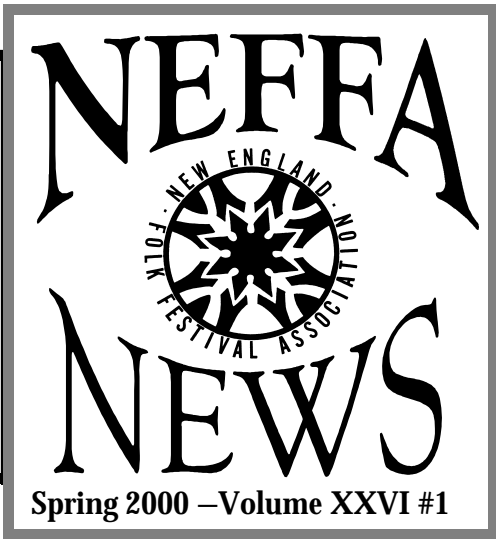


My Old Friends  
The Calendar  
Behind the Scenes  
of the NEFFA  
Festival



Recycling  
Retraction  
Letter from the Prez  
No Room For the  
Minutes (Awwww..)

### How the NEFFA Program Committee Does Its

# Thing

Janet Yeracaris,  
Program Co-Chair tells all!

**E**ver wonder how it is that those 25½ hours of program time, scheduled in 12 different venues at the Natick High School, all come together to make up the New England Folk Festival? It's a complex process, involving many people, and I don't so much want to outline the whole procedure front to back as to point out some of the philosophical decisions we make when putting the program together. People are always asking on Festival evaluations and in conversations: Why isn't there more Siberian dancing? Have you thought of having a kazoo workshop? Who says Pink Floyd isn't traditional music? Okay, maybe not those particular questions, but everyone has his or her own idea of what should be at NEFFA, and it's the job of the program committee to decide what gets done and why. Here is a bit of our thinking.

The program committee consists of various sub-committees that decide the actual content of the various parts of the program. (See the front of the Festival program booklet for a complete listing of who's who.) There are three components to the participatory dance program (more on that later), a folk music and song committee, a Morris dance chair, a dance performance committee, and a program chair (actually, two co-chairs this year) who oversees the whole process. (The Activities Room and the Crafts Room schedules, which also appear on the grid, are arranged separately by those Festival committees, in coordination with the program committee, to avoid personnel conflicts.) These people all coordinate closely to be sure the whole program works, logistically and artistically.

The participatory dance program is conceptually split into three parts: American dance (contras, squares, clogging), International dance (the various flavors of line and circle dancing), and Other Couple dance (English, Scottish, Scandinavian, Swing, Cajun, International couple, etc.). For the various contingents of dancers that attend NEFFA, we've found that splitting the time roughly as follows seems to make most everyone pretty happy: American—35-40%, International Line—30%, and Other Couple—30-35%. If the evaluations for a given Festival have some complaints about "not enough contra dancing" and some about "too much contra," we figure we've hit a good balance. Contra is certainly an important piece of the puzzle, but we do not consider NEFFA primarily a "contra dance Festival." We always hope to encourage people to try a new activity, and therefore try to offer a wide variety of events, and we always try to have several events that are accessible to beginners.

A couple more things may be worth noting about the participatory dance program. We do the programming based on a pool of applications that comes in early in the fall. Although the program committee members scout year-round for new talent, especially in areas where we have too few performers on our current list, we are limited to a large degree by the applications we receive. If no one applies to do swing dancing, we don't program swing dancing. If there are areas of the program

*(THING, Continued on page 5)*



Lisa Greenleaf gets pointers from the newest Program Committee member

# From the President's Desk

Shelagh Ellman-Pearl



**A**s the 2000 Festival draws near, we on the NEFFA Board are excited to see the planning coming together. The enclosed grid shows that the Program Committee has once again put together a sensational program. Despite the special challenges posed by the schedule change for this year, we are happy to report that the Festival will, for the most part, run in a typical fashion. The **Food Vendors** will be offering normal food service on Friday evening, so bring your appetites! The **Performer Sales Table** will be open at its usual location on Friday evening. However, other **Folk Bazaar** vendors, as well as **Crafts Room** vendors and the **Activities Room** will open Saturday morning and remain open through the rest of the Festival.

