

CDR NEWS

IS003

FEBRUARY 2016 EDITION



Thanksgiving Festival, November 27, 2015. Photo by Kate Baron.

Celebrating 40 Years of Community Dance

Welcome to the 40th year of Community Dancing with Country Dancers of Rochester! We intend to make this a yearlong celebration with special events, new benefits for members, and even more great dancing along the way! Stay tuned for more information on all the great activities we have planned.

A Glance Back at History...

This article about the creation of a new dance organization appeared in a 1976 edition of Rochester's Golden Link Folk Singing Society Newsletter:

"Golden Linkers Kelly Beller, Tod Whittemore, Joyce Desmarais & Ceidlen Skidmore have formed the Country Dancers of Rochester. They will meet every Wednesday evening starting June 23rd <1976> at St Thomas Episcopal Church, corner of Winton & Highland. The first meeting will feature Tod calling with the Blackthorn Ceidlidh Band. June 30 will feature Bob Henrie (squares) and Tod Whittemore (contras) and music by the Henry David Thoreau Memorial String Band. July 7 – Ed Butenhof, caller and music by Jubertown Stringband (formerly Swamproot). No experience is necessary and dress is casual. Admission is \$1.50."

Save the Date!

Mark your calendars! Here are some upcoming events you won't want to miss:

- Jane Austen Ball
April 23-24, 2016
- Gotham Gals
With calling by Melanie Axel-Lute
Contra: Thursday, April 28, 2016
English: Sunday, May 1, 2016

Please Note:

- Feb 25 through March 17 - Contra will return to a 8 to 11pm schedule.
- March 24 Contra will be held at an alternate venue - stay tuned for details!

Featured Performers: Gotham Gals and Melanie Axel-Lute

Our showcase band and caller combination this quarter is Gotham Gals, a talented four-piece band from New York City, with Melanie Axel-Lute calling. Gotham Gals have been wowing Contra and English dancers since 2010. The band consists of Norma Castle on flute & percussion, Julia Hartman on fiddle and baritone fiddle, and Robin Russell on piano. Their high energy rhythmic contras - comprised of French Canadian, New England, Celtic, Southern, and Jazz styles - propel and dazzle contra dancers. Their English dance music ranges from lushly romantic, to highly driving, to humorously lighthearted, with all the emotions in between. Dancers of all genres appreciate their rhythms and musical variety. The Gals play regularly in the New York Metro area, and tour beyond.



Gotham Gals

Melanie Axel-Lute is a wonderful English and Contra caller and the choreographer of scores of well-known dances. We are lucky to have her together with Gotham Gals on the Contra and English stages this Spring!

Don't miss these great performers at the Contra Dance on Thursday, April 28 and English Country on Sunday, May 1.

Miss Manners Says...

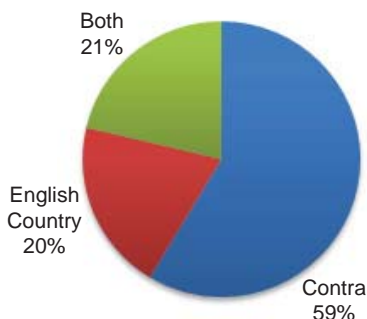
Everyone has the right to say "No" to a dance, for any reason. In most cases, the reason isn't personal. So if you ask and a potential partner says no, smile graciously and bow out. But if you're the person saying no, be aware of how your response may be interpreted if you immediately say yes to someone else! It is commonly considered good manners at a community dance to sit out the song if you've refused a partner.

Become a Member!

You can still become a member of CDR, even though the annual membership drive is over! Fill out a form at the weekly dance or online at www.cd-rochester.org (Membership registration information is on the "About Us" page). Membership benefits include a discount at the weekly dance, eligibility for great members benefits (such as the annual scholarship), and this newsletter delivered to your door! And membership helps support the CDR Community: while most of the revenue from attending the dances goes directly toward the costs of our events (Performers, rent, supplies, etc), the income from club membership helps pay for the annual expenses of the club - such as insurance, website hosting, advertising, etc. So support CDR and become a member today!

You Answered, We Listened!

Thank you to everyone who participated in the 2015-2016 CDR Survey! We received 85 responses - a great turnout! It's provided a lot of data that we are now using to plan our events, marketing, and policies for the rest of the year. Here are a couple of interesting stats we gathered.



