

**A Milestone for the
Thursday Night Dance**

**Ralph Page Dance
Legacy Weekend
Information**

NEFFA



NEWS

Fall 2010 – Vol. XXXVI #3

**Serve NEFFA: The Call
for Nominations!**

News Briefs

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20 Years, 1000 Dances, Too Many Smiles to Count



**Join the celebration
November 11th**

Photo by Ann Cowan

20 Years, 1000 Dances, Too Many Smiles to Count

The NEFFA Thursday night contra dance is celebrating its 1000th dance on Thursday November 11th with a free dance for all attendees that night. NEFFA News Editor Dan Pearl interviewed Thursday Night Dance Committee Chair Dan Pearl about the last 20 years.

News: Hi, Dan. Thanks for taking the time to talk with me about the Thursday night series.

Dan: No problem, Dan. My time is your time.

News: Indeed. So how did it come that NEFFA is running the Thursday Night Dance?

Dan: It was the spring of 1990. There were rumors that Tod Whittemore, the creator and proprietor of the Thursday dance, was going to close the dance down. We couldn't believe it. Tod had been running the dance since the late 1970's, initially at the Cambridge YWCA, and then at the Mt. Auburn VFW on Huron Avenue. Tod was talented, funny, charismatic, and casual – sort of like the Hugh Hefner of the contra dance world – and he filled the place week after week. It was simply the “place to be”.

News: So what happened?

Dan: At the end of his run, Tod was running out of energy and motivation. Tod's ambivalence towards the series was picked up by the dancers, who responded in kind by staying home. It was sad, but Tod announced the end of the series in his newsletter, “At the Hop”. I became part of a small group who would huddle after dances with designs on keeping the dance going. Besides me, there was Steve Boylan, Cal Howard, Larry Jennings, Leslie Morrison, John Rowen, and Ernie Spence. We met one evening at the Yenching restaurant in Harvard Square. Over Kung Pao Whatever, we hammered out our vision of what the dance should be. Should there be a beginner workshop? Regular performers



Tod Whittemore at the Ralph Page Dance Legacy Weekend. Photo by Patrick Stevens

in rotation? Varied performers? These questions, and many more, needed to be answered. By the time the last fortune cookie was opened (“You will run a successful dance series”), the Thursday dance, as we know it today, had been born.

News: You're joking about the fortune, right?

Dan: Duh! Unlike Tod's dance, which was a Whittemore Family Production, we saw benefit to running the dance under the auspices of a non-profit organization. Larry, Leslie and I already had connections to NEFFA, so we approached them about making the dance a NEFFA event. The NEFFA Executive Committee agreed, and the TNDC (Thursday Night Dance Committee) was formed, with me as Chair.

News: Who is on the committee, now?

Dan: Besides me, Cal and Ernie are the only original members still on the committee. Ernie hasn't been to our dances for some time because of health, but it gives me a good feeling to have him remain on our roster. We miss him. Our other members are Lisa Greenleaf (who expertly handles the booking of the performers), Sue Rosen (the coordinator of the NEFFA

The Yenching Restaurant, Harvard Square, Cambridge. The birthplace of the Thursday Night dance as we know it today.



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

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 neffa_news@neffa.dreamhosters.com. Opinions of individuals are not necessarily the opinion of the NEFFA Executive Board.

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<u>Issue</u>	<u>Deadline</u>
Spring	Feb. 1
Summer	May 15
Fall	Aug. 15
Winter	Nov. 1



The Mt. Auburn VFW

Left: Before the demolition.

Right: During the demolition.

Photos: Arnold Reinhold



Contra multi-caller evenings), Nell Wright, “Mac” Walker, and Tova Cohen. We have meetings once every year or two. The dance sort of runs itself.

News: So why did you leave the VFW?

