

Florida Folk Dancer

A Newsletter of the Florida Folk Dance Council, Inc.

May 2007

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Spring Fling Success in Tampa

by Terry Abrahams

In spite of the fact that no one from Melbourne or Gainesville came, we had 38 people at the Spring Fling held in Tampa on May 5 at the Kate Jackson Recreation Center! John Daly got sick at the last moment and couldn't come - we hope he's all right. Dancers came from Orlando/Winter Park, Sarasota and Palm Harbor, Daytona Beach, Ocala, Frostproof, Miami, Palm Coast, and Atlanta (yeah! Jim and Sara Osborn!). The biggest surprise was that Tampa dancers came out of the woodwork!!! There were 15 of us, including some who don't often do international folk dance, or haven't in years - Lee (Woodfin) Beery, Dylan Conway, Kathie Aagaard, Ken Kwo, Ursula Tison, and Bill Schwarz. We count Russell Ericksen, who's dancing with us while staying in Plant City - down from Michigan - among the Tampa dancers, too.

Not only was it a good showing, but the dancing was great, thanks to people's good requests, and Andy's, Bobby's, Bill's and Judith's good picks, as they took turns running the program. There was some cross training, as people shared dances learned at other places. Terry taught dances from Rang Tang (see [Rang Tang](#)) and Bobby taught dances learned at the National Folk Organization Conference (see report in the April 2007 Florida Folk Dancer).



Spring Fling Participants: Gary Lanker, Kathie Aagaard, Caroline Lanker, Pat Henderson, Bobbie Ward, Jan Lathi, Russell Ericksen, Lucille Ericksen, Terry Abrahams, Barbara Ward Donovan, Julius Horvath, Bobby Quibodeaux, Judith Baizan, Dylan Conway, Felissa Gaber, Eva Gaber, Ernesto Baizan, Donna Young, Andy Pollock, Lila Gaber, Ursula Tison, Jim Osborn, Eva Stunkel, Sara Osborn, Bonnie Olson, Bill Schwarz, Lee Woodfin Beery, Virginia Marszal. Others who arrived after lunch are not shown.

Live music was provided for a few dances by Kathie Aagaard, Terry Abrahams and Dylan Conway. The dancing was really high energy, everyone danced except a couple of non-dancing spouses, and we did all our favorites!

The room worked out real well, with its wood floor and enough space that we set up a food area for the whole day and didn't have to move tables. We started dancing at 10:00, broke at 12:30 for lunch and, as usual, people brought really good stuff to eat!

We had a little FFDC meeting during lunch. We tried to watch the Kentucky Derby at 5:00, but couldn't get the station. So we kept on dancing. We broke just before 7:00 to clean up, then 12 of us went for dinner at Bella's, an Italian restaurant a few minutes away.

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So – another good time was had with the Florida Folkdance Council Gang! Thanks to all of you who came and made it such a nice day. Thanks for the good food, including [Italian Zucchini Crescent Pie](#) (recipe in this newsletter). Thanks to everyone who helped set up, tear down and run the program. It was truly a team effort.



Spring Fling Pix

Top row: Felissa Gaber, Eva Gaber, Lila Gaber and Ernesto Baizan; Bonnie Olson. Second row: musicians Kathie Aagaard, Terry Abrahams and Dylan Conway; Eva Stunkel; Ken Kwo, Bobby Quibodeaux and Delores Lustig. Third row: Andy Pollock and Dylan Conway; Ann Kessler, Jan Lathi, Thekla Kahn, Susan Barach, Ursula Tison and Gary Lanker; Terry Abrahams; Nil Wilkins. Fourth row: Virginia Marszal; Judith Baizan programming.

Photos by Caroline Lanker



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Rang Tang

by Terry Abrahams

Rang Tang found Nancy Wilusz, Andi, Ursula and I in one car, Judith and Ernesto on a plane (yes, they have almost free traveling privileges (albeit standby) since Roxana works for an airline (she has just become a flight attendant for Continental – I am SO jealous). We got to Atlanta early on Friday (spending a night along the way), had lunch with two gal friends who weren't attending the camp (Israeli dancers), did some serious shopping at a big mall, then dinner with Bob and Chelley (who attended our camp), then the actual Rang Tang, then worked crossword puzzles all the way home, ate a lot in both directions, had some good laughs, hey – what a great weekend!

