

**Thursday Dance...
in Arlington on
December 27th**

**Appreciating the
Magic of NEFFA**



Fall 2007 – Vol. XXXIII #3

**Dance Performance
Chair Wanted**

**Message from the
President**

Newsworthy People

Concert Room Capacities to be Doubled at NEFFA 2008!

We are pleased (overjoyed, actually) to report that Mansfield officials have agreed to virtually double the room capacity limits for the concert and workshop rooms at the upcoming Festival.

Lt. Neal Boldrighini (fire safety officer, Mansfield Fire Dept.) called us to let us know our approval of a ten (10) square foot per person occupancy limit for the school classrooms (instead of 2007's twenty square foot /person limit) HAS BEEN APPROVED by him and the Mansfield building inspector.

Lt. Boldrighini said "You folks earned it with your efforts last year." All the hard work that was invested in enforcement of the rules - and the patience and understanding of our Festival-goers - has paid off.

In 2008, as we did in 2007, NEFFA volunteers will remove all of the student desks from the rooms and will replace them with movable chairs in advance of the event. NEFFA will post the room capacity at each room entrance, and our room monitors will control room access when the capacity limit is reached. We will continue to strictly observe and enforce all safety requirements, and will address any problems that Mansfield officials may point out as the Festival is ongoing.

– Bob Golder

The Magic of NEFFA

by Diane Biglow

For years, I've wanted to write my view of the wonder of NEFFA. For many great years, my husband, Michael Resnick, and now our son, Matthew Resnick, have been involved with the set-up and take-down of NEFFA. Before the Festival itself starts, volunteers clear out classrooms, set up rented tables, chairs, microphones, all kinds of sound systems, coat racks and hangers, portable dressing rooms, and all other equipment used by NEFFA. Volunteers also put up signs for directions inside and out, performance areas, performances, and every possible thing people need to know to help the Festival run smoothly. Four hours of volunteering is required to obtain a full Festival ticket.

However, most of the volunteers work well over four hours without any other compensation. Cy Kano, who was 86 in June, is one of NEFFA's founding members. He climbs ladders, puts up signs, and stays after the Festival to take signs down. Over the years, Elgie Ginsburgh has volunteered in nearly every capacity possible, from Board Member to head of Signs. Harvey Cohen was

(Continued on page 2)

the Arrangements chair for many years. Ralph Jones is our treasurer *extraordinaire*. Angela Taylor, 80, has been the head of the Folk Bazaar for more years than I thought possible. Doris Possi has organized the dance performances for decades. Dan Pearl and Shelagh Ellman-Pearl work to improve the Festival every year by attending to various details that make it run smoother. Robert Johnson is always available to lend a hand. Many of those who help with the Festival set up have already spent numerous hours volunteering during the months leading up to the big weekend. Diane Mathiesen & Ed Budreau organize housing and then come to help put up and take down indoor signs. They also donate dessert each year for the set-up volunteers. Helen Silver has been one of the artistic sign makers of magic for many years. There are so many people who help as volunteers that it is impossible to name them all. I wish I could.

For many years at Natick High School, there were site changes that led us to the new venue at Mansfield. The enormous task of running a smooth Festival at a new location was daunting. But NEFFA volunteers gave hours and hours of their time and met the challenge to continue the magic of NEFFA at a new location. The program booklet lists the names of the NEFFA officers, directors, and committee chairs. It lists the volunteers who perform and make NEFFA a joyful place to be by giving us the music, dances, and songs from around the world. But it doesn't list the hundreds of other volunteers that come together to make this Festival happen.

We who live in the world of NEFFA are very lucky. What we have created is a celebration where children are safe and can grow in a community of accepting diversity. It is a world filled with music, dance, fun, food for thought and health, art, every kind of creativity, hand crafts, and magic. For me, a big part of the magic is watching the founders being appreciated for what they have given us even as their ages and abilities force them to step back ever so slowly from how many hours they volunteer. Another important part is watching the newborns grow from toddlers to young children, to preteens, to teens, and young adults. I love to see their involvement at the Festival go from observers to participants to volunteers in all aspects of the Festival, including as performers. Then I see them being

involved with their children as they help them learn and enjoy their world of folk traditions. We see the circle of life continue at NEFFA.

