

**Saluting Angela
Taylor**

**Springstep
Taking Shape**

NEFFA
NEW ENGLAND
FOLK
FESTIVAL ASSOCIATION
NEWS

Winter 2002 – Vol. XXVIII #4

**Minutes! Oh, joy.
Oh, Rapture.**

**Beware of
Imitations!**

The NEFFA Board recently awarded Life Membership to three individuals who have shown long and dedicated service to the organization: **Larry Jennings, Angela Taylor** and **Doris Possi**.

Angela Taylor



This is the second of three interviews with the award recipients.

The award presentation for Angela Taylor will be January 18th, during the Ralph Page Dance Legacy Weekend.

In May 2002, the Executive board awarded Angela Taylor a Lifetime Membership in NEFFA. Angela has continuously participated in producing the New England Folk Festival since its inception in 1944. Her service to NEFFA represents an enormous range. Angela has served as President, Vice President, Secretary, Director, and Assistant Executive Director. Over the years she has served on or chaired these committees: Exhibits, Arrangements (Tickets), Publicity, Program, Membership and Food. She worked on programs no longer active, including the Fall Sale Workshop and the Spring Workshop. For 22 years Angela has run the Festival's Folk Bazaar. She also coordinates food for the Ralph Page Legacy Weekend.

On November 4, 2002, I met with Angela at her home to talk about her life, and how she became involved with NEFFA and the dance community in the Boston area. I asked Angela about her childhood.

My parents moved into the Boston area when I was 2 or 3 years old. I went to the Prince School on Exeter Street. It now is a condominium for teachers. Then I chose to go to an all girls' high school, the High School of Practical

Arts on the line of Roxbury and Dorchester. My mother was a dressmaker and my dad was a mechanic. I took an art course when I was in High School. Then the Depression came along and we had to eat so I didn't go to art school. [Learning to sew] was a necessity for us growing up. We were a struggling family. I learned to make things fit and to make do. I worked for others in shops in Brookline and Boston and I've done odds and ends besides sewing. Eventually I decided to do sewing for myself instead of working for somebody else.



Angela Taylor, 1943

I asked Angela how she became involved with the NEFFA Festival.

The Festival started at the Boston YWCA. Ralph Page, Mary Gillette, [Grace Palmer,] and Philip Sharples got it together.* At the time I was at the Y, and I was in Mary Gillette's dance program. So naturally I was on the outskirts and very curious when they started talking about it. Mary asked me to help with some of the details and I said, "Sure, whatever needs to be done."

Were you actually working for the Y?

No, I was in the program. I was a Girl Reserve during high school. Then after high school you became a working girl and had to choose between the Industrial and Business Departments. Being a dressmaker and in sewing and in art, I went into the Industrial Department. We had a total program of dance, art, gym and swimming. Later, during the war, I ran a program for the Job Corps at the Y.

The Festival was at the Y for the first 10 years. Every time anything needed to be done I was right there and Mary Gillette and I would work away on what our end was and everyone else would do whatever they were doing. From then on the rest is history. The first committee chair job I had was for the Seventh Festival at MIT. It was very small then, just dance and a few other things. I was supposed to be co-chair with some fellow. At that time [what was called] "Arrangements" was getting ticket takers and ticket sellers. In those times we had ushers to hand out programs as people came in.

When Ralph came in to the Y on Tuesdays, there was a nucleus of us who went every single week. He took the ones he thought were good and put us in a group and we danced under his aegis doing demonstrations, performances and just went on from there.

The Folk Bazaar has been a really big role for you. How did you get started with Folk Bazaar? Do you sell anything of your own at the Folk Bazaar?

One reason I have a booth is when people need me they know where I am. I like to invent things and make things. It's an outlet for me. I have such an accumulation of sample books from my mom. This is what I have been making things out of for years – purses and stuff for little kids, shopping bags, aprons, anything that is needed. At an early Festival Exhibit at the Y a Swedish lady set up a loom where the piano used to be in the big hall. She would work the loom and show how it works. Someone else would be carding the wool into yarn. Crafts were in the Festival from the beginning. Crafts and dance. Food didn't come in until we went over to Tufts [in 1954]. I had Exhibits for a few years [starting in 1951]. I would get collections of things – one year, collections of musical instruments from different countries, another year, a hat collection from different places. Then handwork. Eventually

(ANGELA, Continued on page 7)

* Ralph Page was a popular New Hampshire square dance leader; Mary Gillette was head of physical education at the Boston YWCA; Grace Palmer was the Y's Director and Philip Sharples had recently founded the Belmont Country Dance Group (one of the first square and contra dance series in the Boston area).



