

**The Festival is a-
comin!**

**New book by friends
of NEFFA**

Call for Nominations

NEFFA



NEWS

Winter 2015 – Vol. XLI #4

**Some minutes: just a
little sampling!**

**Farewells to NEFFA
friends**

**NEFFA Festival—April 15-17, 2016
One week earlier than usual!
Mark your calendars!**

Advance Sales for 2016 Festival

NEFFA will again offer advance ticket sales for the Festival in 2016.

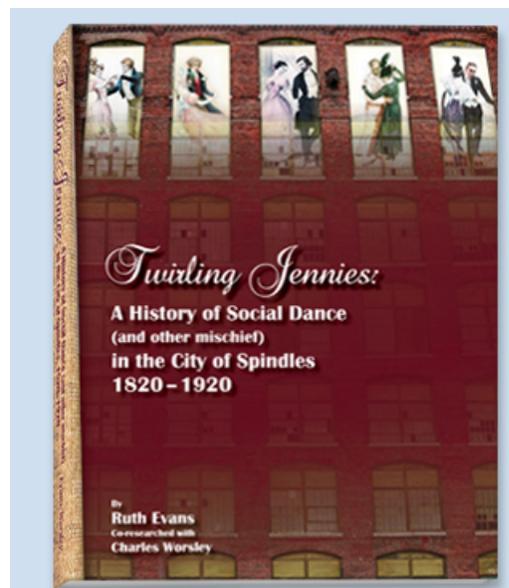
As a member, you have access to ticket pricing averaging 15% off. The member discount code for 2016 is "**BALANCE**". *This code will be required to access member prices for advance ticket sales, so please retain it for your later use.*

Advance ticketing via <http://tickets.neffa.org> will open no later than March 1st. Questions? Email advancetix@neffa.org or leave a message at (617) 299-1590.

-Don Veino

Twirling Jennies: A History of Social Dance (and Other Mischief) in the City of Spindles 1820–1920 is now available online and in select stores. Written by local dancer and author Ruth Evans, and co-researched with her husband, Charles Worsley, this handsomely illustrated volume draws on a wide variety of sources to weave together a hundred years of dance history with the story of America’s Industrial Revolution.

Much has been written about the textile city of Lowell, and about the mill girls who once worked there, but very little has been said about the dance world of these young women. Controversial and pervasive, was partnered dance a harmless entertainment or the road to the brothel? In discussing the evolution of Lowell’s nineteenth-century dance scene, *Twirling Jennies* touches on such topics as social mores, sexual harassment, labor, technology, immigration, pastimes, laws, and language.



For the dancer, there are detailed discussions of specific dances and steps, from the balletic roots of square dancing to a reprint of Vernon and Irene Castle’s 1914 Fox Trot magazine article. For the Lowell buff, there are accounts of people, places and events, including an illustrated tour of Lowell’s Victorian dance halls and the buildings that housed them. There are fascinating tidbits such as Lowell’s sensational Tango Trial or the rise and fall of New England’s trolley parks.

Ruth Evans has been involved with dancing and with textile-related fields for over forty years and made her first foray into writing professionally in 1998. She also has computer graphics certification from UMass Lowell, training that allowed her to repair, restore, and arrange the 300-plus illustrations in *Twirling Jennies* to great effect. Her husband, Charles Worsley, has been researching and performing period-style dancing for over thirty years. Married in 1999, and Lowell residents since 2009, the couple are a familiar sight on the dance floor at Lowell’s Annual Folk Festival.



Twirling Jennies is published by Misenchanted Press and is available as an oversized trade paperback. More information can be found at <http://www.twirlingjennies.com/>.

	Editor: Dan Pearl Mailing: Dayle Watts	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Issue</th> <th>Deadline</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Spring</td> <td>Feb. 1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Summer</td> <td>May 15</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fall</td> <td>Aug. 15</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Winter</td> <td>Nov. 1</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Issue	Deadline	Spring	Feb. 1	Summer	May 15	Fall	Aug. 15	Winter	Nov. 1
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Editorial Review: Terry Huffaker, 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 neffa_news@neffa.org**. Opinions of individuals are not necessarily the opinion of the NEFFA Executive Board.

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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, and the Ralph Page Dance Legacy Weekend. NEFFA also supports 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 for the Board and for Officers. 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 is 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.