**Thank you for your response!** In a previous issue of the *NEFFA News*, I put out the call for help with various legal matters. I am happy to introduce NEFFA's new legal advisor, Steve Moore, of Reading, Massachusetts. Steve is a long-time member of the Boston area and Cape Cod contra dance communities. Thank you, Steve, and welcome! We are still eager to have volunteers to help with set up at the Festival on Friday afternoon or evening. If you have experience with Sound, contact Michael Bergman, Sound Chair, at 617-964-7684 or [augment@world.std.com](mailto:augment@world.std.com). All other volunteers should contact Nancy Hanssen, Volunteer Chair at 508-875-0382 or [neh@world.std.com](mailto:neh@world.std.com). Thank you!

**Access for People with Disabilities.** Every year the NEFFA Executive Board looks for ways to improve the Festival. One area we have focused on again this year is improving the accessibility of the Festival activities to attendees with disabilities. The feedback we received from attendees following last year's Festival was tremendously supportive of

our efforts, and helpful in providing specific ideas. In the Festival flyer we told you of our plans to offer American Sign Language (ASL) interpreting at certain events and limited Assistive Listening Device (ALD) service. In striving to improve our use of ALD and ASL services for this Festival, we are focusing on the programming we believe would best benefit from these services. If you will be needing these services, please notify us by March 15 at [neffa@neffa.org](mailto:neffa@neffa.org) or 508-229-2854. Our website will have current access information. At the Festival, the Lobby and the Hospitality Table will have Access Guides. During the Festival, if you, or someone with you, needs special assistance, please let us know. We will do our best to assist you. And please comment on access on our evaluation forms!

See you at the Festival!

## In Memoriam

**R**ich Blazej died at home February 2<sup>nd</sup> at 5:30pm. Rich, from southern Vermont, was a clarinet player, dance caller, and dance composer and appeared at many NEFFA Festivals.

A service to celebrate Rich's life was held at the Guilford Community Church on Sunday, February 6<sup>th</sup>. Lise Sparrow led the service, which featured friends and family sharing stories and remembrances.

In lieu of flowers, people are invited to make contributions to the Richard D. Blazej Music Fund at the Guilford Central School. The purpose of this fund will be to support and encourage children to learn to play musical instruments. Richard was aware of these plans before his death, and he was very pleased to have this as a legacy. Checks may be made out to "Richard D. Blazej Music Fund" and mailed to: Mike Friel, Principal; Guilford Central School, 374 School Road, Guilford, VT 05301

Lucy Spahr-Blazej, Rich's wife, says that she is filled with gratitude for the outpouring of love and support which has surrounded and sustained the family.

## Come Dance With Us

On Tuesday, June 6, as part of Waltham Days, the Girl Scout Museum at Cedar Hill and the Country Dance Society-Boston Centre are sponsoring a dance to commemorate Helen Storrow's influence on both girl scouting and English country dance. Barbara Finney will lead, and there will be demonstrations of English and ritual dancing, as well as participatory dancing for all. This family-friendly event is free and will take place from 7:00 – 8:30 PM in the Great Hall at Cedar Hill. For more information and directions call the Girl Scout Museum at Cedar Hill at 781-891-8717. – Nancy Hanssen



**Editor:** Dan Pearl  
**Calendar:** Jacob & Nancy Bloom  
**Mailing:** Angel Roman

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. **Send Calendar items** to Jacob and Nancy Bloom, 169 Sylvia St., Arlington MA 02476, or to [bloom@gis.net](mailto:bloom@gis.net). **Other submissions** go to Dan Pearl, 15 Buffalo Run, Southborough, MA 01772, or to [Daniel\\_Pearl@yahoo.com](mailto:Daniel_Pearl@yahoo.com). Opinions of individuals are not necessarily the opinion of the NEFFA Executive Board.

