

Florida Folk Dancer

A Newsletter of the Florida Folk Dance Council, Inc.

February 2004

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

From: ANNIE8@aol.com

My dear Fellow Folkdancers,

February 20th looms VERY close on the horizon, and the excitement increases with each passing day. The program planned is so exciting, the syllabi almost completed, and meals selections - all are just waiting for YOU! As a matter of fact, the closing date for registration is February 10th, so HURRY! (**See the enclosed registration forms for last minute registration!**) If you have a guest who wants to attend, or yourself who might have been delayed for whatever reason, and it is past the 10th, get in touch with me personally and I will see what can be done (all contact info on the masthead).

The reason for the deadline is mainly because of meal preparation. For those who are regular attendees (like for YEARS) already know the procedure, but for those who might not; Christian Church Conference Center in Silver Springs, Florida (where we have the FFDC Camp) has no kitchen for meal preparation. All meals for ALL activities at that Center have to be catered in. That is why it is so important for you to circle the meals for which you are partaking to make sure there is enough food. And if you are more than 45 minutes late for a meal, you just might not get one, because once all are served - whisk - the caterers disappear with any remaining food. But you wouldn't dream of being late, would you?

For all those who have called me about not quite understanding the registration form - nights and meals, etc.... There is so much we have to cover on the form, it is difficult to get it all in and to keep its clarity. But each year it gets better and better, so next year it should be

perfect. But this has never stopped the wonderful gathering of our truly "family of dancers." Please come join us - we adopt immediately. This reminds me of a beautiful little poem.

*He drew a circle to shut me out,
Heretic, rebel, and thing to flout,
But love and I had the wit to win,
We (folkdancers) drew a circle to let him
in. (Edwin Markham)*

Please come join our circle of love

- Ann Kessler

REFLECTIONS ON DANCE

by Dan Lampert <dan@webuniv.com>

Some dance groups are different than others. The Israeli folk dance group, which meets on Monday nights at the JCC in Maitland, Florida, is a good example. You arrive, you put a few dollars into the wicker basket, and you say hello to **Debbie Meitin**, the leader, before you start dancing. These things all sound normal. They are. But when I visited the group on the evening of January 12, 2004, I realized that there are other hidden qualities to this group.

After leading us through some dances, Debbie Meitin turned over teaching to one of the dancers, **Barb**. Barb is the expert on one particular dance, and she led us through it slowly, and then the music played, and she danced in front of the group so we could follow along. While taking a picture of this (see picture below), I realized that dance groups have many talents. The 'teacher' may not be the only 'teacher' in the group.



Barb (in foreground) teaches a dance.

Another talented person in the Israeli group is **Shimrit**, who was a professional dancer / performer in Israel. I don't know all the details, but she moved to Orlando and has since joined the Israeli group here. Shimrit brings a jazzy-style and youthful spirit to the group. She expresses herself wonderfully in dance. For



Shimrit usually moves too fast for my camera, so here, she posed in her "jazz step" just for me.

example, there's a part of one dance where we all move to the center. Instead of taking the usual steps forward, Shimrit will move like a belly dancer -- her hips and arms moving gracefully through the air. This added level of expression gives the other dancers a goal, a model to emulate.

Debbie's group enjoys the contributions of Shimrit, Barb, and others who participate at different times through the year. Every group has talent, and my simple suggestion is that you

cultivate it. You can ask different people to explain how they perform certain movements. You can let others teach occasionally. If you cultivate your group's talent, you will retain more members! They'll be more involved!



Happy dancers with Debbie Meitin in the middle, facing the camera.

DANCETOPIA 2004

From Jenneine dancnar@atlantic.net

FEBRUARY 27-29: AUGUSTA, GA

Here's the scoop on a wonderful weekend of Balkan Dance with Zeljko Jergan, renowned choreographer and teacher. Zeljko will teach Croatian and other Balkan dances - line, couple, foursome, with a good mix of easy, intermediate and advanced levels. Ethnic variety includes, in addition to Croatian: Yugoslavia, Gypsy, Italy, Austria, Bosnia, Montenegro, Hungary, Slavonia.

I will be glad to mail or fax you information and registration forms ASAP.

The weekend will have the typical IFD format: **Friday night** 8:30 - 10 p.m., (we'll be there at 7:00 for registration and request dancing). **Saturday** - continental breakfast with authentic nut strudel; morning and afternoon teaching sessions plus an evening dance party.

Sunday - continental breakfast 9 a.m.; review and taping 10 - noon.

Our venue is beautiful, St. Mary on the Hill School Gymnasium - a new facility with a gorgeous wood floor. There is an adjoining cafeteria, separated by glass doors, so we can

snack and shmooze and still see the dancing. St. Mary's is in a very nice and safe area of Augusta, adjacent to Augusta State University, a nice campus for strolling and fresh air.