- Our respondents were 59% Contra Dancers, 20% English Country Dancers, and 21% Dancers who do both Contra and English Country.
- 65% of our participants who attend dances at least twice a month travel less than 20 miles to attend - 35% of our dancers travel more!
- Wow! 43% of our dancers have been community dancing for 20 years or more.
- 55% of our dancers also participate in another style of dance, outside of CDR.
- The items you want to see more of in this newsletter are Upcoming Events, Featured Performers, and Dance Etiquette Tips.

Stay in Touch...

- www.cd-rochester.org
- www.facebook.com/CountryDancersofRochester
- www.meetup.com/Rochester-Community-Dances
- Questions? Comments? Write to us at newsletter@cd-rochester.org



So Much to Love About CDSS Dance Camp

By Ruth Hyde

It will soon be time to apply to go to one of the dance camps sponsored by CDSS! I have been attending them for about 40 years and will apply to go again this year. I have been to three different sessions at Pinewoods-Campers Week, English-American Week (which no longer exists), and English Week.

Pinewoods is located near Plymouth, MA on two ponds, Long Pond and my favorite, Round Pond. Cabins and houses are located over a wide area so that privacy is possible. They are furnished with comfortable cots, places to hang clothing, bureaus, shelves, and reading lamps. Campers take their own bedding and towels or rent them at camp. Healthful and delicious meals take place in a dining hall. All food is locally grown or created by the cooks and bakers. Vegetarian selections are always available.



Rapper Dancing at Pinewoods.

Classes and social dancing take place in four dance halls, all with good wood floors and open air ventilation. All sessions are accompanied by musicians and taught by well-known dance leaders. Classes are available for advanced dancers as well as beginners and include both country dancing and ritual dancing. If you have never tried sword or Morris dancing, you will be able to start here. There are often classes in singing and clogging. There are also opportunities for campers to share their other talents such as story telling or singing in camp meetings. Evening dances usually end with a song. One night a week is staff night off. Some go into town for lobster and that evening callers and musicians are campers. This can be a nice change. On Friday afternoons classes show what they have learned during the week.

In addition to dancing there is time for swimming and boating, nature walks, parties, and naps.

If you have young children, you might want to choose Campers' Week. There are classes for children and a meeting each morning which includes singing, dances suitable for all ages, and performances. Campers call dances at this meeting and it is one of the opportunities I always enjoyed. The program include both English and Contra dances. On the first night, a meeting is held at which classes offered by campers are scheduled. These can include dance, song, or craft. On one night there may be a costume ball.

English week now includes one contra dance class for those who miss English/American week. Some classes focus on new, old, or challenging dances, while others may teach dancing techniques. I remember one session in which Helen Cornelius taught a dance which had five different types of heys in it. Another consisted of very old dances with skip-change steps and chasse's in them. From Genny Schimer, I learned how to walk leading with my chest; from Jaqueline Schwab, how to give weight; from Gene Murrow, when to use a waltz step and when not to do so if the rhythm is 3/4. But the thing I like most about English week is the opportunity to dance with dancers who are devoted to English dancing, have good energy, use pleasant styling, and are friendly and open to dancing with less experienced dancers.

Other weeks available at Pinewoods include American Dance & Music, Harmony of Song and Dance, Early Music, and Family Week. Information on dates, program, and locations of other camp sites can be found at the web site www.CDSS.org. It is important to get your reservation in before March 21st because more people apply than can be accepted and applications received by that date take preference. Which are accepted is determined by a lottery and a waiting list is created.

Can't squeeze camp into your budget?

Apply for a scholarship! Most CDSS dance camps are eligible for the CDR Dance Scholarship, and there are CDSS scholarships available as well. As a member organization of the Country Dance & Song Society, our members will receive priority consideration for admission when there is high demand. So apply today! See page 7 for information on this year's scholarship.



Did You Know?

Besides being fun to do, dancing is great exercise and its good for you! It is estimated that an hour of vigorous dancing can burn upwards of 400 calories per hour, and it offers many health benefits such as improved muscle tone and strength, better balance, and even psychological benefits such as reducing depression and stress. Many insurance companies even accept dancing toward their Healthy Rewards programs, so check with your insurance today to find out if you might qualify for reimbursement or points! Contact our Treasurer (Treasurer@cdrochester.org) if you need documentation of your attendance at CDR events. We will check the sign-in sheets and provide receipts for dancers upon request.

