

**Personal Reflections**

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**NEFFA**



**NEWS**

Fall 2011 – Vol. XXXVII #3

**SAFE TO READ**

**This  
issue of NEFFA News is  
guaranteed not to  
contain any Minutes!**

*when  
the  
music*  
**calls**

I am at the final act of the Lowell Folk Festival, Kennedy Center Stage, listening to Le Vent du Nord. Outrageously good music.

Can't stand still, much less sit in a seat to listen to the music. HAVE to Dance.... But, wait, looking around I am surrounded by folk I see from the Boston dance community. I want to dance with them but I am hampered by the fact that this is not a contra dance and there is no caller. How can I suggest that we form a contra set or a circle or square and all dance together?

The stars must have been in alignment, because David Millstone was calling at a local contra dance a few nights later and running a "Chestnuts" caller workshop a day after that. At the dance, I tell him about my wish to be able to initiate a dance, not on the "caller circuit" but *in promptu*, to be prepared for the spur of the moment. David offered encouragement to this idea, enough so that I decided to attend the workshop as a dancer, hoping to gather the courage to further my goal at being able to call one contra.

By Terry Huffaker

*(Continued on page 2)*

(Continued from page 1)

My misconception was that a caller's workshop is THE place to be for those who want to be holding THE mike, on THE stage, at THE dance and run THE show. However, what his workshop did was so much greater. It was built around learning to call dances that are a hard sell to today's contra dancers. These dances need a little extra teaching because the choreography is a little different, and these dances are lovely referred to as "Chestnuts" because of their age. One good example is "Chorus Jig". David explained why dances with inactive couples, no swings or circle dances may actually make the dance evening more enjoyable and more inclusive of age range and dance experience.

He grounded us with a history lesson. We dance in a tradition that goes back a few hundred years, we dance in halls that our ancestors danced in, and we still enjoy dancing some of the same dances they did. We invent new dances, reinvent, mold and manipulate others. We should. There is enough room in the hall. I also learned I am not the only one out there wanting to be able to share a simple dance with new friends.

A special thanks to David Millstone for teaching "An Evening of Chestnuts", sponsored by BIDA on 9 August 2011. Live music was by Julie Vallimont, on piano and Edward Wallace, on fiddle. Clark Baker provided hospitality. Thanks to all the attendees who made it such a great workshop. And a special thanks to the brave callers of the evening.

Let's begin by learning to call one dance and hum a simple tune and encourage our fellow dancers to do the same. A roomful of dancing friends is only a few hours away any day of the week. In the words of Arlo Guthrie, if "one person, just one person does it ... And if two people, two people do it, in harmony... And friends, they may think it's a movement." ●

**"Ernie's Favorites" a special evening of dancing featuring the favorite dances of Ernie Spence, will be held on October 9th and will benefit the Parkinson's Disease Foundation.** Ernie was a long-time supporter of traditional dancing in the Boston area who succumbed to Parkinson's disease this past year.

Many of Ernie's favorite callers will present Chorus Jig, Money Musk, other contras, and some singing squares. There will be shared stories and we'll raise a glass of lemonade to Ernie!

Date: Sunday, October 9, 2011  
Where: Concord (MA) Scout House  
Time: 6:30-7:30 PM: Dessert Social 7:30-8:30 PM: Dancing  
8:30-9:00 PM: Intermission  
9:00-10:00 PM: Dancing



For more information, please contact Linda Spence at 781-254-1734 or [LSpence10@gmail.com](mailto:LSpence10@gmail.com). Donations will be gratefully accepted.

## NEFFA on facebook

### Thursday Contra Dance:

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/thursdaycontras/>

### NEFFA:

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/NEFFA/>

## notlob Music Folk Concerts

### Aoife Clancy & Kyle Carey and friends

Friday, September 23 – 8:00pm  
Unity Somerville, 6 William Street (corner College Ave, just north of Davis Square)  
Somerville, Mass

Suggested donation \$20, \$15 w/ advance reservation, \$5 student rush.

Info/reservations - [notlobReservations at gmail dot com](http://notlobReservations@gmail.com)

Clancy - [aoifeclancy.com/](http://aoifeclancy.com/)

Carey - [kyleannecarey.com/](http://kyleannecarey.com/)

notlob - [sites.google.com/site/notlobmusic/](http://sites.google.com/site/notlobmusic/)

*Jeff Boudreau*



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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 [neffa\\_news@neffa.org](mailto:neffa_news@neffa.org)**. Opinions of

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| Issue  | Deadline |
|--------|----------|
| Spring | Feb. 1   |
| Summer | May 15   |
| Fall   | Aug. 15  |
| Winter | Nov. 1   |

# From the President's Desk

*Bill Cowie*



As the Summer of 2011 draws to a close, and we move into autumn, many of us return from our vacations and day trips and long weekends – times of enjoyment and relaxation and renewal. I hope all of you had a wonderful summer.