We all had a wonderful time at Rang Tang. Bata was, if anything, even better than at our camp. We have four new dances to show/teach you. The band was excellent for evening dancing, the food was delicious – breakfast and breaks – the socializing wonderful. Opet was there to sell stuff, which was wonderful since we haven't been able to have them at our camp. I bought all kinds of good things, as did my partners in crime. I stayed with David and Dorothy, who also housed Bata, and that gave me some special time with him, which was really nice since I didn't get much of that while busy running the camp.



L to R: Nancy Wilusz, Andi Kapplin, Ursula Tison at Rang Tang; Judith Baizan, Ernesto Baizan and Liz Noonan at Liz's House, David Digby, Dorothy Archer and Miroslav "Bata" Marcetic at David and Dorothy's House



Photos by Terry Abrahams

President's Letter

Congratulations to Tampa for an excellent Spring Fling. Various personal issues kept the Melbourne group on the sidelines. Happily everyone had a grand time. It shows that no one group is essential to the success of folk dance in Florida.

That said, I'm really sorry I couldn't be part of the fun. Hopefully all the issues will be resolved soon. My next personal problem is the death of my half-brother in Tennessee. So this is brief because I'm getting ready to go to the service.

Keep dancing, and thanks for all of the concern and good wishes.

John



Zelyaskov Family - Musicians at Rang Tang

Folk Dance Resources on the Web

Dunav "The Sharing Place for Balkan Music and Dance" www.dunav.org.il Dance videos and music. Updated each week with new music.

FolkDance Music folkdancemusic.net This site has a lot of stuff, including links (in the Online section) to other sites like the one listed above.

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A Critique of the Hungarian State Folk Ensemble

by Julius Horvath

(From a letter written to the Daytona Beach News-Journal in response to another piece in that newspaper regarding the HSFE performance in Daytona Beach April 11.)

To compare this performance with that of their last appearance in Daytona Beach some ten years ago is too wide for this writer to attempt to describe. I invite you to view the videos of the Dr. Rabai and Sandor Timar directed HSFE to see the truly remarkable and varied program the ensemble is capable of. At that time, they were ranked with the top folk ensembles of the world.

It is, unfortunately, most obvious that their new director and choreographer, Gábor Mihály, does not have the knowledge, experience, talent, or professional ability to lead that former prestigious organization. His appointment was purely political, not technical wisdom. Truly tragic!

The Ensemble started to deteriorate soon after Sandor Timar retired after 25 years as their director and choreographer. Ference Sebo, a fantastic musician and famous orchestra leader, took over. Being a musician, rather than a dancer, he wisely

used all the old choreographies of Timar and Rabai, the HSFE's first two directors. The ensemble was still quite creditable. Sebo left the ensemble after a little over five years to form the now prestigious Hungarian House of Heritage with László Kelemen.

Mihály's leadership changed the course of the HSFE so that they now embrace contemporary music and dance along with material of other European countries. This, all the while, ignoring traditional Hungarian customs. His inept attempt to mix centuries-old traditional with twenty-first century modern is obviously a tragic disaster. The only hope is that Hungary's leadership wake up to the problem and effect major corrections before irreparable damage is done. Unfortunately, this may not happen soon enough.

Most of the music used Wednesday was also modern garbage. Even the talented cimbalom player's solo was some non-Hungarian contemporary piece and came across as just loud and annoying noise.

Please do not misunderstand. All of the HSFE dancers and musicians are especially talented and deserve the very highest praise. It is the material they are forced to use, and their director, that should be severely panned and totally scrapped. Only then can the formerly prestigious Hungarian State Folk Ensemble be raised to rank again with the very best in the world.

Tampa Talks

by Terry Abrahams

We're everywhere, we're everywhere! My daughter Mickey and I ushered at the Hungarian State Tour in Clearwater and it couldn't have been a better show! The Gypsy dance – ohmigod!!!

In April, a bunch of us went to Rang Tang. (See [Rang Tang](#).)

