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Cover Image: *Bill Russell (foreground) was guest teacher at the OFDA Cajun Café. See p. 24 review.*
Photo: Allen Katz.

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[RETURN TO OFDA WEBSITE.](#)

Farewells

by Dorothy Archer

We say farewell to three folk dancers in this issue. Two we haven't seen for some time but David Yee was a regular Thursday night dancer and the suddenness of his death was shocking to all. Chris Linge, a long-time friend of David's, has written a tribute covering his many contributions to the folk dance community and a little bit about David himself. I knew he was very bright and very knowledgeable from personal experience and because I know he was the first chairman of Mensa in Canada. I didn't know he spoke Latin – not that I would have chatted with him in that language. I wonder who would? Thank you, Chris, for an essay which expresses our feelings.

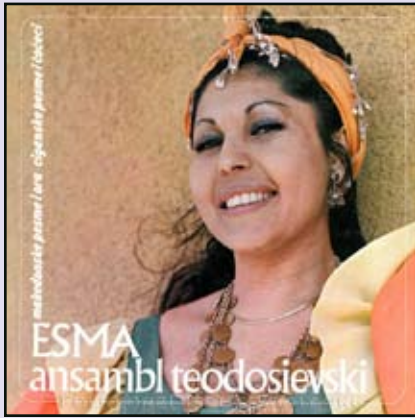
Another loss to the folk community was the death of Esmá Redzepova. The story of her life was written up in many publications, including *The Globe and Mail*. The link on page 5 is to the *Guardian* which did a nice article about her.

International Dance Day is coming up April 29th. A reprint of an article David wrote about the history of the day is included here. This year, the Canadian Dance Assembly is promoting National Dance Week April 22 to 29 incorporating International Dance Day. See www.cda-acd.ca/en/programs-services/national-dance-week. Here is a good opportunity to promote folk dancing

Murray and Lavinia Forbes have been on the road again, this time through France to Germany. The object of the trip was a dance workshop but the story is really in getting there and back. Nancy Nies writes about Holland – in Michigan – and includes some of her own family history and a very happy photo.

The Hamilton folk dancers have been partying again, this time to celebrate their 33rd anniversary. Reports have drifted back to Toronto about what a good night it was so it is a pleasure to have a write-up about it. The OFDA café wasn't quite what we are used to and Karen Bennett has given some of the reasons. On a folk dance trip to New Orleans several years ago, Tamar Berman and I learnt the two-step and had a great time dancing, so, like Karen, that is what I expected. Karen has rounded out her report by including links to many sources which I am sure you will enjoy. Also, she has added a biography of Bill Russell covering his varied activities.

Happy reading and happy dancing.



Esma Redžepova, a Macedonian music legend and advocate for Romani music and culture, died in December 2016. In 2010 National Public Radio ranked her amongst the 50 greatest voices in the world. The Macedonian government twice nominated her for the Nobel Peace Prize for her humanitarian work. Read more about the "Queen of Romani Songs" at www.theguardian.com/world/2016/dec/14/esma-redzepova-obituary

Mixers You Never Heard Of Saturday May 6, 2-5 p.m.

This unique workshop, led by Karen Bennett, will introduce mixers from many countries (i.e. Taiwan, Lithuania, Czech Republic, Sweden, Norway, Netherlands, Latvia...and more). Should be a fun afternoon!

Location: Ralph Thornton Centre.
 Fee: OFDA members \$10
 non-members \$12, students \$8

[Link to Anna Todorovich' website.](#)

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OTEA SCHOLARSHIP

Each Year, OFDA offers the OTEA Scholarship to support a member who wishes to attend a course or workshop or other enrichment activity related to folk dancing.

Applications can be submitted before May 31, 2017.

Details on the OFDA website:
[2017 OTEA Scholarship Ad](#) and
[OTEA Scholarship Rules.](#)

David Yee: Folk Dancer Extraordinaire

by Christine Linge Macdonald



It was with great sadness that our community learned of David's passing in early January. It was a shock to all his friends who had seen him the week before at the New Year's celebration in King City. I had spent Sunday, January 8th, with David seeing the Chihuly exhibition at the Royal Ontario Museum, followed by a big meal at Swiss Chalet. Because he had been a bit dizzy that day, I quickly made a doctor's appointment for him. He wanted company, so I offered to drive him. Unfortunately, when I went to pick him up a couple of days later, it was too late.

David was born in Montreal on March 23, 1942. Many dancers will have known him as Henry, before he chose to be addressed by his middle name, David. One of the last things David shared with me (a rare event because David was famous for his personal privacy) was that he was planning a big party for an upcoming "important birthday". Most dancers are surprised to discover that David would have turned 75 in 2017. I suppose all those years of dancing had kept him young. It is fitting that we will be having a Celebration of Life on March 25th, two days after his birthday, at the Ralph Thornton Centre, a venue that he loved and where he taught folk dancing for some time.

David made a huge impression on all that he met. He had a marvellous, booming bass voice, and he loved to play with words. Everyone would soon be laughing, and David's laughter was infectious. His sense of humour and formidable intellect drew people to him. His dining table at Ontario Folk Dance Camp was always the centre of lively minds and much laughter, and, of course, much food.

After folk dancing, folk music and folklore, David's next passion was food. Many of my fondest memories involve helping David discover the finest meals all over Toronto for the best possible price. For years we ate regularly at Plumers, which was the practice restaurant for the George Brown College Culinary Arts program. A gourmet five-course meal, served on a linen-covered table by waiters-in-training, all for only a few dollars - David was in dining heaven!