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

Issue	Deadlines		
	Covering	Calendar	Editorial
Apr.-Jul.	Jan. 20	Feb. 15	
Jul.-Oct.	Apr. 20	May 15	
Oct.-Jan.	Jul. 20	Aug. 15	
Jan.-Apr.	Oct. 20	Nov. 15	

# NEFFA Arrangements: What Does it Take to Put On the Festival?

*Lou and Peter Berrymen have a very funny song about all of their many possessions.  
This is sort of NEFFA's version of the song. — Bob Solosko, NEFFA Arrangements Chair*



We buy! , we make!, we rent!, we borrow!, we store!

## **Furniture!**

We have furniture - we have 300 tables, we have 1300 chairs, we have 30 platforms, we have 17 fans, we have 10 pianos, we have 55 music stands, we have stools, we have acoustic curtains, we have divider curtains, we have lamps, we have crib pads, we have coat racks, we have hangers

## **Electricity!**

We have electricity - we have power cables, we have extension cords, we have distribution boxes

## **Communications!**

We have communications - we have cell phones, we have cordless phones, we have corded phones, we have walkie talkies, we have pagers

## **Signs!**

We have signs- we have inside signs, we have outside signs, we have wall signs, we have hanging signs, we have table signs we have billboard signs, we have clock signs, we have bus signs, we have direction signs, we have schedule signs, we have flag signs, we have handicap parking signs, we have no parking signs, we have parking signs

## **Parking!**

We have parking - we have parking lots, we have shuttle buses, we have parking flyers, we have parking permits

## **Clocks!**

We have clocks- we have clock stands, we have a good time

## **Safety!**

We have safety- we have safety railings, we have safety hats, we have safety vests, we have traffic cones

## **Cleaning!**

We have cleaning - we have buckets, we have sponges, we have door mats, we have shoe cleaning brushes, we have recycle containers

## **Tape!**

We have tape - we have masking tape, we have duct tape, we have colored tape, we have barrier tape

## **Stuff!**

We have other stuff - we have ladders, we have dollies, we have brown paper, we have Velcro, we have material, we have rope

## **Contracts!**

We have contracts - we have a school contract, we have sound contracts, we have parking agreements


## **People!**

We have people - we have custodians, we have cafeteria matrons, we have electricians, we have bus drivers, we have police, we have EMTs, we have a piano tuner, and we have volunteers

**And volunteers are the most important of all!**

---

P.S. - the Berrymen's song ends with the conclusion that they have to buy more stuff - NEFFA, too!



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# In Praise of Old Friends and Old Dances

Michael Prager

I remember, in my teenage years, meeting a great new friend and then shamefully neglecting an old friend. A more pleasant memory is rediscovering that old friend, whose presence shone with shared experience.

Many of us in contra dancing have a group of old friends that we don't see much any more. The friends I'm talking about are named Chorus Jig, Petronella, Sackett's Harbor, Hull's Victory, Money Musk, and Rory O'More. Of course, they're part of a wider circle. If you've been contra dancing for 15 years, you probably know a few of that circle; if you've been dancing 20 or more, you probably know most of them; but if you've been dancing for only a few years, it's doubtful you've made their acquaintance at all, for our old friends have fallen out of favor. Of course we need and want to have the lively, modern dances—the new friends that add excitement to our lives—but can't we have both them and our worthy old friends and be richer for it?

Why should we bring traditional dances back into the contra mainstream? The main reason is that they're fun to do—but there are other reasons, as well. For one, those dances built our tradition, and we shouldn't just throw them out. Nonetheless, I would not argue for bringing back old bores, but I've danced thousands of contras, and not many are more fun than Hull's Victory or more beautiful than British Sorrow.

Another reason to bring back our old friends is variety. Although many of the new contras are tremendous fun, they do tend to a set format: improper, equal, duple minor, very busy, and with a partner swing. Just as I change partners after each dance, I like variety in the dances I do. Because of their varied forms and moods, our classics dances supply variety, as well as fun and preservation of our tradition.