Judith and Ernesto have done more traveling than usual; they were in Paris in January for five days; in February their son had a shoot in Orlando, came over to Tampa, they went back to Atlanta with him, saw grandkids. In early March they were in Spain for nine days seeing Ernesto's family plus dancing and observing the sardana. See Judith's [Culture Corner](#) on the sardana. Then, Judith was in Boulder in April for a Scan workshop and both Baizans were in Las Vegas for one day in April. - you go guys!

Andi has made her annual trek out to Vancouver, stopping to see friends and family along the way, with a workshop almost the minute she arrived. Ursula is slowly recovering - from everything, it seems - and has had to cancel a couple of trips while she takes care of body business. She did well at Rang Tang, though – we were very proud of her!

Andy is busy starting a new business and swing dancing, Bill Schwarz had April 15th to contend with. For Israeli Independence Day, instead of our group dancing, Ruthy Goodman's group from NY performed. I was in charge of getting her group to and from airports, housing, feeding etc. That was the same weekend as Spring Fling. I'm finished teaching the high school kids, did an hour at a grade school. Bobby and Barbara have done a couple of performances for various groups and are on a kayak kick right now.

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Culture Corner

Sardana: Alive and Well in Barcelona

by Judith Baizan

You can still find plenty of sardana activity in and around Barcelona on Saturdays and Sundays throughout the year. According to "Sardamania: La Sardana a Internet" (<http://sardanista.cat/fed/>), for the weekend of March 10 -11, 2007, a total of three concerts, three picnics, and 23 dances were scheduled, with music for each provided by one of the 25 or so eight to ten person sardana bands (coblas) active in the general area. All were midday or late afternoon activities, lasting a couple of hours or more, and nearly all were completely free to the public.



A Cobla Playing in a Small Square in Late Afternoon



Circles of Sardana Dancers and Onlookers in front of the Cathedral of Barcelona on Sunday Afternoon

The most well-attended event is still at noon on Sundays in the Barrio Gotico in the large plaza fronting the Cathedral of Barcelona. At the appointed hour, the parade of church visitors is moved aside to make way for folding chairs which are brought forth and lined up on the stone Cathedral steps. Here sit the musicians of the cobla featured that day. After several minutes of tuning, practice runs, and melody fragments, the flaviol's high piercing notes announce the first sardana. Below In the plaza, in the throng of picture-snapping tourists, Sunday strollers and shoppers, the waiting dancers heed the call, a few take hands and a ring begins to form. As others arrive they break in to drop their parcels, purses, and jackets in the growing mound in the center of the circle, and hurry out to join the ring,

taking care to match the footwork. More rings form, some larger, some smaller, until as many as eight or so have opened up within the swarm of onlookers who continue to mill around them.

Each ring is attentive to the person, man or woman, who is leading the dance. That person has previously consulted the board on which the Cobla nowadays has posted the "count" for each selection in the program, (the number of its "short" measures, and the number of its "long" measures) in order to call for the proper ending (out of several possibilities) to be applied to each section. The ring of dancers follow the leader as he or she switches between

"short" or "long" footwork patterns and small or large "bounces" according to his or her interpretation of the music.

Because of the subjective nature of interpretation, different rings will not necessarily be doing the same footwork pattern. In sardana music, phrases of "short" measures in sets of 2 alternate with phrases of "long" measures also in sets of 2, and the entire dance goes on for about 15 minutes. In the old days, as the cobla played through the first sections of each sardana, the dancers relaxed and chatted, while their leader stood aside listening and counting measures in order to call the remaining endings correctly.

There are casual sardana dancers, and serious

Sardana continues on next page

Sardana, continued

sardana dancers. The serious ones have been honed on competition, hold themselves to the highest standard of execution, usually dance together in a very small ring, and are beautiful to see in action. Wearing their traditional rope soled canvas sandals, they take tiny precise steps, keeping their weight always forward on the balls of their feet, and when their arms go up they form perfect symmetrical peaks like the points of a crown. We casual dancers would not dream of trying to enter such an accomplished ring.