From the first day I met David, food featured large, and sometimes in weird and wonderful ways. David and Willie Kisin greeted me the first night I danced, one Monday when I accidentally came across the group at the University Settlement House. From that point on we were close buddies. Some of my fondest memories involve going out to eat Chinese food after dancing at the Settlement. On one of those occasions, I asked

David and Willie to explain Mairi's Wedding to me. I had watched it being danced at the Settlement, and ached to join in. David grabbed a few grains of rice to represent the male dancers, Willie lay out a few pennies as the female dancers, and then the two of them animated the rice and pennies in the intricate patterns of Mairi's Wedding. I was entranced... and yes, I could do the dance at the Settlement the next week!

Besides how to make grains and coins dance, I also learned the nuances of truly sophisticated Chinese dining from those two. For example, did you know that steamed pickerel has cheeks? And that they are delicious?

I treasure the memories of all those dining dates with David. He was a brilliant conversationalist with a vast knowledge on so many topics, and a deep appreciation of the humour and joy that can so often be found in even the driest of subjects. To this day, my husband, John, and I quote one of David's Latin riddles whenever we see a line of trucks on the highway. He could speak Latin fluently, using a charming Italian accent! His love of folk dancing and music overflowed his soul, resulting in parties of endless music and dance at his amazing house on Madison Avenue that he opened up for all to enjoy. He travelled far and wide to learn dances, and you could always count on him for accuracy and style in the execution of the dances that he brought to our community.

What a treasure David was to so many people! David Yee: pillar of the folk dance community who created a centre for folk arts in his own home. Personally, I have lost a dear friend, someone who burned with a unique flame, bright and joyous and colourful, who has left memories that will endure in my heart, and in the hearts of many others. You are alive in our thoughts forever, dear David.



Waterloo Camp 2008. (Chris is second from the left and David is fourth.)

More Memories of David...

"I am so sad to hear of this. He was of great service to the folkdance community and will be sorely missed." ... Nancy Leslie, Toronto, ON

"Very sad to hear of David Yee's passing away. He was always a good friend. I lived in his house on Bedford for a few months in 1988. We used to have folk dancing in his house - Fred Slater would know the exact details. Ed, who was a chiropractic student then, helped him out as a super. Ann, another folk dancer did repairs on the house. I knew David as a very kind person. I will miss him." ... Vishwas B. Dhekney, Pickering, ON

"We will always cherish our fond memories of time spent with David: dancing, eating in Chinatown, going through his immense collection of Balkan music phonograph records, visiting Center [sic] Island, going for dumplings at Din Tai Fung in Markham, going to a hidden Serbian club on Queen St., visiting the Caravan music store. He was a unique spirit in the IFD world, and he will be missed." ... John & Galia Kuo, Director of Ensemble Balkanske Igre, Chicago, IL



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International Dance Day

Compiled by David Yee

This article originally appeared in the the June 2009 Folk Dancer Magazine.

International Dance Day (World Dance Day) has been celebrated since 1982 through promotion by the International Dance Council (CID), an umbrella organization within UNESCO for all kinds of dance. April 29 was chosen to commemorate the birthday of Jean-Georges Noverre (1727-1810), “The Grandfather of the Ballet.”

Among the goals of Dance Day are to increase awareness of the importance of dance among the general public, as well as to persuade governments all over the world to provide a proper place for dance in all systems of education, from primary to higher.

While dance has been an integral part of human culture throughout its history, it is underprioritized by official establishments in the world. In particular, Prof. Alkis Raftis, President of the International Dance Council, in his 2003 Dance Day Message said: “In more than half of the 200 countries in the world, dance does not appear in legal texts (for better or for worse!). There are no funds allocated in the state budget to support this art form. There is no such thing as dance education, private or public.”

- The 2005 focus of Dance Day was on primary education.
- The 2006 message of the President of CID addressed the reluctance of dancers to join collective organisations, expressing an opinion that this is a major reason for the lack of due recognition (legislation, financing, visibility) of dance in society, and suggested: “Dancers of the world, unite!”
- The 2007 Dance Day was dedicated to children.
- In 2008, Alkis Raftis circulated an e-mail which said, in part: “Governments, sponsors, and the media are our main concern this year.”

This year, April 29 fell on a Wednesday. Toronto folkdancers were invited to dress in folk attire and attend Sandy Starkman’s class and about forty dancers, including some novices, came out to mark the occasion .

Other groups will get their chance to host the celebrations. Next year, April 29 falls on a Thursday; in 2011, it’s on a Friday.

A group in Pittsburgh, PA wants to create a “National Dance Week” around the same time. This year from April 24 to May 3.

And June 27 is Multiculturalism Day here.

[Link to Shan Shoes website.](#)

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5. Vlasi Style Opanak (OTH MOD 18)
6. Croatian - Pokuple (black) (CRO MOD 3)
7. Croatian - Pokuple (long belt) (CRO MOD 3PLUS)
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Dutch Treat in Holland, Michigan

by Nancy Nies

A collection of blue-and-white Delft pottery on display in the kitchen, a dusty old pair of *klompen* (wooden shoes) in the garage, and a doll in Dutch costume (with “Nancy” branded on one wooden shoe and “Nies” on the other)—all are possessions dating back to my childhood or farther, and all attest to the heritage of my Nies ancestors. Paul and I have visited the towns they came from, near Groningen in the Netherlands, where I was excited to find a tiny spot on the map called *Niesoord* (Nies place). We have also visited Holland, Michigan, to which my great-grandparents immigrated with their parents in the mid-nineteenth century, and where Paul and I once saw costumed high-school students perform a *klompdans* in front of a genuine Dutch windmill.

When we saw the *klompen* dancers, in the early 1990s, we were told that the students received physical education credit for learning Dutch folk dances. I have since learned that nearly 1,500 *klompen* dancers (high-school students and alumni) play a major role in Holland’s Tulip Time Festival, held each May. (The 2017 dates are May 6-14. See www.tuliptime.com/.) Also performing, since 2009, are “*kinder klompen*” dancers (aged 8-10). In addition to many *klompdans* performances, the ten-day celebration of Dutch culture offers parades, fireworks, a Dutch market, shows and concerts, a craft fair, and street scrubbing—not to mention 4.5 million tulips!