Office		Name	Term Expires	Eligible for re-election
President		Terry Huffaker	2017	Y
Vice President	·	Dave Eisenstadter	2016	Y
Secretary		Beth Parkes	2017	always
Treasurer	·	Ralph Jones	2016	always
Nominating Committee	·	Audrey Knuth	2016	
		Sarah Hirsch	2017	
		Molly Bledsoe	2018	
Directors	·	<i>vacant</i>		Y
	·	Jonathan Cannon	2016	Y
	·	Susan Levitin	2016	
	·	Bruce Randall	2016	Y
		Nick Arango	2017	Y
	·	<i>vacant</i>	2017	
		Jessica Johnson	2017	Y
		Carl West	2017	Y

Please send all suggestions and direct nominations to Nominating Committee Chair, Audrey Knuth, by email (audreylk24@gmail.com). The deadline for nominations is February 15, 2016. Feel free to contact any board member with an inquiry regarding the roles and responsibilities of the various positions.



The good news is that we are holding the 2016 Festival ticket prices at 2013 prices. Yes, we can because we have faith that you believe in what we are doing and want to see the NEFFA way continue. We are a financially prudent organization. No campaign big bucks stop here. We keep it local.

But NEFFA does need parts. Most years what we take in at the gate does not cover expenses. The bridge from year to year is that folks become members, becoming part of NEFFA. The membership money and donations cover the shortfalls; the people make the Festival by coming, by talking, by playing, by dancing, by making, by bringing others and by volunteering. Honestly, we don't offer any of the big incentives. We rely on the performers who give at the door, the volunteers who give time and money, the dollar bills that fill the jugs at the Info tables, the hours of work done freely by committee folks and board members and that person who becomes a member.

Countless times we have talked about spending more in advertising to get the numbers up, get new folks to come. But each time it has come up (and since I have been with the board, every year we debate this topic over again), we look at the Festival evaluations and debate the merits of additional flyers, newspaper ads, Facebook pages and it always comes down to folks come because they had a friend who was excited enough to encourage them to come. Someone once told me that we do not appeal to the mass market, and the most we can expect is less than 1% of any town or community to be interested in what we do. I do not know of any way to advertise to that 1% in any cost effective way.

So, dear members and friends, encourage others to come, to join, to partake in what we know is one of the best communities around. The word "remember" can be "re-member" to join as a part again.

Join, or rejoin here <http://neffa.org/join>

I am forever getting e-mails that tell me how we can be doing our business better, making our membership grow, etc. Just today in my inbox "Your Membership Thought Leadership Webinar Series". I smile knowing that they don't have the slightest clue. But you and I do.....Thanks for loving NEFFA, and keeping it vibrant.

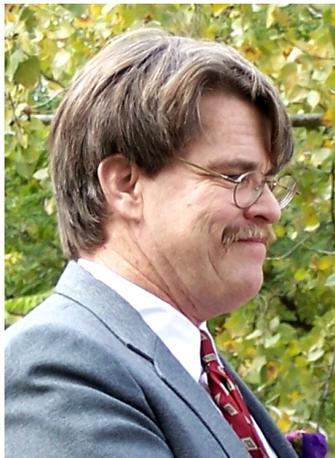
Feel free to contact me,

Terry Huffaker

Tee.huffaker@gmail.com

978 263 5468

In Memoriam



Many of you will remember **Matt Oldale** from the Concord and Rehoboth dances. Contra dancing was one of his biggest joys and passions. Matthew and I met on the dance floor, and most of our "courtship" occurred there as well. He prided himself on his phrasing, and always made sure his partners were laughing and smiling with a bit of silliness. His wit and kindness was omnipresent. Sailing Beetle Cats on his beloved Cape Cod was another of the joys of his life, along with all fuzzy creatures. If Matt went to someone's house, the first thing he did was find the cats or dogs to say hello to.

What most folks did not know about Matthew was that he had been a type I diabetic since he was 15. He had had a successful kidney transplant in the 90's that allowed him a decade of continued vitality. His transplanted kidney began to fail early in our marriage, and he began dialysis again in 2009. This was the reason you hadn't seen him in some time - he did not have the energy to dance and was frustrated any time he tried. He had been on the transplant list from 2009 until he died on September 6, 2015. While we had had several calls this past year and were very hopeful, a matching kidney did not come through soon enough.