Karyn Kelly, our professional, certified Massage Therapist will offer blissful foot massages, in a private setting, for \$5.00.

The cost is \$65.00 for the entire weekend. Friday night only - \$15. Saturday - \$50.; Sunday session - \$10.

This week the temperature here should hit the mid 60's, and by the 27th, Spring will be making some advanced forays.

Please make checks payable to: Jeremy Pearson, and mail to Chelley Gutin, AIFDC, 724 Somerset Way, Augusta, GA 30909.

Our brochure (ask for it) has a map showing how to get to St. Mary School from I-20 and more detailed information on the weekend.

NEWS ON AMAR LATHI

From Jan <DCLathi@aol.com>

Hi everyone! I am happy to report that Amar has only four more visits to the "Zap Center". And, we are hopeful to get plane tickets for sometime next week for sunny, warm, snow-free, iceless, barrenless, FLORIDA!

I am probably more excited than Amar to return home – probably he will miss his sister-in-law's Indian cooking, but I will be so happy to see y'all and be in our own bed. As for dance camp, Amar can not attend and does not want to. I desperately want to come but only if I can get good care for him. We'll see, but it does not seem likely. I will miss everyone. Another big storm is due in during the night through noon tomorrow. But the end is in sight and I love it! See some of y'all soon!

Love from the two of us,
-- Amar and Jan

GAINESVILLE SHINES

By Joyce Dewsbury joysong@ufl.edu

It seems that every time we turn around we receive another invitation to dance somewhere.

In recent weeks we danced at Gator Nights which is a special event held at the J. Wayne Reitz Union at the University of Florida. There are all sorts of activities as movies and entertainment. The last time we participated in this we danced out on the colonnade at the Union. But this time the performances took place in one of the ballrooms and we danced on a raised plywood stage. We performed Keciko, Dansul Fetelor de la Crihalma, Rustemul, and Milisimor. The audience was very enthusiastic. We invited people up to the stage to learn some dances and at least twenty people joined us. Shelley and Jenneine taught several easy dances and everyone had fun. Then Josan and Aman performed some Bhangra dances. They also encouraged folks to join them on the stage and taught some basic Bhangra movements.

Four of our dancers went to one of the local elementary schools and taught some dances to the children. The children really enjoyed this experience, as did our dancers. Community outreach is always a good service, which our group has been happy to provide when we have the time. The most recent performance was on Sunday, January 25. Four of us (Raluca, Shelley, Yang, and I) danced for the kickoff event for People Awareness Week, which has taken place for at least a dozen years at the University of Florida. All the events and celebrations of People Awareness Week are geared toward promoting and educating the students about diversity. The kickoff was a special event and even the new UF president attended. Attendance on Friday nights has been gradually increasing and that is a good thing. Dancing is always much more fun if there are more folks to dance.

There is a very happy event that took place recently. Jenna and Toshi are the very proud parents of a little baby girl, Talia Kei Nishida, who was born on January 18, 2004. She weighed 8 pounds and was 20 inches long. A picture posted on the web shows a beautiful little baby girl. We welcome the newest folk dancer with great gladness.

ST. PETE DANCERS

By Terry Abrahams terry.abrahams@verizon.net

Lo and behold - pictures! This is the St. Pete group called "Shalom Dancers" run by Jeana Kibel. I perform with her group.



This was a Hanukah show.

The second picture is us singing and playing (I'm on the accordion behind the pianist) Hanukah songs at a performance in Heritage Park in St. Pete.



AFRICAN DANCE WITH NONI

From: Raluca Ioana Rosca <rarosca@ufl.edu>

Last night's workshop with Noni was just great! Thank you so much, Shelley and Yang, for working hard and making this event possible.

Florida Gym was full of people--most of them playing table tennis and basketball, the other ones dancing with us (the court partitions surely came handy)! 60% of the dancers were new to

our group, and hopefully we'll see more of them regularly on Fridays. And of course, the Spinal Tech people had a free show while playing the music for Noni.

After a thorough series of stretching exercises, Noni Ojouba taught Mandjani, a 'dance of power' from West Africa. Traditionally done by teenagers and young people, Mandjani is a very energetic dance, with an 'up and out' feel to it. In fact, one of the movements reminded me of Bhangra.

We appropriately ended the evening with some cooling/stretching exercises, and with Noni's talk about the dance rhythms of Africa. We could have stayed for hours more, but our reservation time for the evening ended at 10 pm (and the basketball lovers were reclaiming their space...)

Once again, an evening w. Noni was a fun, energetic and educational event. I highly recommend her!

See you all dancing,
Raluca

Another view on the same event...

