist, Jan Łętowski, provided a link to a 2019 article called “The Last of Transylvania’s Saxons,” about ethnic Germans who had been invited to settle in Hungary by King Géza II (ruled 1141–62) in order to develop an economy and to protect the borderlands of the kingdom from Asian invaders: <https://www.bbc.com/travel/article/20190909-the-last-of-transylvanias-saxons>.

One area that some of them settled in is now part of Romania. The term “Transylvanian Saxons” actually covers a multiplicity of ethnicities who came in waves of settlement over many centuries: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transylvanian_Saxons. The kings of Hungary also invited people who were not “Saxons” to settle their eastern borders, such as Vlachs from the Balkans and East Slavs (in particular Rusyns) from Galicia.

Andrew Carnie, a former Toronto folk dancer who grew up in Calgary, has long lived in Tucson, Arizona, where he maintains the dance-description site Folk Dance Musings (<https://folkdancemusings.blogspot.com/>), works as a linguistics professor, co-teaches a class on folk dance at his university, and leads a recreational group (attendable virtually). He did an

interview in April: <https://arhtisticlicense.com/2023/04/11/an-interview-with-andrew-carnie-folk-dance-enthusiast-and-linguistics-professor/>. Ye Acting Editor values his assistance as a fellow teacher and frequently consults his very useful site. Late in April, he wrote on his Facebook page, “Wow. This was totally out of the blue. I had no clue. I just learned this by reading the National Folk Organization newsletter. Apparently at the annual meeting I was one of three awarded Honorary Membership for my service to folk dance. Totally surprised; only learned about it by reading it in the press! I’m humbled.” Here’s the May issue in which Andrew learned of his award (and to which he had contributed an article on hybrid—virtual and in-person—events): <https://mcusercontent.com/>. Congratulations to Andrew!

And congratulations to Jim and Dena Nicoloff, who celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on 15 May. They had met in 1965. Dena wrote on Instagram about the anniversary of their 1973 marriage, “50 years later ... love, laughter, music and dance, family and friends ... Only count the sunny hours.”



A combined museum/guesthouse in the village of Cincșor, Romania, preserves a typical Saxon house.

Photo: Stephen McGrath.



Jim and Dena Nicoloff, around 2014.