Matt and I began our life together when we met on Labor Day Sunday in 2003 at the Brattleboro Dawn Dance. We celebrated our "Anniversary" there every year until he was unable to dance anymore. It seems fitting to me that any who can and care to meet at the Labor Day Dawn Dance September 2016 should come together to dance in the memory of this most joyful, kind person. NEFFA and the Joslin Diabetes Center are accepting donations in his memory. But one of the best ways to keep his memory alive is to always remember to dance with joy, courtesy, and kindness. – Joan Oldale

We will miss his smiling presence at the festival. Thanks to those who have given gifts in Memory of Matthew Oldale to NEFFA. – Terry Huffaker, NEFFA President



It is with regret that I report the passing of a long time member of our dancing community. **Cornelia (Kee) Spruyt Learnard** especially enjoyed Contra, International & and Scottish dancing. Kee was a member of NEFFA for over 40 years, and volunteered her time at the Festival for many of year up until the early 1990's. She served as chair of Hospitality in 1958, and was on the NEFFA Board in 1981.



Jeff Martell, 50, of Northampton MA died recently in an auto accident on the way to a gig in New York. Jeff, well-known in western Massachusetts as a folk performer and organizer was a key volunteer for Greenfield's Green River Festival. He managed the Sales department for the Country Dance and Song Society of Easthampton, MA.

September 20, 2015 NEFFA Executive Board Meeting Minutes.

President's Report

I've been asking committees to find co-chairs so that we have a more robust environment. I know that makes it harder to run the committee. If you can bring in another person I think it will make us (NEFFA) stronger. That's my first goal: to find more people to be co-chairs to build a stronger NEFFA. Especially when we have less time to organize before the Festival.

NEFFA has been in the news. We were on the radio and in Greensboro NC blog.

Matthew Oldsdale, dancer in Brattleboro, etc. passed away recently.

Bill Cowie moved to accept the committee members and their voting and non-voting status. Ralph seconded.

Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report

Over the past 10 years we have lost \$6000 on the Festival. This has been offset by tee-shirts sales and membership. I believe we are in a very good financial situation. We do not need to be concerned about ticket prices from a financial point of view.

Old Business

Credit card ticket sales

We eventually want to be able to take credit cards at the Festival. Nick Arrango did a presentation and we are thinking of doing a beta test in a limited way at the Festival.

Terry: Nick, Carl, Harold, and Susan will take this outside of this meeting and come up with a proposal.

Low Volunteer sign-up

Our volunteer chair is getting married today so is not here to discuss this. Bill: was this a significant issue? Beth: yes, several places had trouble.

Mexican Restaurant

They are going to do another demonstration (as they did with the wood carvers this year.) They may be doing a food booth. Maureen is going to talk to them about that.

Operations and Signage

Harold: I need to discuss the 8-hour shifts with the Fire Dept.

Performer Ticketing

Linda: Gillian and I met to discuss ritual teams. We have changed the time-line for ritual teams. Gillian is very positive about asking them to give some sort of donation or come up with a separate ticket. They are 30 to 50% of the total number of performer tickets. And their performance time is about 15-20 minutes (a 50 minute slot divided between 3 teams). Gillian believes that asking them to buy an affordable ticket is not going to be a problem. They understand this. We will have a proposal soon. We will not be doing any changes with the rest of the performers at this time.

Program

We have very specific steps in putting the schedule together. The application process is up. Please encourage folks to apply sooner rather than later. Our mission is traditional folk music and song.

Terry: does everyone know the Festival is a week early? Linda: we sent out to about 500 performers.

Session Badge Checking

Terry: Alan said he did not have enough volunteers this year. If he had enough he would have assigned someone to sit outside dance halls to check tickets.

Robert: I saw some discussion about session leaders announcing it. It seems to me that sounds like a great idea. Linda: that isn't going to happen. There are just so many things we can ask the performers to do. There are 12-15 rooms with performances going on at every time. They only have 50 minutes and every minute they lose is precious. In an ideal world we have a separate team of people who check tickets. They would have a special badge that says they are doing that job. Susan: could we have someone at session switching times, not an all the time thing, but when we think there is the most bang for our buck.