JANE AUSTEN BALL

About the Ball

"There is nothing like dancing after all. -- I consider it as one of the first refinements of polished societies."

--Pride and Prejudice

Whether we dance English, Contra, or both, most of us in Country Dancers of Rochester would agree with the opinion given by Sir William Lucas in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. When music, movement and merriment come together good times follow.

Jane Austen novels are famous for many reasons, not the least of which are the ball scenes that occur. In the books and in the movie adaptations these scenes are some of the most important and beautiful. Who can forget the way Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy spar delightfully as they try to discern each other's character while dancing at the Netherfield Ball? Now you will have the opportunity to dance like Jane Austen or Elizabeth Bennet!

Mark your calendars for one of the finest dance events of the season as Country Dancers of Rochester offers its Tenth Annual Jane Austen Ball on the weekend of April 23 and 24, 2016.

The Music

"...without music, life would be a blank to me."
--Emma

Music and movement make up the essence of English Country Dance. This year's ball will feature the music of Childgrove, a nationally known group of country dance musicians from Ann Arbor MI. Childgrove is composed of Debbie Jackson on piano, Anne Ogren on violin and viola, and Martha Stokely on oboe, pennywhistle, and recorder. These three draw on their backgrounds in classical, Celtic, Klezmer and other styles, to bring a fluid, eclectic approach to the elegant and compelling melodies of English Country Dance.

Ball Prep Classes

Dates: March 13, 20 &

April 3, 10, 17

Place: First Baptist Church,
175 Allen's Creek Road
Rochester NY 14618

Cost: \$5

Time: 3:30 to 5:30, followed by a potluck supper.



Debbie Jackson is a pianist who regularly plays for both English Country dances and Contra dances. She enjoys improvising and interpreting music to connect with dancers.

Anne Ogren joined her first orchestra at age 13. Since then she has performed with many soloists including Van Cliburn, Tony Bennet (no relation to Elizabeth) and PDQ Bach. Now she enjoys traveling with Childgrove and spreading dance music wherever she can.

Martha Stokely is a classical musician who danced for many years before deciding to play for people who like to move while listening. She enjoys performing with Childgrove, and recently began composing English Country Dance tunes.

Calling

This year's Ball will be led by the very knowledgeable and exciting English Country dance mistress Beverly Francis. Beverly is a noted expert on Jane Austen, and has been working hard to put together a program of period dances. Beverly's deep knowledge of Jane Austen's work and times will give a true Regency feel to the ball. Dances like Drapers Garden and the Duke of Gloucester Waltz have been especially chosen to provide an elegant and lively connection to Jane Austen and her times.

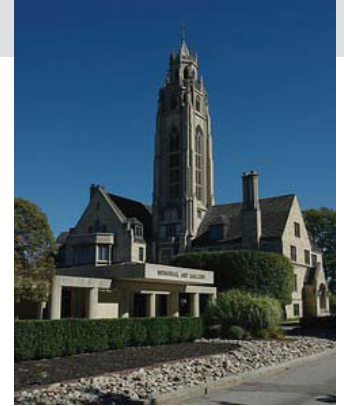


JANE AUSTEN BALL

The Venue

This year for the Tenth Annual Jane Austen Ball we will be returning to our roots. The ball will be held at the Cutler Union of the Memorial Art Gallery. Built in 1933 Cutler Union was originally the women's dormitory for the University of Rochester. This elegant venue was the location of the first Jane Austen Ball in 2007. On the outside the building is in a neo-Gothic style (it could not be more Northanger Abbey). Inside it is pure elegance. In the beginning the ball attracted about 50 dancers. We have now grown to about 80 dancers, but do not fear a crowd; we will be using more of this beautiful space.

"Frank Churchill had danced once at Highbury, and longed to dance again..."
--Emma



The Program

This year's Jane Austen Ball will provide a full weekend of activities on April 23 and 24, but the excitement starts much earlier. Beginning in March ball prep lessons will be offered on several Sundays. These are usually held in the afternoon at the First Baptist Church, and are followed by a potluck supper before the regular evening dance program. These sessions will cover all the dances that will be on the ball program, and will give every dancer an opportunity to become familiar with the dances.