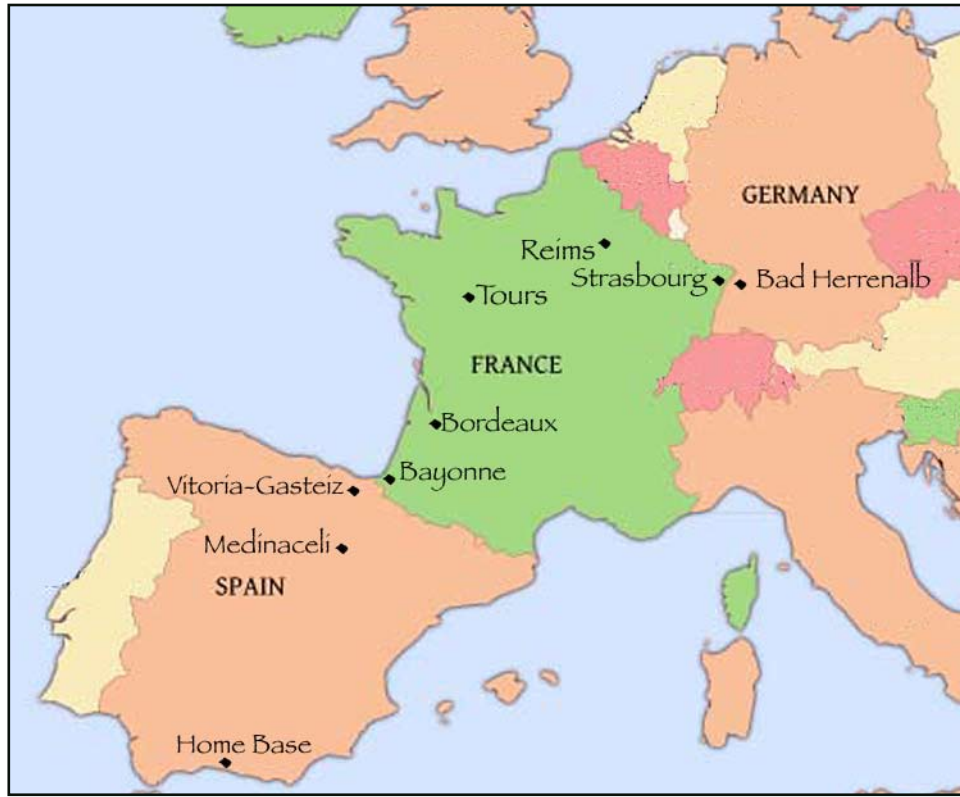
For a brief sample of Tulip Time *klompen* dancing, see: www.youtube.com/watch?v=x_JFE6VRCqE. The Tulip Time website (www.tuliptime.com/dutch-dance-costumes/) offers photos and descriptions of the 36 different costumes—representing eight Dutch provinces—worn by festival dancers. (Interesting facts: The authentic costumes are handmade and must meet rigorous standards, and the dancers wear several pair of thick socks inside their wooden shoes!) Now that I know more about Holland’s *klompen* dancers, I think it’s time for another visit to Michigan—this time in May, to get in touch with my Dutch roots at the Tulip Time Festival.



A klompdans at Tulip Time in Holland, Michigan.

New Year, Greek Style, in The Black Forest

by Murray Forbes



Masters of contrary thinking we, of course, headed north for the New Year while everyone sane was heading south. It all started sweltering on a beach in Greece at a Greek dance workshop on the Pelion Peninsula last summer. So when Beate, who was also at the workshop, sent us an e-mail inviting us to see New Year in from Bad Herrenalb in Germany with the same great teacher, Kyriakos Moisidis, we of course looked at each other and said “nuts” and so it simmered. We had never actually been to the German Black Forest and, then, beautiful France is sort of in-between Spain and Germany and so the crazy idea of heading in the wrong direction started to take shape.

At about this time, the first hints of imperfection in the plan came to light when our German friend from yoga pointed out that it was illegal to drive in Germany in the winter without snow tires. Now, we live in a valley in the south of Spain and although snow can be seen perched on top of the formidable mountains above us it never, thank goodness, gets into our valley so snow tires would definitely be a rather silly expenditure. So nervously watching the weather forecasts we decided to run the risk of life imprisonment and time our brief sortie into Germany to avoid snowfall – which we in fact achieved but only just.

So in pleasant sunny weather in the south of Spain we started our road marathon rapidly progressing to drizzle and grey and finally gave

up in Vitoria-Gasteiz, the Basque capital in the north of Spain, for a terrible night in a hotel that was barely heated. In fact, not to be overly repetitive, what ought to have been a great trip was rather marred by being cold the whole time and it got progressively colder the further north we went – surprising though it isn't. We are definitely out of practice since we left Canada eight years ago. To our Canadian friends, though, I have to point out that unsupportable cold is anywhere from -3 to 6°C, so we are unrepentant wimps, but then we also don't have those great Eskimo parkas you envelop yourselves in.