Editor: **Dan Pearl**
 Editorial Review: Shelagh Ellman-Pearl, Maureen Carey, Claire Reid, Lisa Greenleaf
 Mailing: **Dayle Watts**

Issue	Deadline
Spring	Feb. 15
Summer	May 15
Fall	Aug. 15
Winter	Nov. 15

The NEFFA News, a publication of the New England Folk Festival Association, Inc., is published four times a year to communicate with its membership and other interested persons. **Please send all editorial submissions** to Dan Pearl, 15 Buffalo Run, Southborough, MA 01772, or to Daniel_Pearl@yahoo.com . Opinions of individuals are not necessarily the opinion of the NEFFA Executive Board.

Publicize your events! Display advertising is available for qualifying folk-related organizations. For more information, contact Dan at +1-508-229-2854.

Call For Nominees



The Nominating Committee: Bob Solosko, Mari Young, and Sandy Ryan

NEFFA is a non-profit organization run by volunteers. In addition to producing the annual Folk Festival, NEFFA runs a weekly contra dance, the Ralph Page New England Dance Legacy Weekend, and a series of family dances. NEFFA also supports various folk-related activities through its grants program.

Our traditions and bylaws encourage member participation in a number of ways. Many of you are no doubt familiar with the role of volunteering at the Festival and you may also know that NEFFA's goals of preserving folk traditions are actually overseen by an Executive Board, composed of elected and appointed members. Interested NEFFA members can become actively involved in administration by volunteering to take on a position of responsibility on the Board or a Festival committee.

Each year, the Nominating Committee prepares a ballot listing the nominees for the elected positions on the Board. We welcome all suggestions and *volunteers* from the NEFFA membership. Please send your suggestions to Nominating Committee Chair Bob Solosko by mail (224 Forest Street, Reading, MA 01867) or by email (rbsolosko@attbi.com). The deadline for the nominations is January 15, 2003. Feel free to contact any board member with an inquiry regarding the roles and responsibilities of the various positions.

In recent years, Nominating Committees have recognized that NEFFA is a large organization with a geographically dispersed membership and that most of these members do not know each other or the candidates. Thus, there is little point to a popularity contest, with losers as well as winners. Most ballots, therefore, have presented uncontested slates. Unless a meaningful choice on some issue presents itself, we anticipate continuing this practice. However, our bylaws encourage direct nomination by members: the name of any eligible person suggested by twenty-five or more members is included on the ballot, if he or she consents. Under NEFFA's bylaws, elected Directors are expected to chair or be a member of a committee or to take on other responsibility.

The current Elected Board members are listed below. Those positions for which the incumbent's term ends in 2003 are to be filled in the April election. Directors and Officers serve terms of two years and may be re-elected for one additional term (the Secretary and the Treasurer are always eligible for re-election). Members of the Nominating Committee serve for a single three-year term. The incumbents marked with an asterisk are ineligible for re-election. Positions to be filled are listed in italics.

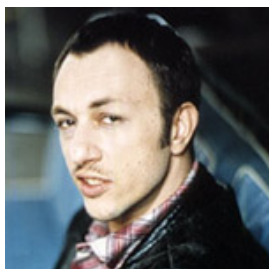
Office	Name	Term Expires
President	<i>Shelagh Ellman-Pearl*</i>	2003
Vice President	Maureen Carey	2004
Secretary	<i>Judy Schaffer</i>	2003
Treasurer	Ralph Jones	2004
Nominating Committee	<i>Bob Solosko*</i>	2003
	Mari Young*	2004
	Sandy Ryan*	2005
Directors	<i>Robert Johnson*</i>	2003
	<i>Linda Leslie*</i>	2003
	<i>David Reid*</i>	2003
	<i>Nancy Horn</i>	2003
	Dan Pearl	2004
	Jessica Holland	2004
	Dayle Watts	2004
	Arnold Reinhold	2004

Beware of Imitations!