On Saturday afternoon, there will be a final tune up for the ball at the First Baptist Church. This will also be followed by a potluck supper. Then, in the evening, we will have a dance for experienced dancers. The dances will be called, but walk through will be limited, and the program will feature more challenging dances.



Scene from the First Annual Jane Austen Ball at Cutler Union

Registration

Registration for this event will open in mid February in time for Valentine's Day. Registration will be available online at our website or by paper registration form. Please see our website at cdrochester.org for details on cost and schedule.

Finally, on Sunday we will gather at Cutler Union. In the morning we will walk through all the dances on the ball program, refining our art to perfection (although dances will be called during the ball). Following the practice we will have lunch catered by Max of Rochester. After lunch there will be ample time to change into ball dress. Then we will dance through the afternoon, reliving the times and tunes of Jane Austen. A break with elegant refreshments will be provided. After the ball those who wish will gather for dinner at a local restaurant.

Please see our website at cdrochester.org for specific details on the schedule. Hope to see you all at the Tenth Annual Jane Austen Ball!

"It may be possible to do without dancing entirely. Instances have been known of young people passing many, many months successively, without being at any ball of any description, and no material injury accrue either to body or mind;--but when a beginning is made--when the felicities of rapid motion have once been, though slightly, felt--it must be a very heavy set that does not ask for more."

--Emma

Be My Valentine

Community dancing is a social activity, so it's natural that our participants form connections - some that last just the length of a single song, and others that last a lifetime. Over the long history of CDR we've seen many of our dancers take their relationships beyond the dance floor. This story features the beginnings of just one of our latest love stories.

Our love story

By Cheryl McAfee

When I retired in 2008, I started taking line dancing and Zumba classes through MVP Health Care to make new friends and exercise. I really didn't like the line dancing very well and after a short time, someone suggested that I stay for the next class - which was contra dancing. Having never heard of contra dancing, I hesitated a bit, but decided to try it. I loved it from the first class! Contra dancing at the one-hour class was hardly enough, so I began attending the Thursday night CDR dances and found a whole new world of friendly people, wonderful music and contra dancing! Yeah—I was hooked!

Tom McAfee was introduced to contra and English country dancing by his cousin in 2004. He loved the dancing and the opportunity to socialize—if you haven't noticed, Tom loves to socialize! Tom also attended the contra dance class at MVP—he liked helping new people learn to dance. In 2010, when he was about to leave for a long vacation, he asked for my address so he could send me a postcard. I replied: "You big flirt, you're asking all the ladies for their addresses!" But, I gave him my address anyway. Once we started to communicate, we realized that we had lots of interests in common. Our first date was for dinner and the contra dance on July 29, 2010, and the rest is history. We were married on August 31, 2012, and our first dance was to the song: "May I Have This Dance for the Rest of My Life".



Photography at the Dance

How do you tell a potential dancer what Contra or English Country is all about? That it's good exercise, similar to square dancing (but not really!), just so much fun? There's something about community dancing that eludes explanation, and a person just has to try it to understand. So how can we get new people to the dance? Unfortunately, many people have never experienced the joys of dancing, and convincing them to give it a shot can be a real challenge. So we at CDR are faced with a conundrum - when verbal explanations fail us, how can we go about growing our community? The solution we've landed upon is not just to explain - we need to visually show what we do. So throughout 2016, be prepared to see cameras more often at our events. We're taking photos to share on our website, social media, and outside marketing, trying to capture as much of the magic of our dances as possible for the world to see. So when you see a camera pointed your way, don't freeze up! Keep in mind, we're taking photos of a whole community, not just you - and everyone looks great when they're having fun! And we hope you'll enjoy seeing photos of events you've participated in and sharing them with your friends. However, if you have a concern about being photographed or tagged in any photos, please talk to the photographer. We can't guarantee you won't end up in a photo as part of the crowd, but we'll make sure you're not the main feature of any published shots and we won't tag you in the images online.



Invite a Friend to Dance - For FREE!