Lovely though Vitoria is, even when overwhelmed by Christmas, we were happy to move on bright and early next morning. Our next stop, complicated by the fact that we are old enough to take the time to avoid the exorbitant French road tolls, was Bayonne in France. We joined the whole of Southwestern France in the last-shopping-day-before-Christmas traffic jam inching our way into this magnificent town. I had rented an apartment right in the old center by the cathedral with a lovely cobbled plaza in front encircled by tiny cobbled streets. The property managers had even arranged parking (something nigh impossible to find in most French downtowns) albeit a wet hike away. The second hint of disaster then occurred as all access to anywhere near our aparthotel was barred off for Christmas festivities and the nice little plaza was swarming with parents and tots enjoying the cacophony of amplified Christmas noises and fun fair. Ignoring a road block and backing into the noisy plaza I brazenly held my own against animated abuse in French while Lavinia rushed into the office to find out what we should do and sort out the location for the parking. Just before being arrested we managed a twenty-point turn and escaped into the bedlam with no clear idea of how to get to the parking. The GPS naturally couldn't find it so in the end we programmed in somewhere near and half an hour later, having asked a million questions of pedestrians enjoying the steady rainfall, we discovered the improbable entry to the parking lot round and under the road we came in on.

In fact, notwithstanding the weather, Bayonne is a pretty town and where we were located was very convenient and surprisingly sound-proofed. While exploring in a vacant sort of way, in a moment of indecision some local chap came up to us and asked if he could help us find our way. If one is going nowhere one can never be lost but I noticed that he had a very nice looking baguette under his arm – no striped tee-shirt or string of onions though. It was an inspired inquiry and we had the best baguette and pastries that I think I have ever had, from a bakery close to the cathedral. Trying to find it next morning in the pouring rain was another issue but by exploring every side street off the cathedral I eventually did.

After two nights in Bayonne it was time to move on and, using the GPS,



Château Chinon from the top of the fortifications where Joan of Arc met Charles VII which ultimately led to the end of the Hundred Years War in France's favour.

we crawled through drizzle all day long following traffic-clogged side roads towards La Vandée where Canadian friends of ours have retired in one (and perhaps the tiniest) of the 34 Châteauneuf in France. Against all probabilities the sun managed to seep through (that pallid northern European sun that generates no heat) and we spent a great Christmas



Murray outside of Chateau Azay le Rideau.



Reims cathedral where most of France's kings and queens were crowned.

with our friends visiting the coast for a brisk exposure to the icy blasts off the Atlantic Ocean at Saint-Gilles- Croix-de-Vie and Noirmoutier. The latter is a peninsula in low tide but an island otherwise and the road out of it has poles that one can climb if one misgauges. Luckily we didn't, as my days as a stork are probably over.

Christmas Day was our time to move on. I had booked an apartment in Tours so that we could visit the châteaux at Chinon and Azay Le Rideau. It was a comfortably renovated apartment in a 16th century building beside the Loire River the other side from the downtown – superb. The only problem, of course, was that everything was shut including nearly all the restaurants, bakers and food shops. En route we pulled into beautiful Saumur forlornly hoping to find lunch. Surprisingly we eventually did find a restaurant on the tiny road along the edge of the Loire River out in nowhere, run by a Moroccan lady. The weather was cold and wet but at magnificent Chinon, where Joan of Arc first encountered Charles VII, a glimmer of anemic sun unfroze our limbs sufficiently to get us up to the impressive fortifications.

We spent two nights in Tours and then headed for Germany with a couple of nights in Reims midway. The apartment I had rented there was a bit outside of the city center and not easy to find but had street parking. The problem with apartments is that an arrangement for getting the key requires greater precision planning than we are used to but the GPS seemed to think we had lots of time and the sun was out as the conjunction of lunchtime and Chartres came together.

We shared the magnificent cathedral in which many kings and queens of France were crowned, including Charles VII with Joan of Arc at his side,

with a Chinese tour group all taking selfies of themselves and anything else in the way, including Catholics praying. Although a worthy diversion, it was the start of yet another disaster. When we finally located where we had parked the car it seems that by diverting to Chartres the GPS felt it had to guide us into the traffic jam around Paris, including a stretch of the near stationary *périphérique*, ever-delaying our arrival. Finally we got to join the rush hour in downtown Reims in appalling weather and in the dark. We did eventually find somewhere to park, a chilly distance away from our accommodation, and our patient proprietor led us through a series of locks to a little courtyard and into a three-storey sort of town house. We spent a couple of very quiet nights there close to the downtown but in a slightly worrying neighbourhood. It is hard to know precisely what one is going to get when booking online.

Downtown Reims is superb and has another magnificent cathedral. I am sort of allergic to cathedrals but from fifty paces they are reasonably safe. As a security measure we found a cheese merchant open in the almost deserted covered market and bought amongst others a Livarot to take back with us. Largely thanks to that, no one attempted to break into our car or even hitchhike. I can seriously recommend it. Eating it is a different matter but we will try it out on our French friends here.

Finally, in grubby weather but not quite snow, the GPS took us way up into Belgium and Luxembourg before a delightful drive through the Black Forest to the postcard perfect well-scrubbed spa town of Bad Herrenalb. To our surprise there were 75 participants in our workshop split into beginners and others. Kyriakos Moisisidis is a very good dancer and teacher and we had live music for much of the workshop including the New Year's Eve party with Katerina's amazing singing. She also taught some of the songs but for the musical appreciation and general benefit of the others we only participated in the dancing. In addition to our band of three on the first night, another group of musicians attending another event decided to come and join our musicians. Then on two of the evenings, we had performance groups come to dance in their splendid costumes. The first



Bad Herrenalb from the hotel where the dancing was.



The large performance group and musicians on the first night. Beate who organized the workshop with her back to the camera. Bottom left is Katarina, the amazing singer and Kyriakos, the teacher.

group was large with about thirty-odd dancers and the second one was a smaller Pontic group. It is amazing how easy these guys make it seem. It was really most impressive.

Most of the participants were from various parts of Germany but there were also other visitors some of whom we had met before. - two dancers from Israel we know and get on very well with, a very nice couple from Finland and a Dutch couple, one of whom is Egyptian by birth, who are about our vintage. Also, our friend, Lenka, from Prague was there. One very good dancer came from the south of Russia and looked quite Asian. It was a very enjoyable and friendly group.