**Grupo Neffa — A
Brazilian shipping
conglomerate**

**Italian Hip-Hop
artist “NEFFA”
(Giovanni Pellino)**



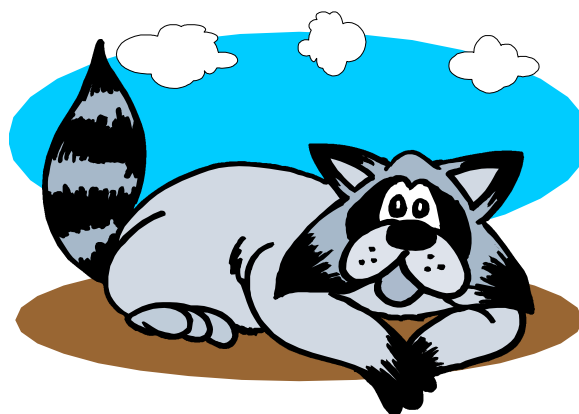
**Our motto: “NEFFA, the New England
Folk Festival Association: oft imitated,
but never copied... or duplicated, or
something like that.”**



NEFFA President Shelagh Ellman-Pearl presenting his Life Membership plaque to Larry Jennings at the NEFFA Contra Dance at the Mount Auburn VFW in October 2002. *Photo: Stacie Barker*

Summer Jobs at Pinewoods

Full-time and volunteer crew positions are available for the coming summer at Pinewoods Camp in Plymouth, Massachusetts. Possible full-time openings include head cook, cooks, cooks' assistants, dishwasher, grounds crew chief, grounds crew, and office/store manager. Full-time crew should be available to live at camp from approx. June 1 through Labor Day. Volunteers assist the kitchen and grounds crews, and should be able to commit to 3-4 weeks of work (3 days per week). For more information and an application, contact Eileen Callahan at manager@pinewoods.org (much preferred) or 508-224-4858.



Summary of Minutes of the NEFFA Exec Board

15 September 2002

Call to Order (Shelagh Ellman-Pearl)

Arnold Reinhold was attending his first meeting; there were introductions all around.

Life Memberships are going to be presented during events that correspond to a major activity of the recipients. Larry Jennings' certificate will be presented at the dance on Thursday, October 24; Doris Possi's will be presented at the Saturday Dance Performances at the 2003 Festival; and Angela's will be presented at the 2003 Ralph Page Legacy Weekend.

Dan Pearl, Lisa Greenleaf and Sue Rosen are members of an *ad hoc* committee to review Larry Jennings' sequel to "Zesty Contras."

Think about pros and cons about distributing the pre-meeting materials electronically. This will be discussed at the next meeting.

Secretary's Report

Regarding the minutes of 18 May 2002 were approved with minor corrections.

Committee Chair Approvals (Shelagh Ellman-Pearl)

This is the full slate as proposed

GENERAL COMMITTEES

Advisor – Larry Jennings

Family Dance – Jacob Bloom

Festival Site Committee –Harold Henry, Dan Pearl, Judy Schaffer, Peter Olszowka

Grants Committee

Bill Cronin, Robert Johnson, Judith Schrier, Tony Parkes

Legal Advisor – Steve Moore

Membership – Stacie Barker

NEFFA News

Editor Dan Pearl

Mailing: Dayle Watts

Editorial Committee: Shelagh Ellman-Pearl, Lisa Greenleaf, Maureen Carey, Claire Reid

Publicity – Jessica Holland

Ralph Page Memorial Committee

Members: Sam Alexander, Dave Bateman, Sarah Dawson, Christine Fowler (Secretary), John McIntire, Don Primrose, Patrick Stevens, Angela Taylor, Marianne Taylor, Peter Yarensky

Springstep Advisory Committee Representative – Peter Olszowka

Thursday Night Dance Committee

Steve Boylan, Lisa Greenleaf, Cal Howard, Larry Jennings, Dan Pearl, Sue Rosen, Ernie Spence