For the NEFFA Board, September is the time when we return our focus to the many tasks involved in planning our upcoming activities, and in particular, the annual Festival in April. During the months of summer, when the detailed logistics of the following April are not yet bearing down upon us, the Board has time to reflect on the Festival itself.

In June, the Board met to conduct our annual self-evaluation. We looked at what went well and what didn't, from programming and scheduling to finances and logistics. We reviewed each and every evaluation form that Festival attendees submitted, looking at your input to help guide us in our efforts to continue to create an enjoyable weekend.

I want to personally thank all of you who took the time to fill out a Festival evaluation form, either on-line or on paper. Your kind words and enthusiastic responses mean a great deal to the many members of the organizing staff who spend so much time bringing the Festival to life each April. Your suggestions and critiques are also very valuable feedback for us, letting us know what we should do more of, and what we should consider doing differently. Unfortunately, we are not able to respond to each of you individually, but I want to assure you that your voice is heard. Sometimes, you will see your suggestions realized at future Festivals. Sometimes, we may not have the resources to put your suggestions into practice.

For example, we almost always receive a number of comments about food selection at the Festival. We realize how important food is to your enjoyment of the weekend, and we are constantly reminded of the great diversity of tastes and preferences among the 3000+ people who attend the Festival. Variety is the spice of life, and we constantly strive to provide a wide variety of food choices. But finding organizations or businesses that are willing to set up a two-and-a-half day operation at the Festival site can sometimes be a challenge. Not everyone whom we approach has the capacity to safely provide large amounts of food within the confines of the grounds and facilities of the Festival site. We continue to look

for new and different food vendors, and would love to find a broader ethnic mix. If you know of a business or organization whose food you have enjoyed, please let us know, or ask them to contact us, at <http://www.neffa.org/feedback>

In July, Board members and committee chairpersons met for our annual strategy session. We put aside for a moment all of the nitty-gritty details of the Festival and spent a whole day discussing topics related to our mission of celebrating and promoting the folk arts in New England. We broke into brainstorming sessions and discussed ways to bring new excitement to the Festival, and we talked about how to ensure that the Festival and the organization remains true to our mission and yet relevant to the new generation of young people who have joined the folk community. We will work to bring some of these ideas to life in the months ahead, and hope that you will continue to enjoy the Festivals and dances for many years to come.

As always, we welcome your thoughts and ideas. Please feel free to speak to me, or any of the Directors or Chairpersons, if you see us at a dance or a concert. Or you can contact us by email or through the web site.

And Thank You for your continuing support of NEFFA!

Bill Cowie  
President  
New England Folk Festival Association



Carol Ansel

# PUTTIN' ON THE DANCE UPDATE

Here's what's happening at Puttin' On the Dance: A Conference for Northeast Dance Organizers, November 11-13, 2011.

## REGISTRATIONS:

- The conference is **filling up!** Nearly 70 dance organizers are now registered. So far we're a diverse group - age (20s to 70s), experience organizing dances (4 months to 35 years), types of dances (monthly rural community, urban weekly, gender free, English, family, contras, chestnuts, and more), organizational structure (from one person shows to huge non-profit boards), and location (CT, MA, ME, NH, NY, ONT, VT as well as MI, PA & TN) Wow!!
- Our original capacity target was 75-80, and while we may be able to squeeze in a few more, if you **plan to come** but have been procrastinating, **now** would be the time to send in your registration.
- We've posted updates on our website regarding current availability of the various housing options.
- Registration forms and details are on the POTD website: [puttinonthedance.org](http://puttinonthedance.org).

## SCHOLARSHIPS:

- Scholarship funds are *still* available - thanks in part to the generosity of many individual dance organizers who've registered for the conference and made a donation. We've just gotten word of support from the Monadnock Folklore Society, a NH folk arts organization which directs various concerts, music sessions, and the Johnny Trombly memorial scholarship, as well as the every Monday/2nd Sat Nelson NH dances and the 1st Sat Peterborough dance.
- Thanks MFS & generous donors among the registrants, as

well as CDSS, DEFFA, NEFFA, & New England Dancing Masters!

## LEADERSHIP & PROGRAM:

- New session leaders are coming on board as Linda & Mary continue to work on the details of the program and coordinate with the session leadership.
- We're always happy to hear suggestions of Northeast dance organizers who also happen to be talented and skilled presenters or teachers. Contact us here: [nedanceorgs@gmail.com](mailto:nedanceorgs@gmail.com)

And finally, some of you have asked how the venue held up in the aftermath of recent hurricane flooding in VT. The Hotel Coolidge is fine, although that whole region has suffered major structural damage (roads, bridges, water/sewer, electricity, homes/businesses). According to Delia, who lives in the Upper Valley, the locals have really come together in solidarity with their neighbors, showing the power and the importance of community.

On that note, we look forward to building community with many of you in November. And of course, happy dance organizing to all!

Cheers,  
Chrissy Fowler



# N·E·F·F·A

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