To add to the general beauty of the place, the sun managed to come out on day two but we had to bring forward our departure to Strasbourg by



Leading is the Israeli friend Giorjo followed by a genuine Greek who taught the beginners and at the end is the Chinese looking Russian.



Petite France in Strasbourg- beautiful but very cold. (Lavinia in foreground.)

a day as snow was predicted. We actually did venture out for a frozen lurch to the spa at the other end of the village but even though Lavinia likes these things she reckoned she would be a block of ice by the time we got back.

The New Year's Eve party was quite special with the final moments lit by a circle of candles followed by a spectacular firework display in the village below our hotel. Although we caved in by about one, long before the champagne had been finished, the dancing allegedly went on until four.

Our drive to Strasbourg started out pretty well across country through a series of pretty villages bordered by frozen trees. However, when we got to the highway it started to snow although luckily not settling and I was able to slink into France without even detection of my deficient tires.

Our apartment in Strasbourg was in a lovely old house next to the Orangerie Park and the European Council buildings. This is one beautiful city and once we worked out the bus system we risked hypothermia for the sake of architecture. As we arrived on New Year's Day there was not much open until one got right into the tourist center and I made the mistake of driving in which was a disaster. By some freak we did eventually manage to find a parking spot and had a ridiculously enormous and excessively mediocre meal in the old Custom House but in great ambiance. Next day in a snowstorm we located the bus in and had a most unenjoyable waddle around the historic downtown. It was

walkable to downtown but Lavinia had managed to get Greek Dance knee, a rare debilitating disease brought on by excessive exposure to Greek culture. Our inspection of the historic center was therefore a painful, wet and slow waddle. At some enlightened point we decided to head up to a covered mall in the north of town to thaw out when we were accosted by Kyrakos, Katerina, Beate and one of the other musicians. As they were taking a boat trip round the river we joined them for a chaotic meal and sightseeing trip in which we learned more than we necessarily needed to about the history of Strasbourg. Arriving a day early we had three nights in Strasbourg and although the second day was sunny it was really dreadfully cold so that even the beauty of Petite France was a qualified success.

If the drive into Strasbourg was challenging, the long drive cross country over some very icy roads in thick fog and a bit of wet snow was horrendous. It got easier the nearer we got to Bourges but we also managed a fair swathe of treacherous *la France profonde*. Bourges is a totally delightful little town to which we will definitely return in better weather. I had booked us into a hotel a bit out of the center where we could park on the road but it was a bitterly cold walk into the old town.

A much easier and lesser drive got us into Bordeaux where we spent a couple of nights in an apartment hotel near the river and an easy tram ride – once we worked out where it stopped, which was not well advertised – into the center. It is a big city with all the big city challenges but very attractive. In addition to the plethora of ancient architecture there are also some very interesting and creative modern buildings. The mayor, having been imprisoned for misappropriation of public funds, got promptly re-elected as soon as he got out and is now running for president. That is France.



One of the modern buildings in Bordeaux.

On one occasion we joined a queue around the block for a truly French experience. L' Entrecôte serves – you guessed – steak and fries. That is all it serves. The delicious steak comes in a marrow and butter sauce cut into thin slices completely filling a large serving platter and the fries, to die for, are piled in an enormous mound on your plate. The doors open at 12 noon on the dot, no reservations accepted, and we froze halfway down the block for quarter of an hour before this event. Then efficiently everyone was herded into one of the four floors depending on the size of the party. The couples' room had tables in a line barely separated from each other into which we filed with dispatch. Three-quarters of an hour later, having eaten more than is humanly possible and declined the extra pile of fries to mop up the sauce, we emerged to see the queue still halfway to the National Theatre. What amazing marketing. One product and, according to our neighbours a few inches to our left who managed to put down dessert on top of their meal, every day it is like this.

This time I set the GPS for Medinaceli which is a very long drive but somewhere in northern Spain that we have always driven by and not visited. As I avoid toll roads, we had a tortuous ride through magnificent country around the edges of the Pyrenees through the little Basque villages, so luckily it was sunny and there was no snow. This museum village with its dilapidated old castle from the *Reconquista*, precious *Plaza Mayor* and solid *iglesia* is quite delightful. It was 8°C when we arrived so one could almost breathe. Then the thing that we had unconsciously missed the most – everyone smiles and laughs and is friendly. We got the last room in the inn so luck was back on our side. It is very popular with the Madrid crowd and also those from Zaragoza.

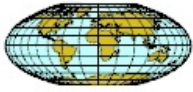
Two things struck us on this trip that I feel are worthy of mention. First, the cost of everything incrementally increases as one works one's way north. Fuel, for instance, was particularly higher in France and Germany than

in Spain. Second, French food is still mouth-wateringly described and beautifully presented but quantity seems to have taken over from quality. However, the pastries, bread, croissants and cheeses are still as good as ever and we returned home thoroughly broadened by the experience.



The hotel in Medinaceli in northern Spain on the way back.

[Link to Jim Gold's website.](#)



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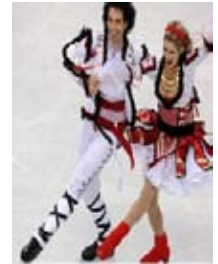
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Macedonian Celebration in Hamilton, 27 January 2017: Hamilton International Folk Dance Club's 33rd Anniversary

by Helena Adamczyk and Joan Tressel

Photo: Jack Evans.



Vlasto and Karolina Petkovski.