Web Site – Dan Pearl

FESTIVAL COMMITTEES

Access –Katy Burns, Rayna Tulysewski, John Wojtowicz

Activity Room - Linda Palmstrom

Arrangements –

Inside Facilities – Harold Henry

Inside Signs - Diane Biglow, Michael Resnick

Outside Facilities – Dan Pearl

Outside signs - Dayle Watts

Operations Manager - Dan Pearl

Clocks – Rayna Tulysewski

Early Entry –Mari Boyar Young

Crafts – Ann Schunior, Susan Tornheim

Evaluations – Janet Yeracaris

Folk Bazaar - Angela Taylor

Food -

Operations - Mary Wakefield, Don Parkhurst

Pre-Festival - Maureen Carey

Hospitality – Shelagh Ellman-Pearl

Housing - Diane Mathieson, Ed Budreau

Instrument Check – Laura Leibensperger

Lost and Found – Dan Pearl

Safety - John Wojtowicz

Performer Sales Table - Susan Janssen

Program – Linda Leslie

Participatory Dance

Contras & Squares - Lisa Greenleaf

International Line -- Mari Boyar Young

Couple - Melissa Cook

Folk Music and Song – Isobel Abelson, Jean Schwartz

Dance Performances – Katy Burns, Janet Yeracaris, Doris Possi (*advisor*)

Morris and Sword - Katy Burns

Printed Materials – Bob Golder, Linda Leslie, Dan Pearl, Janet Yeracaris

Sound –Peter Olszowka, Stacie Barker, Michael Bergman (*advisor*), Alex Latzko, Judy Schaffer

Tickets - Claire Reid & David Reid

T-Shirt – Lisa Greenleaf

Volunteers - Nancy Hanssen

A motion to accept the proposed slate was approved by voice vote of the elected board.

Grants (Robert Johnson)

The Grants Committee is authorized to spend up to \$500 on a grant request without approval of the NEFFA Executive Board. The total amount allocated for this has been \$5000 per year, but in actuality, this has not been spent.

The regular motion to re-fund the Grants Committee was made to Authorize up to \$5000 for the Grants Committee for this year. A motion to amend to have this motion apply to all future years, as well, was passed, and the main motion was passed as well.

Group Ticket Sales (Linda Leslie, Claire Reid)

The possibility of a group rate for attendance to the Festival was discussed. The particular request in front of the board did not match peoples' model of a school field trip, so there was not a meeting of minds on the issue. Linda Leslie offered to draft a proposal for a future meeting.

Springstep Center

Deb Hawkins and Sharon Pressly Fiero represented Springstep in a presentation.

Building Update

The framework is going up. On noon on 25 September 2002, there will be a hard-hat photo opportunity. On October 23rd or 24th there will be the

“first dance” in the building (a press event).

Status of the Organization

The structure of the various groups that support the Springstep Board of Directors was presented. The groups are:

- Presidents Council – Representing the Resident Partner Organizations
- Campaign Steering Committee – Fundraising
- Finance Committee
- Nominating Committee
- Advisory Committee

In addition there are consultants and an Executive Director (position to be filled).

We have become fully aware of the challenge in front of us: to raise \$2.1 million dollars.

Fundraising

Our first fundraising will be from within – those who have a special interest in the project. Then, we will work our way outwards. We will work to obtain the largest gifts first. We would like to have several members of the folk community to be part of the fundraising effort: prospect review, soliciting, etc. Within the next few weeks, we will finish our prospect review.

In order to go for corporate support, we need to show large support from the partner groups (in terms of numbers of people, and amount of support).

In the next six months we will be contacting those people who can support us above the \$5000 level.

We need more help on all aspects of fundraising, especially with the identification of members that may be in the position to donate high amounts.

You may decide that you don't need Springstep; regardless, we will always be your friend

NEFFA's Commitment

NEFFA has given a \$10000 donation to Springstep, part of the requirement to become a Resident Partner Organization. NEFFA has given Springstep a copy of the mailing list.

Springstep would like NEFFA people to review the mailing list, 2 to 3 NEFFA people to sit on the steering committee (not necessarily board members), names of people to consider for the advisory committee.

Springstep is seeking 100% of participation from designated key people from the Resident Partner Organizations. That is, the Presidents. The commitment is over 3 to 5 years. Other people will be approached later.

We will be using the NEFFA mailing list for a one-time solicitation; it is a waste of postage to keep sending mail to non-responsive people. When people contribute, they will migrate to Springstep's own mailing list. We will be a membership organization.

Future Meeting Dates

Members are welcome to attend these meetings. For more information, contact Dan Pearl at Daniel_Pearl@yahoo.com or 508-229-2854.