A Circle of Serious Sardana Dancers and the Traditional Rope-soled Sandals

Photos by Judith Baizan

Gainesville, USA, calling...

by Jack Seltzer

One of those months just went by and now I'll spend a few minutes trying to figure it all out here.

Over the past month Gainesville has been trying to work on their future. What is going on with the local dance organization, Gainesville Dance and Music Association (GDMA), which has been our parent group, so to speak? Toshi, Joyce, Julieta and June have putting the pieces together slowly, but with pieces still missing.

The answers aren't readily coming in but we'll keep working on it. Sadly, we may not be able to dance at 308 anymore if GDMA can't communicate better with its members. We just don't know. But we'll keep working on it and report the results next month.

Since Daniel Sandu left at the beginning of April, we've been in this funk with GDMA. If the times weren't a changing, we'd have jumped all over the fantastic variety of dance forms Daniel gave us. But the future will certainly offer plenty of his great rhythms. Stefan & Margaret went through one of his - a neat and simple couple dance called Hora de La Inceput - last week, before they both took off to Romania & Turkey, respectively. They're going to hook up in Istanbul next Thursday and will romp all over for a few days together. Lucky them.

Hora de La Inceput has a lot of pushing and pulling with your partner's hands as an occasional mixing of the sexes. Very different. John's been doing the incredible sounding fusion dance, "Sa-Ti Sari Bosca."

It's a work of art. The speed and changes are extremely challenging. Julieta went over the Pink Panther sounding one of Daniel's called "Hora Eureiasca." Excellent pattern, smooth like silk dance.

From the Editor

Gary and I had a grand time at Spring Fling. Thanks, Tampa, for hosting it. I got a lot of pictures - so many I had a hard time deciding what to print. I finally decided to go for a lot of different people and interesting poses. Smiles on faces counted, too. Fall Fling 2006 in Melbourne brought out a lot of dancers on the east coast and Spring Fling in Tampa brought out the west coast crowd. So, maybe that's a good arrangement for next year? Is Tampa thinking of making this a new tradition, or maybe another group will want to do Spring Fling 2008?

Pictures and articles have been coming in steadily for this issue. I'm pleased to have Judith contribute a Culture Corner article on the sardana. I'd like to make Culture Corner a more frequent feature of the newsletter. What is your cultural heritage? Does it include dance? Or have you lived or spent some time in another culture? A Culture Corner article doesn't need to be a well-researched thesis. In fact, your personal experiences are preferable.

My cultural heritage is Quaker and they frowned on music and dance from their founding in the mid-1600s until some time in the 1900s. So, I don't have a dance heritage of my own to draw on. (Thank goodness Quakers have been more enlightened with regards to dance in my lifetime.)

- CL

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Italian Zucchini Crescent Pie

(Pat Henderson made this for Spring Fling.)

A \$40,000 Grand Prize Pillsbury Bake-Off winner; a beautifully seasoned vegetable-and-cheese main course dish that received its just due. You'll love it.

4 cups thinly sliced unpeeled zucchini
1 cup coarsely chopped onion
¼ cup margarine, olive oil or butter
½ cup chopped parsley or 2 Tbs. parsley flakes
½ tsp. salt
½ tsp. pepper
¼ tsp. garlic powder
¼ tsp. basil leaves
¼ tsp. oregano leaves
2 eggs, well beaten
8 oz. (2 cups) shredded natural Muenster or Mozzarella cheese
8 oz. can Pillsbury Refrigerated Quick Crescent Dinner Rolls
2 tsp. Dijon or prepared mustard

Heat oven to 375°F. In 10-inch skillet, cook zucchini and onion in margarine until tender, about 10 minutes. Stir in parsley and seasonings. In large bowl, blend eggs and cheese. Stir in vegetable mixture. Separate dough into 8 triangles. Place in ungreased 11-inch quiche pan, 10-inch pie pan or 12 x 8 baking dish. Press over bottom and up sides to form crust. Spread crust with mustard. Pour vegetable mixture evenly into crust. Bake at 375°F for 18 to 20 minutes or until knife inserted near center comes out clean. (If crust becomes too brown, cover with foil during last 10 minutes of baking.) Let stand 10 minutes before serving. Cut into wedges.