Dan: We had to. The VFW hall was an expensive building to maintain. The dues income from the ever-shrinking VFW membership plus the rental income and bar revenue was not enough to cover the overhead. The VFW finally relented to sell their property — lock, stock and rocket — to the City of Cambridge for a very tidy sum. The deal was even sweeter for the VFW, because they now rent their new basement facility at the same address for a buck-a-year type of arrangement.

The city’s plans were to knock down the hall, and put in facilities for the youth center that they planned for the site. We needed to get out, and that’s what we did. While the Scout House was offering us a slot, we felt compelled to first try another in-town location: Springstep.

News: Ah, yes.

Springstep.

Dan: Springstep

News: Springstep...

Dan: Springstep. That situation didn’t work out well for us, and we wound up losing thousands of dollars in our 6-month stint there.



Springstep

Fortunately, Thursdays were open at the Scout House, so we made the move to Concord.

News: And you’ve been there ever since.

Dan: For the most part. Occasionally, the Scout House does floor refinishing and we need to move the dance for a week. We have used Arlington Town Hall, the West Cambridge Youth and Community Center (WYACC), and the FOPAC hall across Walden St. from the Scout House. On November 4th, we are running the dance at the WYACC in Cambridge..

News: Tell me about the Boat Dance.

Dan: I *loved* the Boat Dance. This was a Tod tradition that we tried a few times. We’d rent a three-deck tour boat and tool around Boston Harbor. We’d visit the USS Constitution while we were dancing “Hull’s Victory”.

News: Why did you stop running them?

Dan: Let me tell you: A tour boat is one expensive hall. Last time we rented it, it was \$800 an hour for the proverbial “three-hour tour”. Do the math. We lost a ton of money, and called it quits. Maybe we’ll try it again some day.

News: How has the dance changed in 20 years?

Dan: The age demographics change over time. Nowadays, it seems like over a third of the crowd is younger than 22. This bodes well for a healthy future of our dance series. We know that the soul of our dance is within the dancers. We are going to our part by putting on the best dance we can, and we hope that lots of folks will go along for the ride.

Country Dance and Song Society Looking to Hire All-Around Tech Savvy Person

CDSS, an arts and education nonprofit, seeks part-time tech support to oversee our website (and broader online presence), internal database, hardware and network support. Desired skills:

- experience with hardware and networking support, website design, databases
- small office and nonprofit or school experience preferred
- willingness to work with people with a wide range of tech experience and knowledge

More details are available at www.cdss.org/tech

Serve NEFFA!

Call for Nominations



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

Our traditions and bylaws encourage member participation in a number of ways. One of these is by volunteering at the Festival. Another significant way that interested individuals can participate is by becoming a Board Member. NEFFA's goals of preserving folk traditions are overseen by an Executive Board, composed of elected and appointed members. Under NEFFA's bylaws, elected Directors, or Members of the Board, are expected to chair or serve as a member of a committee or to take on another responsibility.

Each year, the Nominating Committee prepares a ballot listing the nominees for the open positions on the Board. We welcome all **suggestions** and volunteers from the NEFFA membership. Our bylaws also encourage **direct nomination** by members: the name of any eligible person suggested by twenty-five or more members will be included on the ballot, if he or she consents.

The current Elected Board members are listed below. Those positions marked with a dot (·) 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.

Please send all suggestions and direct nominations to Nominating Committee Chair, Julia Nickles, by mail (4785 One Lamplighter Way, Mount Hermon MA 01354) or by email (Julia.nickles@gmail.com). The deadline for nominations is January 15, 2011. Feel free to contact any board member with an inquiry regarding the roles and responsibilities of the various positions.