January 12, 1pm

February 9, 1pm

March 8, 1pm

Springstep Center Takes Shape

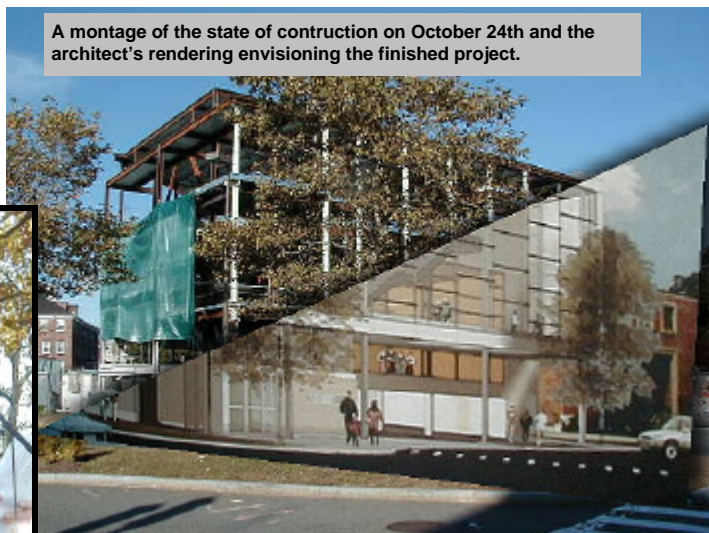
October 24th saw the inaugural dance at the Springstep Center for Traditional Dance and Music, now under construction a stone's throw from Medford City Hall. A dance stage had been set up in a parking lot near the construction site, and over 100 supporters watched a selection of dance and music performances and listened to congratulatory remarks from Mayor Michael J. McGlynn, key contributor Deb Hawkins, and others.

Folksinger Jeff Warner acted as emcee for the event, which was followed by a cider and donut reception at the nearby Amerisuites Hotel.

In the background was the steel framework of the Springstep Center itself, now sporting a pine tree on the topmost girder signifying the “topping out” that occurred earlier that day.

The building is expected to open in the spring of 2003. Plans are underway for NEFFA, CDS Boston Centre, the Folk Arts Center of New England, and the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society Boston Branch to become “resident partners” of Springstep, with offices and some dance events run at the Center.

Springstep is in the midst of a fundraising campaign. If you'd like to get involved, please contact them at 781-395-0402.



A montage of the state of construction on October 24th and the architect's rendering envisioning the finished project.



Jeff Warner



Pat Iverson and Martha Forsyth



Commonwealth Vintage Dancers

A History of Volunteerism

Highlights of Angela Taylor's contributions to NEFFA

Exhibits Committee

1951, 1956, 1967-69,
1976-77

Folk Bazaar

1978-present

Director

1965-69, 1976-77

Assistant Executive Director

1956-57

Arrangements

1954-55

Secretary

1953

President

1970-73

Vice President

1969

Publicity

1957, 1960-62

Foods

1964-65

Program Committee

1960



(ANGELA, Continued from page 2)

Exhibits evolved into Folk Bazaar.

Instead of an exhibit of handcrafted things it became a place to sell them?

I'd ask if people could contribute -- I mostly went to the dancers doing performances. We got to know the people who ran them. Because our performers are unpaid, if they had a booth to sell stuff they could finance whatever they needed to rent cars or get people to the performances. A couple of times we worked that out easily. One year we had a Swedish group trying to raise money to go to a competition in Sweden. They had a booth at the Festival and the money they raised there they [used] to get their group to Sweden and back. I had other people asking me, "If we had a booth at the Festival it would help us finance our dance group." A couple of time Doris [Possi, former chair of Dance Performances] and I worked out a way so that people who needed to get people to the Festival could have a booth and make money that way. I tried to promote that more but it didn't always work out.

Sounds like it would take a lot of coordination or some groups wouldn't have things they wanted to sell?

Yes, that's it. But when it did work out everyone was pleased with the results. And the Folk Bazaar. I got it in '78. That's when the transition was from Exhibits.

You were Vice President and then President. Can you talk about that period?

One of the years I was President, I think it was '73. We went to Wellesley [Laughs]. That was so tough. That school was so chopped up in such a way it was very hard to put things in place. I remember we all went out to look at it, and we would stand around and scratch our heads and say "Now, how are we going to do this?" It took us such a long time to do it and we had to do it in such a broken up way and it was very expensive. It was one of the most expensive Festivals we had. It left us very little for the next year.