This year at Mansfield, I went from hopeful to happy to very happy. It was a joy to see the faces of many, many people smiling and thanking me for the indoor sign work done by myself and my husband, Michael Resnick, and others. The comments from the Mansfield custodial staff, who had no idea what NEFFA would be like, were uniformly positive about the NEFFA community. The custodians were particularly pleased


by the individuals who thanked them for their work. Bob LaConte, the Mansfield School Facilities Director, was ever present, ready to help, and was of great assistance to all of us and happy to help too! The police and firefighters mentioned

that NEFFA folks were courteous, helpful, and appreciative, and gave them absolutely no problems. The school kitchen employees who supported the food vendors found the vendors to be easy to work with and were happy to help out. Of the people I spoke with, everyone from the Mansfield community who worked at NEFFA said that they would send their family and friends to our Festival. It was wonderful to hear how they enjoyed our music, dancing, singing, and handcrafts even though they had never seen or heard most of it before.

I am proud that my family is a part of this magnificent world of magic. My son Matthew has come to NEFFA since he was three weeks old. Each year he has helped in some way during set-up and take-down, even if it was as a source of joy for all to enjoy. This year Matthew is nine years old and he worked as a volunteer for Harold Henry, the Arrangements chair, setting up chairs to earn a volunteer ticket. He worked 6 ½ hours on Thursday and another two hours on Sunday. I am so proud of him and Matthew was very proud of himself and able to express it. This too was a kind of magic because Matthew could now give back by doing a service for a Festival he has always enjoyed.

We who live in the world of NEFFA are very lucky



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Editorial Review: Robert Golder, Shelagh Ellman-Pearl, Lisa Greenleaf, Robert Johnson												

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From the President's Desk

Robert Golder



building NEFFA's relationships with town officials and business leaders in the Mansfield area. Our efforts to negotiate less severe room capacity limits in 2008 have been ongoing for months with town officials responsible for public safety. Our discussions have been very helpful and cordial, and as a result NEFFA will be permitted to seat more attendees in the concert and workshop venues.

Many NEFFA committees are working hard right now to ensure a successful Festival next April 25-27. For example, in September the Program Committee received and processed performer applications. During October and November, the Committee will sift through these applications and develop a schedule of Festival events that has a good flow of artistic variety and timing, but doesn't double-book any of the thousand-plus individual artists for performances at simultaneously occurring events!

Determining the schedule is an intricate *tour-de-force* of logistics, and it takes time to do it well. Programming decisions will be finalized in December, when all the jigsaw puzzle pieces of performer availability and event coordination have been set into place, and the schedule triple-checked for any flaws. At that point, performance applicants will be notified whether they have been selected.

The Program Committee's planning also reflects NEFFA's intention to rethink facilities use at Mansfield, in order to provide a safer, better Festival. The schedule of events is being developed with an eye toward improving our use of space to reduce crowding, assure safety, and improve attendee satisfaction. When you arrive at the Festival next April, you'll note that the Program Committee has made some changes in how concert and workshop spaces are used. Some events in the High School will take place in new rooms. Other High School rooms that we made use of in 2007 may not be used in 2008. We've learned from our experiences at the 2007 Festival, and intend to get the best possible results from the spaces in which we host our events.

As President, one thing that I'm working on is

I'll also meet with the executive director of the local Chamber of Commerce, and make similar contacts in the area.

Other Executive Board and committee members regularly travel to Mansfield, or talk by phone or e-mail with our contacts there. These dedicated volunteers are working well in advance of the Festival, arranging for housing, parking, and the other services required to bring you the best possible NEFFA experience in 2008.

You can help make the 2008 New England Folk Festival a resounding success for the thousands of participants that will come to Mansfield next April. If you are not yet a volunteer, please consider volunteering some time in preparation for or at the Festival. NEFFA is an all-volunteer festival. We're proud of that tradition and we thank those of you who help, and those of you who would like to help.