It was a magical evening at the Hamilton Folk Dance Club with over sixty participants dancing like there was no tomorrow. Vlasto Petkovski, the workshop instructor, taught a number of Macedonian traditional dances that appealed to dancers of all levels of experience. This included a simple version of Nevestinsko, a wedding dance, the lively Sadila Jana, Tapan Chuka, and Sefkievo done to gorgeous music by Smolski, the band that played at Karolina and Vlasto's wedding in Macedonia. We also enjoyed dances that Vlasto has taught in Hamilton since January 2015, including the three part Kopacija. We gasped for

Vlasto's knees when he did some performance style deep knee bends to the third dramatic part of Kopacija. But then we were all carried away by the music and spirit of the dances.

Guests from the Macedonian community, dancers from Vlasto's performing group along with international folk dancers from London, Toronto and beyond blended in seamlessly with the enthusiastic Hamilton folk. We whooped and hollered dancing Pusteno, Pajdusko, Sedi Donka, Jove Male Mome, Čočeks, Lesnotos and other Balkan favourites. Stefania Miller set a torrid pace programming the three hour evening, giving dancers just a ten-minute break before putting on music for those who prefer to dance than eat the delicious potluck offerings in the cozy parlour, upstairs from the dance floor.

The ten-minute break was just enough time to wheel out the sumptuous cake celebrating the Hamilton Club's 33rd anniversary. Joan Tressel presented Stefania Miller with a bouquet of roses in appreciation for her leadership in keeping the club buoyant for so many years. Jack Evans, Stef's partner, was also acknowledged for his many contributions. We then sang Happy Birthday to Stefania and wished her another 33



Joan Tressel presenting flowers to Stefania Miller. Helena Adamczyk (who baked the cake) is behind Joan.

Photo: Rick Adamczyk.



Photo: Ashley Petkovski.

The happy gang at the end of the evening.

years of leading and teaching in the Hamilton Club. We all expect to be still dancing in 2050.

The Hamilton folk wish to express our appreciation to Vlasto and Karolina for once again sharing their Macedonian heritage with us as well as to all the participants for making our 33rd anniversary a memorable event.



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Bill Russell's Cajun Dance Café, February 4, 2017

by Karen Bennett

See other photos of this event on the OFDA website: <http://ofda.ca/wp/photos/>.



From a photo by Allen Katz.

Bill Russell.

I came to the café not having twigged to the teacher's name (I'd last met him in his capacity as a folksinger decades ago) and carrying a set of expectations arising from (a) what turned out to be inaccurate advance publicity; (b) my knowledge of Cajun history and exposure to the culture via past workshops; and (c) current study: my upcoming mixer workshop contains a Cajun Two-step. Despite the current era of "alternative facts," I'm not comfortable with writing an "alternative review" that proclaims the event a blissful success. I've written "controversial" reviews before, though not with a light heart, and taken my share of flak for it. So I'm sorry to have to say that my expectations for the Cajun café went unmet and the event proved enervating when it should have been energizing.

First, it was unfortunate that two cafés in a row featured material of similar origin and difficulty level. On November 26, Dale Hyde had taught two simple French-Canadian dances, one a mixer and one not (The Thief and Garde la Tienne), as part of an international program. So a lot of Bill's material, being traditional Cajun (a word derived from "Acadian"), was a mite familiar to anyone who came to both events.

Unaccompanied, Bill sang these songs for six dances: "Le joli rosier," "Allons au bois," "Charlie" (a play-party mixer), "Aveine" (=Avoine, or oats), "Shoo-fly" and "Miro-fli-flo-fla." Then, to canned music, he taught what he called the Two-step but was actually the https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cajun_Jig One-step, although both can be done to the same 2/4 or 4/4 music. (Here's the One-step, a.k.a. the Cajun Jig: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sboid1Yt24U.) The Two-step, in ballroom terms known as the Foxtrot (here's a lesson on Cajun style: www.youtube.com/watch?v=EhU5b8rAUNc), is a little harder and a lot more interesting, alone or when combined with the Jitterbug (a wonderful Jitterbug example: www.youtube.com/watch?v=FepqRqZ8mb0; and check out the funky in-place footwork here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=7XQV_U4XOnk). It was the Two-step I'd been looking forward to, as announced not only on the advance publicity but on the spot by Bill. I felt quite let down, and not only because the Two-step as a dance style is *in the family*, although I believe I'm the last one who knows it. (My father called it the Manitoulin Stomp; Manitoulin Island is in Northern Ontario.) Combined with lively music (such as here, played by the Savoy Family Band: www.youtube.com/watch?v=wlv8PUyc1HQ), it can be so much fun.

The last dance Bill taught was the Cajun waltz, which he prefaced with the fatal word “boring,” and indeed it proved to be, if done the traditional way. An example is here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qh8TrGqutx4. I note that modern Cajuns rotate much more than we were allowed, so that there’s nothing unique about the style: www.youtube.com/watch?v=0wR8k55vjUU.

In addition, Bill showed, but did not play, a traditional Cajun musical instrument, the triangle or “ti-fer,” made from a piece of farm equipment used in haying. He’d acquired the ti-fer from an uncle of Marc Savoy, T.M. Riley, a one-armed blacksmith in Eunice, Louisiana. Said Bill to me later by e-mail, “I am particularly partial to my instrument because it is made of a low-carbon steel, which is rare these days. It gives a cluster of sound when you hit it.”