Another year we went to Worcester and went to a municipal building. The union took us to the cleaners. And that was the year that Ralph Page was in Japan. He was a union man, but when he came back he was so livid about what they did to us. I had never seen him so upset about anything. [Laughs] That year we were very worried about whether we would be able to float another Festival, we were that close. In those days we had standup mikes. I remember Dick Crum was on our program. They would charge \$10 to take the mike from the end of the hall to where you'd have to bring the mike if someone had to sing. And we had to have their orchestra. "Oh we can play anything" they said. Those men in that orchestra were so terrible they didn't get into the rhythm of anything until their last half of the program on Sunday, and none of our people could sit in with the orchestra like we do. [Now] we have people coming and going sitting in and then going off to dance and that kind of thing. It was a miserable, miserable Festival and we didn't know what we were going to do but we managed to float another one.

I asked her about NEFFA's growth over the years.

It was very gradual. When you think there were only 10 people working on it to start with. I think the attendance was something like 300 people. That was the smallest. But it did grow and grow. And early on we tried to make it a New England Festival. You can see by the program. We moved from one place to another because it was in New England and we tried to keep it a New England thing. When the Festival was held in New Hampshire, a group in New Hampshire worked on it. We would meet as a whole group but they took the

responsibility for getting the tables and chairs done. We went to Rhode Island a couple of times. One Rhode Island Festival was pretty bad because that was the year “folk festival” got a bad name because there were these wild groups coming up and doing folk music. There were having these crazy parties and disturbances and townspeople got upset with them. That was the year if you said “folk festival,” you couldn’t explain anything to them. You were already branded. That was a rough year and our attendance was not as good. We proved ourselves anyway because we had a nucleus in the town who worked very hard and had to talk and talk to get people to understand we weren’t *that* kind of folk festival, that we were established and we knew our way around. So we got over that high hurdle! [Laughs] Oh, we had some pretty funny experiences.

Most of our Festivals have all been fun in some ways. Some have been rougher than others. At the Festivals, people had a good time because they wanted it to succeed. They wanted it to go well and everyone’s heart was in it and we persevered despite [obstacles]. So it’s only been a few spots that have been rough, but all in all we’ve had a great time and it’s been great.

I remember we were trying to get the Festival a permanent home. My brother Conny often said it was too bad NEFFA couldn’t get a home of its own. He would go around and talk to government agencies that would have buildings and surplus property. And a couple of times he had the plan practically there. At one point early on, Irvin Davis [NEFFA President from 1955-59] scotched the idea, saying NEFFA wasn’t in the real estate business. When I was President, I had a special meeting to see if we couldn’t persevere and make this thing work. At that point there wasn’t anything that was on the market that was good for us. We let the good ones pass us by. That was a disappointment, because that was Conny’s dream: that NEFFA should have a place of their own. And now we’ve got plans to form a relationship with the Springstep Center for Traditional Dance and Music. Anyway, I’ve had a good time.

Any advice for people working with NEFFA now on things to do, on the way you’d like to see NEFFA continue in the future?

No, I think we’re on the right road. I just hope they never forget that NEFFA is for everyone and not try to make it like anything else, because our Festival is unique. No matter who you talk to out of state, they will tell you that our Festival is a unique festival the way it is now. If someone suggests, “Someone else is doing this, why can’t we do it?” and it means paying someone for a specific program or way of doing something, it won’t work because of the way we run our Festival. I think we run our Festival much differently than the others. I’m not sure how many are all-volunteer organizations like we are.

If we’re going to keep the spirit alive the way it is, we have to keep remembering. I gave you a [paper listing] the goals of NEFFA. I think we should keep putting that in front of people and ask people to read it and understand it. And really stick to it because if you start trying to be like somebody else or go off into another

direction, it won’t work – you’ll lose a lot of the uniqueness we have. The four wall hangings in the Main Hall during the Festival represent the Swedish, Bulgarian, Ukrainian and Native American cultures. They were planned and executed by Anna Sannella [Mayo] in 1968. Twenty years later I was part of a group of dancers who refurbished them on Elgie Ginsburg’s living room floor.

Another thing you’ve done for a long time is work on the Ralph Page Memorial Committee. Can you tell how that came about?