Orlando International Folk Dance Club

by Pat Henderson

Our big event for April was a performance for the Casselberry International Folk Festival. We had ten dancers who met at the home of Deane Jordan before and after the show. We had a quick rehearsal, had a great performance nearby and returned for wine and snacks. The show went well considering that we have not performed together in quite a long time. We paid tribute to many FFDC teachers--Batrineasca by Lee Otterholt, Sandy Starkman's Sborinka, Richard Schmidt's Polonez Royale, and Platky by Jim Gold were some of our dance choices. We ended up the last group of the day to perform since it started raining as we finished. One of our dancers reported that the stage



Performers at Casselberry: Pat Henderson, Bobby Quibodeaux, Juanita Schockey, Phyllis Dammer, Deane Jordan, Ann Robinson, Lucy and Joe Birkemeier, Joy Herndon and Kelly Fagan.

Photo by Manuel Mora Valls

hand of the day said that we were his favorite group--not bad for a group of mostly senior citizens!

Travel for the month included Joe and Lucy Birkemeier to Phoenix. Lucy also visited family in Chicago in early May. I had the pleasure to experience Honolulu and the island of Oahu with my son, Brian Quibodeaux. He won a reward trip with Sprint and it was wonderful. I visited the Polynesian Cultural Center where Brigham Young University students work to pay for their expenses at the Hawaii campus. Six different Polynesian villages make up the park and once a day, there is a parade of dancers on boats throughout the park. Later in my visit at a luau, I could tell the difference between dances from Tonga, Samoa, Fiji, Tahiti and Hawaii.

Orlando continues on next page



Hawaiian dancers at the Polynesian Cultural Center on Oahu

Photo by Pat Henderson

Orlando, continued

Since this article is being written after Spring Fling, I can report on that great event also. Unfortunately, Bobby and I, Eva Gaber and her daughters were in the only ones from our group to attend. It turned out not be a good weekend for various reasons with our other dancers. The location was fantastic and the facility very spacious. It was great to see Dylan Conway again and do Dudino Oro with him.

After dancing, we joined the group at a nearby Italian restaurant. Even though we stopped earlier than normal (6:30 pm), Bobby and I danced almost to the point of exhaustion. Thank you to Terry and the Tampa group for sponsoring Spring Fling.

The Grapevine Dancers of Sarasota

by Marie Millett

Our dancing circle continues to be large and we are grateful. On May 2 we celebrated World Dance Day a few days late by dressing ethnically and submitting requests for our two favorite dances ahead of time. Andi arranged the program and we danced a bunch.

On the down side, it was farewell to Andi until fall when she returns from Vancouver. Next week our circle will be missing Tom and June Morse and Christine Vincent but in the meantime we will be dancing all Summer. If you want to come dance with us, do check with me at

gvduum@earthlink.net or 941-351-6281. Once in a while our rec center closes for various reasons.

The picture demonstrates that ten of the Grapeviners had a good time dancing with Shlomo Bachar last weekend while Andi and Ursula were off to Maitland to learn some new Israeli dances. Thanks to Estrella Englehardt for making the arrangements for Shlomo's workshop and visit.

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The Babiak Dance Ensemble of Sarasota

by Dmitri Babiak

We celebrated St. Patrick's Day at Bird Key Yacht Club with Tahja of International Productions. What an ostentatious audience, all dressed in green! Tahja invented and performed her own rendition of Irish dances in fancy green skirts. We followed with the



Babiak Dance Ensemble: Pat Houppert, Dmitri and Shirley Babiak, Catalin Mihai and Tahja, Denise Peterson and Andrea Velat

Photo by Bruce Cardall



Sarasota Grapeviners: Front - Lisa Kramer, Shlomo Bachar, Beverly Mann, Susan Gordon. Second row - Susan Barach, Christine Vincent, Marie Millett, Delores Lustig. Back row - Thekla Kahn, Estrella Engelhardt, Judy Merkt

traditional Irish folk dances: the Bridge of Athelone, Gai Gordons, Siemsa Bierta, Sweets of May, etc.

For a finale (audience participation), Tahja had the yachtsmen get up and invent their own Irish jig, one at a time. They loved performing and were very inventive. It was an incredible show.