By Joyce Dewsbury <joysong@ufl.edu>

On Wednesday, January 28, the University of Florida Folk Dancers presented an African Dance Workshop with instructor Noni Ojouba. About a year ago we had also invited Noni to do a workshop and that was so good that she was invited back. Those who attended this time had a great time. The dances she taught required a lot of energy and Shelley, the president of our group and a young student, said that all her muscles hurt the next day. After the teaching everyone sat down and Noni talked about African dancing, its history, influences, and evolution. Raluca and Shelley said that the talk was fascinating and very informative.

On Thursday, January 29, the Roumanian student group was invited by the UF Library to present a program as part of the annual People Awareness Week. Our very own Raluca was the speaker and she gave a most interesting talk with slides about Romania, her country. After Raluca's talk everyone who attended was eager to make travel arrangements to go to visit Romania.

FOR VALENTINE MONTH...KIND OF CUTE.

From: Joy joy077@webtv.net

<http://www.e-cards.com/occasion/valentines/loveyou.html>

WEB TIP FROM RALUCA

By Raluca Ioana Rosca <rarosca@ufl.edu>

An excellent site on Bulgaria's traditional costumes, dance and music:

<http://www.eliznik.org.uk/Bulgaria/index.html>

ISRAELI DANCE WORKSHOP

GUEST TEACHER DANY BENSALOM

Directly from Israel Saturday, March 27 and Sunday, March 28, 2004

Saturday 7:30PM to 11:30PM - teaching and dance party

Sunday 9AM to 8PM - teaching, review and requests

JCC of Greater Orlando
851 N. Maitland Avenue
Maitland, FL

Cost: \$45 in advance and \$50 at the door, \$10 for Sunday dinner.

For more information, please contact Debbie Dorsky Meitin at 407/788-7277 or email dmeitin@cfl.rr.com

TAMPA TELLS ALL

From Terry Abrahams
<terry.abrahams@verizon.net>

Hi everyone. I'm just recovering from Snowball - the big contra weekend put on by the Tampa group and it was terrific!!! Someone promised me he'd give me some pictures, so far no go, but...oh well. The bands were great, the callers were great, all good dancers, and the Gulf

Coast Casino can't be beat for floor space and floor itself!

The only problem was, it interfered with Pat's retirement party. I heard from Andi and Ursula though that it was terrific as well. I hate conflicting dates. Still, looking forward to a great camp weekend in Ocala. Ann has worked hard to make everything run very smoothly, the teachers should be great and just seeing all of you will be the usual treat we all look forward to. T-shirts are in the making (hope you ordered yours), buttons too and snacks sound good already, Suzie and Richie will be selling their "stuff" and that's always fun! And who knows? A skit may be in the making...remember the dance of the women's bathroom? What more do we need?? Our local groups continue as always.

Israeli has entertained a few from England, Judith's group is steady and holding. Some still traveling to visit other groups, some still swinging. Too bad we can't all match the contra rage, but then again, as my button says: If international dancing were easy, everyone would do it! See you soon! -- Terry

REFERRALS FROM OUR TEACHERS

From Carol McGinn jraybaker@earthlink.net

I've taught the Albuquerque folk dancers Moj Maro, Mavromata, Bracno Oro, Paraliakos, and Batrineasca that Lee Otterholt taught at last year's dance camp. All were well liked. When one of the Albuquerque dance groups was looking for someone to teach a workshop in April I recommended Lee. Seeing the videotape Julius Horvath made helped in their decision. Thanks FFDC and Julius. Now I get to dance with Lee in Feb. and April! I'm really looking forward to seeing everyone in February. Best regards to everyone, -- Carol McGinn

FLORIDA FOLK DANCER

Florida Folk Dancer is a monthly publication of the Florida Folk Dance Council, Inc., a non-profit corporation whose purpose is to further knowledge, performance, and recreational enjoyment of International Folk Dance.

President: Ann Kessler
3295 Gorse Court
Palm Harbor, FL 34684
Phone (727) 789-6480
annie8@aol.com

Editor /
Historian: Dan Lampert
PO Box 151719
Altamonte Spgs., FL 32715
dan@webuniv.com

VP: Nancy Wilusz
3880 El Poinier Court
Sarasota FL 34232
edwardnan@webtv.net

Secretary /
Treasurer: J.P. Miller
2006 Oak Street
Melbourne FL 32901
jpmiller@cfl.rr.com

Committees: Advisors to the Board:
Pat Henderson
Terry Abrahams
John Daly

Nominating Committee:
Terry Abrahams

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Subscriptions are \$15 per year and include membership in the Florida Folk Dance Council. The membership year runs from one Annual Camp (usually February) to the next. Members can receive the newsletter electronically if desired.

Check our web site for further information on folk dancing in Florida: www.folkdance.org

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Return Address

FFDC Newsletter Editor
Post Office Box 151719
Altamonte Springs, FL 32715-1719
USA

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