Ted Sannella was the one that got a committee together because he thought Ralph should be recognized and we all did because we danced with Ralph so often. To me that was a perfect time of my life. That whole scene where we had this wonderful chance to be under Ralph who was so dedicated to dancing and giving us a taste of what happened before and taking us through the transitions. We got a committee together and started talking about it. I wasn’t in on the beginning [of the committee]. I came later when they started talking about food and stuff. I had been at Ralph’s camps and managed his kitchen for a long time. The whole process was to be able to have a place where people interested in the evolution of square and contra dancing would have a place to go, where there would be dancing and people could see Ralph’s folk dance library and materials. Ralph was always looking, every place he went. You’d find him in the book section of second hand stores looking for things, going through piles of folk dance tunes. He was always looking for old material that he didn’t have. He had a big collection himself but he was always looking to replenish it and add to it. That booklet he put out once in a while [*Northern Junket*], he’d put in it his new finds, snatches of tunes, stories, dance manners, Q & A’s, and all kinds of information people would find interesting. Ada [Ralph’s wife] was a doll. She and I would go after the Festival “galooping” as we called it. We’d drive my car and go to all the old barns, every secondhand store, every bargain place in the whole area and she had some beautiful things. [Laughs]

I wanted to ask you about the performance group for Ralph Page. Did you go around or do it just at the Festival?

At the Festival. No, once in a while, once we did it at one of the hotels, because Axel Spongburg was head of the Swedish group at that time and he and my brother Conny had traded off doing dance things for each other and he asked us as a group to come. We were still dancing together and we just put together a program. Mostly it was just Ralph’s group. Actually we didn’t need much rehearsal because we danced with him constantly. And we did the kind of squares that are very fun to watch as well as to dance and we knew them so well. I remember as a group we went down to Swarthmore College and one of us forgot in a moment where he was and what he was doing and didn’t do what he was supposed to do. If one person doesn’t do it right and you don’t catch it, everyone else sort falls apart. Al Smith, who was running it, was one of these volatile guys. He would explode in the least moment. When the dancer did this thing he shouldn’t have done, we started falling apart, we started laughing. Al got so frustrated and so mad he got down on the floor and banged on the floor like this and he said “Dech! Dech! Dech! Dech!” By that time everybody in the place was so helpless with laughter, we couldn’t do anything for about twenty

minutes. Afterward the kids on the side said, "Is he like that all the time?" We said, "Yeah." It was just one of those complicated things like "In the center and out, in the center and out" and then of course that breaks down and nobody else can go anywhere.

You talked about Conny. I know that Conny has been in the folk community and Conny's former wife Marianne...

They started the Folk Arts Center.

Did he get involved in Folk Arts totally independently from you and NEFFA? How did that happen?

Well, during the war years, when my brothers came out of the service, my brother Fred needed time off to get himself back to earth again. I brought him into square dancing. When Conny came out of the service, we took him in to dancing. The group I was dancing with were the kind of people that danced together, skied together, camped out together. There were about twelve to fourteen of us. They welcomed them into the fold as if they were there forever. My brothers were natural dancers, so they just got into it and at one point they were dancing in a demonstration group.

Conny decided he wanted to teach. In order to teach folk dancing in a public school, he had to have the certificate. So he went back and got it. Then, after he thought about it a while and he met Marianne and they got married, they decided they were going to start this dance group [Folk Arts Center of New England], which they did. And ran it for twenty-five, thirty years. Then [FAC] had Octoberfest up in Vermont. Conny was the one that pushed it. He is a great organizer as well as a great teacher. He was the one who talked Werner Von Trapp into teaching us yodeling. Werner could never understand why people wanted to learn from him. And he was a wonderful

teacher. He was soft-spoken and precise and everyone loved him and he was nervous as a wreck. And Conny would say, "Yes, you can do it. Come on! Everyone loves you." We would take the ski lift to the top of Mt. Mansfield and we would yodel on the side of the mountain. That was the most wonderful thing because at some point you could hear it coming back to you!



November 2002 Photo: Shelagh Ellman-Pearl

This group that did everything together. Did they start before NEFFA?

No, as a result of meeting at Ralph's Tuesday night at Y. The Festival was running for a few years before that. We were there every Tuesday. It got so we would go to a different nationality restaurant every Tuesday night; we'd meet Ralph at the bus stop, go and have dinner and go to the dance. It was one of these things that just happened. Even today we're great friends, we see each other, talk to each other. We gave my brother a 75th birthday [party] six years ago. Everybody came. Paula Luv, who had moved to Hawaii, came. All the people that taught at his dances came. I was so impressed. Just a simple flyer I sent out and all these people responded.

You never married yourself?