Another important way to assist the Festival is to help build NEFFA's membership base. If you're already a NEFFA member, please be sure to renew your membership, or encourage a friend or family member to join. And please plan for next April to bring with you to the Festival a friend or family member who has never attended before.

Please visit www.neffa.org often for the latest updates on planning for the 2008 Festival, plus our other programs such as the annual Ralph Page Dance Legacy Weekend in Durham, NH (January 18-20, 2008), and the Family Dance Series and Thursday Night Contra Dance Series in Concord, MA. As always, thank you for helping NEFFA to create joyful celebrations of music, dance, and crafts for the New England folk community.

— Bob Golder, President



A tradition of dance performances sets NEFFA apart from other folk festivals. Irish, Lithuanian, Polish, and Swedish dance groups performed at the first Festival in 1944 and have attended ever since, as has the Country Dance Society, Boston Centre with its performances of English dancing. As the years passed, these groups were joined by performers of traditional dances from China, India, Mexico, the Philippines, and other countries and cultures.

NEFFA is now seeking applicants for the volunteer position of Chairperson, Dance Performances Committee. This group is part of the larger Program Committee that coordinates dance performances, participatory dance events, folk music and song concerts and workshops, and Morris and sword

performances. Much of the prep work for Dance Performances is done by a well-organized committee, and various volunteers help as stage managers during the Festival weekend. But NEFFA needs a chairperson who acts as the overall manager of this process, and guides it toward success in the months prior to the Festival.

The chairperson needs to be someone with good organizational, logistical, and “people” skills who would like to work with diverse performing groups and carry on a multicultural tradition that originated at the very first Festival. Prior Dance Performance chairs will be available to provide training, assistance, and advice.”

Work begins in the fall with the application process, and planning continues into the spring. At the Festival, the chairperson oversees volunteers smooth execution of the performances.

If you are excited about leading this important aspect of the Festival, or want more information about this volunteer position, please contact Linda Leslie, NEFFA Program Chair, via e-mail at laleslierjg@comcast.net or by phone at (508) 999-2486.

Thursday Night Dance News

When Life Gives You Lemons...

You dance! The Concord Scout House, we just learned, is going to be refinishing its floor on December 27th, so we're going to take this opportunity to do something SPECIAL!

The dance is going to move for that evening only to Arlington Town Hall: a truly gorgeous hall with high ceilings, a U-shaped balcony, and more space to dance than the Scout House! The evening will start at 7:30pm but we'll go to 11pm. During the break, we will partake in a dessert buffet: Bring a dessert to share!

See the enclosed flyer for more details.

Thanks, Leonard

The Thursday Night Dance Committee bids farewell to Leonard Lu. Leonard was a helpful and supportive member of our committee who relocated to Washington DC. Best wishes, Leonard, and thanks!

Helpers Needed

Sometimes the committee people are in short supply on Thursdays, and we could use some people willing to help out with after-dance clean up on a semi-regular basis in exchange for admission that evening. Interested? Contact Dan Pearl at Daniel_Pearl@yahoo.com or at the dance.

IN THE NEWS



Filmmaker, humorist and regular Thursday night dancer **GARY ROMA** was interviewed in the Boston Globe by Pagan Kennedy. Gary is talking about his new film: a documentary on dental floss. Read it at

<http://tinyurl.com/2zdsaq>

Read in the Boston Globe how luthier **AARON GREEN**, just starting out in the business, got inspiration and mentorship from **ALAN CARRUTH** at the New England Folk Festival!

<http://tinyurl.com/yo8wu2>

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 \$20/individual, \$38/family (up to 2 people over 18). Contributions beyond these basic amounts are welcome and 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, or via email: neffa@neffa.org

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

What's Happenin' at the Cambridge VFW?

The Mt. Auburn VFW building, having been sold to Cambridge as the home for their new Youth Center, is under serious reconstruction. Time will tell whether the new facility will be suitable, affordable and available to us for our dance, but in the meantime, watch out for falling girders! **Ann Cowan** paid the building a visit a few weeks ago, and took these pictures.



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