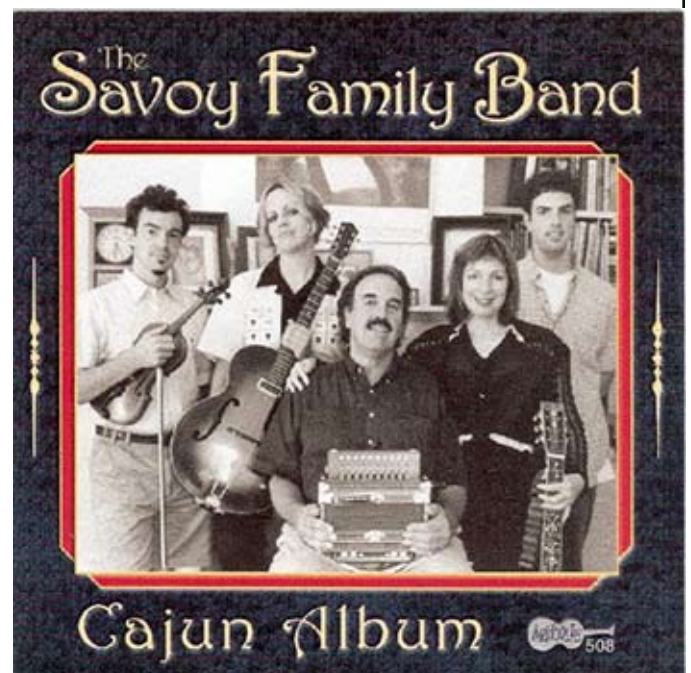
Bill also provided by e-mail a biography: See “About Bill” on p. 26.

Links of interest:

1. <http://theind.com/article-69-a-drink-and-a-song.html> An article about a CD of Cajun drinking songs released in 2006 called *Allons Boire un Coup*. CD co-producer (with Joel Savoy) and contributor Joshua Caffery said in the liner notes that people elsewhere often get drunk and simply have a hangover, but when south Louisiana musicians get drunk, they have a hangover, drink a glass of lemonade and write a song about it.

2. The *Allons Boire* CD is sold by Valcour Records, whose site has a lot of great stuff on it: www.valcourrecords.com/.

3. A bio of Joel’s Savoy’s father, Marc, is here, and it contains an interesting Canadian angle: www.meloche.net/marc.htm. It also holds this quote from Marc, as reproduced from the book *The Maker of Cajun Music* (Presses de l’Université du Québec, 1984 [in French]; University of Texas Press, 1984 [in English]; 2nd ed., University Press of Mississippi, 1999): “I am constantly at war against the forces which are destroying our culture so rapidly. Can’t these people see that they are giving up a beautiful, rich heritage to pursue something which is totally meaningless in comparison? Oftentimes, I’ve been asked why I continue in this futile attempt to



The Savoys have played a vital role in preserving Cajun culture. Left to right: Joel, Sarah, Marc, Ann, Wilson.

preserve my culture, and I think the only answer I can allow is that when my children become parents, I hope that they can pass on to the next generation other things besides disco music, glitter swinger vans, and the like. I hope they will still remember some of the beautiful old Cajun ballads, still remember some architecture other than mobile homes, and our way of life that has endured for so many years unchanged. I hope they remember that they are direct descendants of a strong people who came to a foreign land and developed the most powerful ethnic culture in America that withstood the test of time for 200 years until along came the generation who thought that the artificial turf on the other side of the fence was grass.”

About Bill—In His Own Words

[From an e-mail from Bill to Karen Bennett, February 10, 2017]

I arrived in Canada [from Baton Rouge, Louisiana] to attend McGill University in 1966. After graduating in 1970 with a B.Com, Honours in Economics, I became a folksinger and have been ever since. I lived in Montreal a couple of years, then in Morin Heights, QC, for a few years and moved to Toronto in 1977. In 1997, my spouse was hired to teach translation at Laval University in Quebec City. Upon her retirement, we returned to Toronto in 2014.

Mariposa in the Schools (MITS) took me on in 1977, and I have been working through them ever since. The organization provides a wide variety of traditional arts programs for schools throughout Ontario. In conjunction with the Inner City Angels, MITS also provides Toronto schools with thematic longer-term programs that combine plastic arts with folk arts.

I am hired in schools to either perform in concerts or do classroom workshops. Most of the time, MITS gets a request for a French program from either a parent volunteer or a French teacher. Right now in February, most of the calls are for concerts having to do with the Carnaval de Québec. For instance, this month I will be doing two shows of songs and storytelling with Marylyn Peringer, along with other musicians; calling dances for a Bal de Carnaval with Anne Lederman and Ian Bell; and performing in concert solo. Most of my work is in French, often using my Louisiana repertoire. Rarely, however, I am hired to give a program of traditional songs and games in English.

While living in Quebec City, I did short tours of Ontario schools for MITS. Now that I have returned to Toronto, my availability is less limited. I see students from kindergarten through grade 12 and adapt my program to the ages and linguistic abilities of each group: French Immersion, Core French, ages involved, and so on. In the more intimate classroom

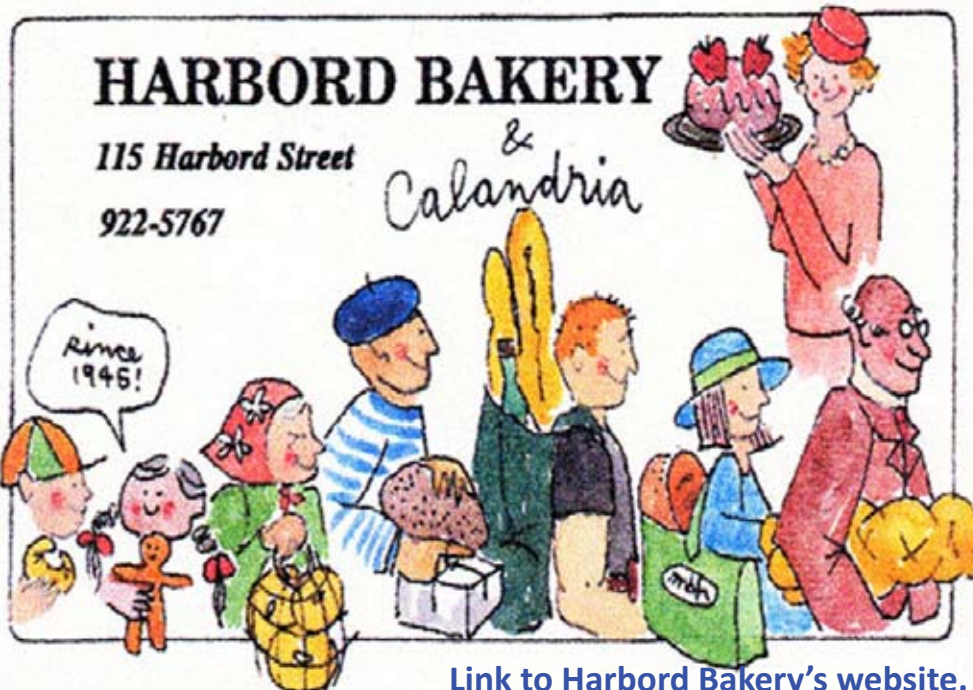
environment, I focus on traditional games and word play. My concerts are highly interactive, where the students are encouraged to participate. My high school programs focus on Louisiana and the Cajun-Acadian connection and again are highly participatory.