No. I was just so busy helping other people and having such a wonderful time doing other things. I dated a lot but nothing clicked. I have nieces and nephews. When Conny and Marianne had classes in schools, I would take care of the kids sometimes. This is what families are for. In a way I'm getting it back now. I'm glad I had a chance to bring both Fred and Conny into square dancing, folk dancing. Everything they knew before [the war] had gone by the board.

A lot started because you did that.

One thing led to another.

AIRDANCE, OLD NEW ENGLAND and PHANTOM POWER at Dance Weekend

NEFFA's best-kept secret, the Dance Legacy Weekend named in honor of Ralph Page, will be held for the 16th year on January 17-19 in southern New Hampshire, just one hour's drive from Boston. The well-kept secret is that most of the program consists of exciting contemporary-style dancing: the kind that is preferred by many current contra dancers. It is also a celebration of our traditions, and includes calling, music and dance workshops. While reminding us of the elegance in our historical roots, it does not sacrifice the vitality of modern contra dancing. It is like a winter dance camp, where the dancers share meals and "hang out" together in an informal, welcoming community spirit off the dance floor as well as on it.

Three bands that feature some of the most popular and exciting musicians in the region will be performing. **Airdance** (Rodney Miller, fiddle; Mary Cay Brass, piano; Stuart Kenney, bass, percussion; Marko Packard, flute, guitar and sax), **Phantom Power** (Lissa Schneckenberger, fiddle; and Bruce Rosen, piano) and **Old New England** (Jane Orzechowski, fiddle; Deanna Stiles, flute; and the dean of New England contra dance piano, Bob McQuillen) will provide a diverse program of first rate dance music.

The featured callers are two mainstays of the New England dance community, Linda Leslie and Tony Saletan. Linda, of New Bedford, Massachusetts, is known for the wide variety of choreography in the dances she chooses, and the enthusiasm she exudes for all aspects of the dance she is in charge of leading. Tony, who joins us from Lexington, Massachusetts, is a singer, TV host, and a well-known and respected contra and square dance caller.

A seventeen-year-old dancer who has attended most of the last eight years, says this is a wonderful event for young people. "The dancing is lively enough, and there is a rich sense of connection with our shared history that one does not get at, for instance, the Thursday night dance. It is really amazing to get to dance with some people who have been dancing and playing music for fifty years or more, it just gives you a sense that what your doing is part of a greater tradition. Many of the people that attend this weekend have been dancing all their lives, and listening to their stories is really incredible. There is a great atmosphere that pervades the different activities of the whole weekend."

All this fun takes place on the beautiful campus (usually snow-

covered in January) of the University of New Hampshire in Durham. Dancing, workshops and meals are held in the Memorial Union Building, where last year several meal times featured lively informal jams by about a dozen musicians. There is special-rate housing available to us at the on-campus hotel, the New England Center (800-590-4334). Make your reservations early, and ask for the "UNH Rate." For other accommodation lists, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Chrissy Fowler, 259 Wadleigh Falls Rd., Newmarket, NH 03857. For local hospitality contact Chrissy at 603-659-7038.

Tickets may be purchased for the entire weekend or any number of the individual sessions. Reservations will be necessary for all meals and must be made by January 8th. All other events may be attended without advance registration and paid for at the door. There will be a DISCOUNT on the full weekend fee for people attending for the first time.

For further information call 603-659-7038, 603-463-7771, or 603-664-2513, or visit the NEFFA website.

— *Maureen Carey*

The New England Folk Festival Association, Inc. is a non-profit educational and cultural organization, incorporated under the general laws of Massachusetts to preserve folk traditions in New England and elsewhere; to encourage the development of a living folk culture; and to encourage high standards of quality and performance in the folk arts.

Membership entitles one to voting privileges, publications, and to reduced admission to selected NEFFA-sponsored activities. It is open to interested persons who support our objectives.

Annual Dues are \$7/individual (\$18 for 3 years); \$11/family (up to 2 people over 18) (\$28 for 3 years). Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law. Send check, payable to NEFFA, to the office. Occasionally, NEFFA shares its mailing list for a one-time use by like-minded folk organizations. If you do not want your name and address shared in this way, tell us with your membership. **Please direct all inquiries** to the NEFFA office: PMB 282, 1770 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, MA 02140 or (781) 662-6710.

Interested persons can get on NEFFA's mailing list for one year at no charge. Send request with full name and address to the office.



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