Where were you when you first heard the Beatles or Frank Sinatra sing? (If you don't like them, think of music meaningful to you.) Do you remember the feeling of dancing with a sweetheart to "your song?" The songs we hear, like sights or smells, bring back memories. Those old friends of ours—the classic contra dances—have their own tunes, and because of that, they too can bring back memories of happy years of dancing. When I hear Chorus Jig, I think of Ted Sannella's calling, and I'm twenty years younger. When I think of Money Musk, I remember Ralph Page. Hull's Victory brings back my first NEFFA Festival and a particularly blonde partner. I don't know when it happened, but those old dances became part of my life, right alongside my other old friends.

Memories are for the old, but we all hope to get old some day. Today, most of our younger dancers don't know the old dances,

(FRIENDS, Continued on page 5)

## Retraction of Suggestion in "Environmentally-Friendly Festival" Article

In an exuberance of recycling fervor, I suggested in the last NEFFA News that people might consider bringing their own plates and utensils for reuse at the Festival. Well, **DON'T DO IT!** The Natick Board of Health forbids such reuse. Serving utensils at the food booths might touch re-used plates that have mouth germs. So please consider other ways to help make the NEFFA Festival more environmentally-friendly, but don't bring plates from home for re-use.

The NEFFA Board supports finding ways to encourage a more environmentally-friendly festival but is not yet recommending specific ways to do that. Board members will be discussing this issue at a future meeting. Stay tuned!

— Jean Krogh, Director

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

**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: 1950 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, MA 02140 or (617) 354-1340.

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.

Mar 10-11 Downeast Country Dance Festival. Morse High School, Bath ME. Contact: 207-926-4225, 207-568-7597, 207-346-3761.

April 14-16 NEFFA. Natick High School. 617-354-1340. See the articles in this issue.

May 5-7 Hands Four Spring Weekend. East Hill Farm, Troy NH. Contact 978-670-9333.

June 22-29 Folk Arts Center sessions at Pinewoods. Plymouth MA. Contact 617-491-6083.

July 28-30 Cranberry Dulcimer Gathering. Unitarian Church, Binghamton NY. Contact: Ed Ware, 1259 Fowler Place, Binghamton NY 13903. 607-669-4653, e.ware@ieee.org, people.ne.mediaone.net/jonw1/cranberry/index.html

Aug 5-18 Balkanfolk 2000 Festival, Koprivshitsa Bulgaria. Contact: www.balkanfolk.com, zornitsa@info.unacs.bg

**Always call ahead before travelling great distances to go to dances!**

*(THING, Continued from page 1)*

you'd like to see expanded, encourage qualified performers you know to apply; the program committee will certainly consider new applicants for future Festivals. Also, we always have to consider what will work at NEFFA—most dance events are no more than an hour long, so a teacher needs to be able to offer a satisfying amount of material in that time. And there are some kinds of events that don't work well logistically or we simply consider inappropriate for NEFFA—preserving traditional folk arts is a strong part of our mission and vision.

On the folk music and song side, the issue of what is “traditional” comes up plenty, and the committee must exercise a fair amount of judgement deciding what is “traditional folk” and what is not. In addition, we try to offer a wide variety of instrumental workshops, sing-alongs, concerts, family events, storytelling, discussions, and so on. Again, the committee is constrained by applications it receives—if no one applies to teach a kazoo workshop, we don't offer one that year.

In all areas of the program, our vision for NEFFA is that it be an inclusive, enjoyable, friendly Festival, and we seek performers and event leaders who contribute to that atmosphere.

We welcome feedback, so if you have thoughts on any of this, on anything that happens at this year's Festival, or on anything else, please fill out a Festival evaluation or get in touch with a member of the program committee. Enjoy this year's offerings and have a great NEFFA!

*(FRIENDS, Continued from page 4)*

dances that could come to mean a great deal to them as the decades pass. That's the final reason to invite our old friends back: they have made their way into my heart, and I know they will win others if they are given a chance. Tradition, fun, variety, and sentiment—take your pick or take them all! But please, call Hull's Victory for me, won't you?

*Mike Prager <mprager@alum.mit.edu> has been enjoying square and contra dancing for 21 years--in New England, California, and the Southeast. He now lives in Beaufort, North Carolina.*



**N·E·F·F·A**

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