Office	Name	Term Expires	Eligible for re-election
President	• Robert Golder	2011	
Vice President	Nancy Hanssen	2012	✓
Secretary	• Beth Parkes	2011	always
Treasurer	Ralph Jones	2012	always
Nominating Committee	• Julia Nickles	2011	
	• (vacant)	2012	
	Linda Leslie	2013	
Directors	• Bill Cowie	2011	
	• Dave Casserly	2011	✓
	• Frank Kreimendahl	2011	✓
	• Don Veino	2011	✓
	Terry Huffaker	2012	
	Robert Johnson	2012	
	Ashley Zanca	2012	✓
	Alex Krough-Grabbe	2012	✓

JOIN US FOR THE TWENTY-FOURTH ANNUAL

R·A·L·P·H P·A·G·E

JANUARY 14-16,
2011

MARTIN LUTHER KING
DAY WEEKEND



MEMORIAL
UNION BUILDING
UNH ~ DURHAM,
NH

Dance Legacy Weekend

A Weekend of Outstanding Contra & Square Dancing

Celebrate the New England Tradition ~ Excellent Music, Great Callers & Friendly Dancers

- ∞ Lynn Ackerson & Tod Whittemore Calling
- ∞ Randy Miller, Peter Siegel & Bob McQuillen
- ∞ Firetruck: Anna Patton, Ethan Hazard-Watkins, & Bruce Rosen
- ∞ Friday Night: Dudley Laufman & Staff Callers
- ∞ Music by the Sugar River Band: Jane, Russell, Sophie & Neil Orzechowski

- ∞ Dancing all day!
- ∞ Workshops on dance, music, calling
- ∞ Retrospective Dance Session:

∞ THE RALPH PAGE LEGACY ∞

If it weren't for Ralph Page we might not be dancing!
A chance to learn about Ralph Page or to revisit his legacy.

- ∞ Grand Dance Saturday evening

For More Information:

Go to the NEFFA web site or contact Sarah Dawson.

NEFFA: <<http://www.neffa.org>>; click on the RPDLW link.
Sarah Dawson: (603) 659-5612 or <rpdlw@me.com>.

Further information will be posted as it becomes available.
The web site should be mostly complete by mid- to late-summer; flyers and registration materials shortly thereafter.

Rapper Dancers Clash in Cambridge This Month!

Country Dance Society-Boston Center, Great Meadows Morris and Sword, and the Greater Boston Rapper Sword Community invite you to be part of the first ever Dancing America Rapper Tournament, "DART 2010", October 22-24, 2010, in and around Kendall Sq., Cambridge, MA.

DART2010 will bring together sword teams from the US, Canada, England and Scotland to celebrate the talent, innovation, and new ideas of sword dancing and honor its deeply rooted traditions. Come out and support the competition dancers and venues, and see some great dancing!

Participating teams include Sallyport Sword Dancers (Newcastle), Mons Meg Rapper (Edinburgh), Thrales Rapper (London), and teams from many parts of America, including Kentucky, Minnesota, New York, Toronto and the New England area.

The competition will take place on Saturday, October 23, from 12:30 pm to 5:00 pm in and near Kendall Square. Groups of teams will rotate between All Asia, Lord Hobo, Cambridge Brewing Co., and Tommy Doyles. Watching the competition dancing is free (but please support our host venues!).

Some individual registrations for the weekend are available (\$45/person), see the website: www.dart2010.org. The website also lists details on venues.

Location Advisory: Thursday Contras at the Scout House

November 4: The dance will be held at the West Cambridge Youth and Community Center, 680 Huron Av., Cambridge. 7:30 to 10:30pm

ECD in NH is BACK

The New Hampshire English Country Dance Society is pleased to announce that the Concord, NH English Country Dance has returned from "summer vacation" to the usual time & location: 5:30 PM 2nd Sundays; Presidential Oaks Auditorium, 200 Pleasant St, Concord NH. Check the web at www.NHECDS.org or email info@NHECDS.org for more information.

Upcoming performers:

Nov 14 Rich Jackson leading with the Boston area band Paradise Bird

Dec 12 Dave Bateman leading with Vince O'Donnell on fiddle & Ken Allen on piano



N·E·F·F·A

New England Folk Festival Association

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