This month we are again teaching second grade classes at Taylor Ranch Elementary School. This is our fourth year in a row. Each day we arrive in a distinctive costume: German, Ukrainian, Latino, Greek. This year the school added their eighth class, making it over 200 students. Compressed into a two hour schedule.

We teach them once a week for three weeks and then they perform for their parents. The girls wear skirts and blouses and the boys wear long trousers(preferably black), white shirts and a red cummerbund.

The Sarasota Arts Council arranges for our teaching and compensates us for our time and effort.

The Babiak Dance Ensemble rehearses weekly on our wooden deck and we book shows with mobile home parks, assisted living places, private parties and ethnic clubs. At present we have three regular couples, but can muster up to 14 dancers. We are always looking for new dancers, especially the elusive men dancers. Contact us at 941-966-1847 for more information.

Blast From the Past (Tallahassee)

by Pat Pieratte

On March 31 and April 1, my husband and I attended a high school band reunion honoring the memory of the band director, at nearby Wakulla Springs State Park. After going to only the evening activities on Saturday, I got interested and went back Sunday after church to see some of the pictures and memorabilia which were set up in a conference room. We had just finished looking at the memorabilia and were taking a quick tour of the grounds when I came up next to a familiar face, reading one of the signs.

It was Safia Kahn, who used to dance with the Tampa group. My first thoughts were that I hadn't seen her in about ten years, that she probably still lived in Tampa but had just stopped dancing, and since Tampa isn't that far away, it wasn't that unusual. But as we talked, I found out I was wrong on all counts. Safia moved to Boulder, Colorado about 20 years ago (where does the time go?) and was back in Florida, along with her boyfriend Mike, to visit her mother in St. Pete and her sister in Tallahassee. She doesn't folk dance much, but does Argentine Tango and vintage ballroom dancing. After working as a nurse for many years, she went to medical school and is now an emergency room doctor in northern Arizona! That's quite a haul from Boulder, so she works for awhile, then takes some time off.

In my excitement, I forgot to get contact information from her, but it was great to see Safia and meet her boyfriend and family. She looks exactly the same as 20 years ago! We took some pictures, but they are the old fashioned kind, and they are not developed yet. I'll try to get them in a future newsletter.

I think it was quite remarkable that she had never been to Wakulla Springs, I hadn't been there for about 7 years, she had been gone from Florida for 20 years, and we happened to be in the same place at the same time! It truly is a small world! If any of you have contact information for Safia, please let me know.

Correction

In the April 2007 Florida Folk Dancer, the woman identified as Jean in the pictures with the story about the Spring Garden Festival on the first page is actually June Littler.

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Events and Tours

August

August 10-19 Folklore and Heritage Tour in Slovakia, Ukraine and Hungary

Dance classes, meetings with village groups, folk festival, museums, historical sites. Organizers: 3ART Ltd., Ervin Varga, Slovakia
www.folkloretrip.com e-mail: 3art@folkloretrip.com

U.S.A. contact: Vonnie R. Brown, 1717 Applewood Road, Baton Rouge, LA 70808 e-mail: vrbfolk@cox.net tel/fax: 225 / 766-8750

September

September 5-9 World Conference on Dance Research

Held by International Dance Council CID, in Athens, Greece. See web site

www.cid-unesco.org/html/announcements.html.

October

October 5-7 Sharpes Assembly English Country Dance Weekend

Place: Kenilworth Lodge, Sebring, FL

Guest teacher and caller: Brad Foster from Amherst, MA, Executive and Artistic Director of the Country Dance and Song Society

Music by Full Circle

More information at <http://chagalo.org/ecd/>

Please note: The Florida Folk Dancer prints information on folk dance tours which may be of interest to our readers. This does not imply an endorsement or recommendation of any tour.



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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.

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Submissions: Send all newsletter submissions to the Editor during the last week of the month, to be published the first week of the next month. Electronic submissions are preferred.

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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. The newsletter is posted on the FFDC website and members with e-mail addresses are notified of its availability. Subscribers/members can also request printed copies to be mailed to them.

FFDC Website: www.folkdance.org