Being mostly retired now, I do less work outside of Ontario. However, I was recently asked to give a workshop for French Immersion teachers in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. There is talk of having me back next school year for another session for Core French teachers.



Catherine Blanchet.

Most of my repertoire I learned from Catherine Blanchet (1921–2007). [Her obit, which has many more details of her folklore activities: www.vincentfuneralhome.net/fh/print.cfm?type=obituary&o_id=84819&fh_id=11197.] As an itinerant music teacher in the late 1940s and early 1950s in Vermilion Parish School Board (south of Lafayette), she asked her students to bring songs from home. At the time, almost all her students spoke French at home, so the songs they brought were almost all traditional French songs. Catherine would make choral arrangements and the children would perform them at school concerts. She told me that the parents and grandparents would often have tears in their eyes when they heard them. This was at a time when children were punished for speaking French on the school grounds, but here was a teacher who saw value in their home traditions. Later, Catherine was given a wax disc recorder by one of the Lomaxes, and she recorded many of her neighbours around Abbeville and Kaplan. Of course, her recording medium changed with technology. She generously shared her collection with me.



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



The Grapevine

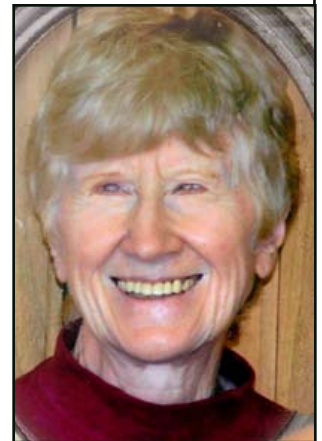
Sandi Heggie died in January. When in Toronto she danced with David Yee on a Thursday morning and after she moved to Gravenhurst, she did Scottish dancing with the local group. In 2005 she arranged for David to lead a folk dancing workshop for the Scottish dancers in Gravenhurst. In 2006, she and Jean Mulholland visited Bathurst Inlet and introduced folk dancing to the guests. With the advice of David Yee they chose Robin Ddiog, Milanovo Kolo, Varba, and a hora danced to Curenta.

Pat Rines, sister of Nancy Leslie, died in February. She was an active member of the University Settlement folk dance group and was also in the performance group. She attended a number of folk dance camps and also was on our Mexican excursion. Some may remember her under her name of Pat Culbertson.

Marie Hori writes, "On August 14 I will move to Victoria, BC where I have family. I have enjoyed many years of good music, dancing, friendships and food. Thank you to wonderful teachers past and present, excellent programming by OFDA, dedicated volunteers, and the many kind people who gave me rides to and from classes, events, camps and subway stations, often going out of their way. I have fond memories of many summer vacations at the Maine Folk Dance Camp then Mainewoods Dance Camp. Good health and happiness to everyone."

Judith Cohen received a life membership from the Toronto Musicians Association in recognition of her 35 years of membership in good standing. She gave a lecture-recital in February for Trent University on Jewish, Muslim and Christian Musicians in Medieval Spain, and a concert of medieval music with Tamar, her daughter, and three other musicians at the Alliance Française, in January. She is invited to Madrid for the second half of April to speak and sing at a Sephardic Studies symposium organized by the French Maison d'Izieu.

In the October 2016 issue of *Folk Dancer Online*, there was a photo of a wheat stalks in the form of a treble clef presented by Gloria and John Grindlay at Camp that year. Gloria has written the following explanation. "The specially created Corn Dolly, woven from wheat stalks, is a gift to the folk dance community to acknowledge their assistance and support for international folk dancing in the Waterloo Region – both for the annual Folk Dance Camp at the University of Waterloo and the KW International Folk Dance Group from 1983 to 1988. This Group could not have operated without the unstinting teaching help from Sandy Starkman, Judy Silver and guest teachers Jane Aronovitch Al Gladstone, Keith Atteck, Teme Kernerman, Dale Hyde and Olga Sandolowich. Bouquets to all!



Sandi Heggie.



Corn Dolly – symbol of peace and prosperity.

The University of Waterloo was born in a cornfield 60 years ago this year and I thought it particularly appropriate to mark the occasion and our thanks with a Daniel Kramer Corn Dolly woven in the shape of a treble clef. Daniel provided the following information. Corn Dolly making (wheat weaving) is an ancient craft going back thousands of years, when it was thought that a spirit lived in the cornfield. To preserve this spirit at harvest time and ensure the success of next year’s harvest, a corn dolly was made for the spirit to rest in. Today the corn dolly is a decorative symbol of peace and prosperity in the home throughout the year.”

We would like to thank all of the(many) people who participated in the t-shirt slogan contest. At the end of January members of the OFDA Executive (those who had not participated in the contest) voted on their favourites and the slogan that came out on top was “Dancers Without Borders”. The contest winner, Bev Sidney, will be happily receiving her free t-shirt!

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