Having a hard time convincing your friends to try a dance? Community dancing is more fun when lots of people participate, and we know word of mouth is our best form of advertising. But sometimes new dancers need a little extra encouragement before they'll give it a shot. So for a limited time only, CDR is running a promotion in which members can submit their friends to receive a FREE first-time Dancer pass to any regular weekly CDR event. Look for the application online or at the weekly dance.

2017 CDR Wall Calendar

Love seeing great photos of our dances? Want to know about all our events coming up throughout the year? This fall, we'll be publishing our first ever CDR Wall Calendar! It will feature great photos of our community in action and also note all of our regularly scheduled events for your convenience. Presales will open this Fall.

Want to submit your photos for consideration? We'll be holding juried selections in the fall, but we'd love to see your photos now! Send them to newsletter@cdrochester.org. Image resolution of at least 1700 x 1300 pixels is recommended.

2016 CDR Dance Scholarship

We are pleased to announce that applications are now being accepted for the 2016 Country Dancers of Rochester Dance Scholarship! Last year we received several excellent submissions and awarded Carol Gayeski and CJ Ziegelhofer each partial scholarships to dance camp at Pinewoods, which were then matched by CDSS funds. They both had a great time at camp and have brought home their new dance knowledge and great camp experiences to share with our community.

This year we're opening our scholarship opportunity to all members of our community (callers, musicians, sound techs and organizers as well as dancers), to apply for funds to attend a camp, seminar, or other activity related to our mission of furthering the preservation, study, teaching, enjoyment and continuing evolution of English and American traditional and historical dance and dance music. Here are the requirements to be considered eligible for a scholarship:

- All applicants must have an active membership with CDR.
- Applicants must state the benefit that his or her proposed activity will bring to the Country Dancers of Rochester community.
- Proposed scholarship activities MUST be related to English and American traditional and historical dance and/or music. A preference will be given to applications that are directly related to Contra or English Country dancing.

All scholarship applications are due by February 28. The maximum amount to be awarded is \$500. Please email scholarship@cdrochester.org with any questions you might have.

Letters from our 2015 CDR Dance Scholarship Recipients

Dear Country Dancers of Rochester,

I would like to thank you for the scholarship to attend English Country week at Pine Woods this past August. I was able to attend with my nieces and we thoroughly enjoyed ourselves. It was a truly unique experience and I would not have been able to attend if it were not for the generosity of CDR.

I was not only able to partake in excellent English Country dance classes and learn about timing and covering, but I also had the opportunity to experience other dance styles like Contra and Square dancing. The musicians are wonderfully talented as are the callers. I also had the opportunity to meet other dancers and learn from them also. I hope to use what I have learned in my own dancing to improve my style.

It was a wonderfully exhausting week of dance, dance, and more dance! Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

CJ Ziegelhofer

Thank you CDR, and thank you CDSS (Country Dance and Song Society) for the joint scholarship to attend camp at Pinewoods this past summer. For many years I had heard from fellow dancers, either contra or international folk, about Pinewoods. They always described it with the "aah (or awe) of wonder" in their voices. Now I know it really is a wonderful place. And it's truly a national treasure because of its history and setting.

The week I was there was called Harmony of Song and Dance. I'm a long-time dancer and sometime singer. An interesting aspect of the week was that many of the attendees were there for the 'song' part and had little or no experience with dance, either contra or English. I enjoyed helping them along, particularly at the evening dances.

Eating meals all together in the beautiful open-air dining hall was a large part of why I enjoyed the week. It's just nice to gather around, eight at a table, with interesting people and lively conversation. The food was really, really good ---- well-made, homemade stuff!

The cabin I was in, along with a roommate, was very near one (Round Pond) of the two ponds there. Nice swimming; an idyllic setting. I lucked out in getting assigned to a new cabin near a new bathroom/shower complex!

A stay at Pinewoods could be a vacation for anyone, even someone completely new to country dance and song.....or for families during the family weeks. It's a pretty reasonable price for room, board, and activities. You choose what you want to participate in, no requirements. And to mention a few other things: the experienced, excellent, even famous musicians, callers, teachers; the every morning community chorale; the four great dance pavilions. I'm looking forward to going back next summer!

Sincerely,

Carol Gayeski



Country Dancers of Rochester
140 Fernboro Road
Rochester, NY 14618

Stamp

Address Line 1
Address Line 2
Address Line 3



www.cd-rochester.org