Harvey: it sounds like we have gotten lax about ticket checking and we just need to do it. Michael: my understanding is that this has to do with the Saturday day/evening changeover. Terry: there was an issue with the timing of the medley. If you are a member of the Festival Committee you have the right to check tickets. Michael: with the correction of the schedule, will the issue become a non-issue? Are we expending a lot of effort on a non-issue? Robert: I have done ticket checking at various times. There have always been a fair number, we should put some emphasis here.

Carl: Perhaps on the grids we put a colored chart of the session times. On the big grids.

Terry: Alan and I talked about this and make sure the safety people are aware of the session colors they are seeing. Harold: it needs to be a strong color change.

Bad Behavior

Terry: we had a discussion in June that several people complained about dancing behavior. Michael: I got some information about the BIDA signs. I have not pursued that. We need to talk about what they need to be. I am a little ambivalent about those particular signs. I am happy to talk to people about what makes sense.

Bruce: I'm not sure what type of bad behavior people were concerned about. Linda: Basically there were some folks, dancers being rude to folks. People who were clearly beginners in a contra line and the reception they received was not the stellar "We are all in this together" that we want to see. I don't know how extensive it was, but even if it was a few people we need to respond and make sure that people know that "we hear you." A lot of work needs to be done, we shouldn't go crazy overboard, but we could put the message out there. I think this is important. Bruce: Are the people doing bad behavior are they going to read and heed signs? Terry: I would like to see a sign that tells people what to do if they experience a problem. Nick: the purpose is not to tell people what not to do, but to express our values and say "this is what we believe in." Harold: so they see that we don't endorse this behavior. Michael: I'm starting to like the idea of bathroom signs. They are pretty bare and something succinct that says "we pride ourselves on being a community." Terry: "NEFFA's way"

Food

Terry: Maureen and co-chair Christine Day are doing food. I am still looking for someone to do same-day setup on site.

Children's Activity room

Susan: Layli Busby is co-chairing with me and will hopefully be there this year. We are in better shape this year. We looked at the schools and we thought about how to bring the children's activity room closer to the core of the Festival. There are a set of rooms in the back of the high school, down a ramp, where we have had nursing mothers in the past. Two rooms (I think they are art rooms) one could be activities and another a story-telling room. We would keep the nursing mothers where they are. We have been inadvertently saying to young families that they are not welcome. Linda: if you have been to HS 125, this is behind there and down a hallway. There are other rooms down there. Harold: these are the special needs rooms. Michael: we are doing this this year? Harold: yes. Terry: this means 119 MS is available. It is a fairly quiet hallway. Linda: we are switching 108 with 119. It is better for performances. Folk bazaar will have 108. Harold: it will mean more people passing folk bazaar on their way to 119.

New Business

Grants Committee

Robert: we would like to be authorized to spend up to \$2000 on grants. Most years we have not spent this.

Beth: I believe you are perpetually authorized. Ralph: **I move we reauthorize the grants committee, Linda seconded.**

Last year we had 5 applications, we granted 3 and denied 2. Ralph: I don't remember actually paying these.

Robert: the \$300 risk sharing loan was not needed. The others will be coming through or were paid.

Motion carried.

Timelines

Terry: Information, Program, & Crafts timelines were in your pre-meeting package. The timelines are a way of letting people know what the committees do. I have also put together a yearly agenda out on a Google doc that

lets you see what is coming up.
If you are the head of a committee, please get a timeline in to me.

Meditation Room

Harold: we have a nap room, but we do not have a place where people can just sort of “chill.” Perhaps we need a “NEFFA meditation” room where we could set it up as a place to just relax for a while. It could have a table with reminders of our heritage to help people “meditate.” Harvey: would there be additional cost? Harold: I do not believe so. We pay a flat fee for the school rooms. I would need someone to help put together a tape track of quiet music that we could have playing. Michael: what room number? Harvey: not yet determined.

Festival Setup

Harold: because we don’t have Thursday, everybody will need to think about what Friday and Saturday will look like. We cannot get into the school until the children leave, so we have 3 hours to set up. We may still be setting up while the Festival is running on Friday. Think about “what are your priorities?” It is not going to business as usual. Sound, especially, needs to think about what is happening when. We cannot come in as NEFFA until the busses leave.



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