



September 2008

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President's Letter

Fall Fling is coming soon – October 10, 11, and 12. Friday night is Melbourne's usual dance night, and we love to see people come in early to enjoy an extra night of dance. The Fling proper starts Saturday at 11 AM, leaving a little time to relax on the beach in the morning. The Fling, of course, features lots of good dancing, a pot luck lunch, and leftovers for supper. For those who want to stay through Sunday, we have a light continental breakfast and then do a little dancing.

Finally, starting at one on Sunday, we have our monthly set dance workshop/party. This is a chance to do (or redo) all the set dances that didn't get on the request program. Did you miss out on Mairi's Wedding? We'll do it again. More to the point, if you've been wanting to learn how to do Mairi's Wedding, let us know and we'll take the time to review it. Unlike the Fling proper, the Sunday afternoon workshop/party is a chance to try new dances. If you remember France Moreau's French Canadian set dances from a few years ago, we're working on Quadrille de St. Basile. We're not planning a Sunday lunch, although, depending on how many stay, we could easily make a food run.

If you need a place to stay, drop us a note. We still have some home spaces left. It's almost too late for dance requests, but if you have something you especially want done, please drop a note to me at jdaly@palmnet.net. At the very least, there'll be spaces to write in requests during the program.

The next event after Fall Fling will be camp on February 13-16, 2009. We have Yves Moreau and Roo Lester coming to teach. Roo will focus on some great Basque dances. And those of us who like Scandinavian have prevailed upon her to come a little early. Current plans, subject to some revision, are for her to come and dance with Judith's group in Tampa on the Wednesday before camp, and then to have a Scandinavian workshop at the hotel from 1 to 4 PM on Friday.

This is the time to be making requests for camp scholarships – if you have an up and coming dancer who might have trouble attending his or her first camp, send us a note.

Check the Calendar

Remember to check the FFDC calendar on our website,

www.folkdance.org

for upcoming events. It contains the same types of events, tours, camps, etc. that are announced in this newsletter. But, the newsletter is constrained by space and does not publish all future events every time. The calendar is updated frequently, between newsletters, and the events stay on the calendar until their dates are past. Additional information is also available in links on the calendar entries.

How We Fared in Fay

Tropical Storm Fay had its effects on some of our dancers, but thankfully they were not serious. Orlando got a lot of rain (see [Orlando International Folk Dance Club](#)). On the East Coast, some dancers lost power (see [How I Spent My Summer Vacation](#), by Catie Geist). Jeanne Murray's driveway was washed out and there was a temporary lake in the yard at her new house.

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Tampa!

by Terry Abrahams

So, I looked to see what I wrote about Tampa last month, and lo and behold, I didn't! But my trip to Romania was in there and the announcement of Yoav coming to Tampa – our most exciting news. By the time this article is read, he will have come and gone, and we hope with a happy experience.

My personal life continues to be exciting – this time I am back from Africa! As you know, this was a postponed trip from last year. Jodi and I joined 19 Dutch for 25 days covering Zambia, Botswana, Namibia and South Africa. We "overlanded" - which means we were in a self-contained big truck, tents on top (which we put up and down ourselves each day), food underneath (which we helped prepare) and long drives to get to the next place. In between, we saw the animals by land, sea and air (very exciting), Victoria Falls, national parks, the dunes, villages, townships, Cape of Good Hope, Capetown; did white water rafting on the Zambesi river, quad-biked over the dunes, and rode camels.

Dancing wasn't the highlight of the trip, but we did see some. In Namibia, a group from a nearby village performed "tribal" dances and played the drums at our camp.

Another time, we were taken into the Okavango Delta in "mokoros" – canoes hollowed out of trees and propelled by poling. In the evening, the polers danced around our campfire, imitating animals. All in all, except for the very cold nights (it's winter there), getting sores from putting up and down tents, and missing a lot of verbal fun as the Dutch chose to speak Dutch, we had a great time.

Following my return, I traveled with Pat, Bobby and Debbie Meitin to Karmiel USA in Dahlenega, GA for Dany Benshalom and Ruthy's Israeli Dance weekend, which, as always, was wonderful. Joining us from Florida were Donna Young and many of the Gainesville gang. It's always great seeing the old gang from everywhere else, the camp is beautiful, the food good, some great dances! We learned all the latest, greatest, and reviewed many oldies.

Andi is back! Ken is back! Ursula is leaving for Spain. Judith and Ernesto are be-bopping around, it's hard to keep up! We actually had a new person come last week, who used to dance – even at Buffalo Gap – and we're hoping she's a keeper. Bobbie Ward has been bringing her niece who seems to like us, so we actually had a circle last week! Looking forward to seeing everyone at Fall Fling, some of you at the Sharpes Assembly.



Foreground pictures, clockwise from top left: a mokoro (boat) ride through the Okavango Delta, Terry with tent, Terry on a camel, a mokoro poler dancing, tribal dancers with grass skirts, Terry and Jodi on the Namib desert.

Photos by Terry Abrahams, Jodi Teitelman, a guide and the camel owner

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A Road Trip Vacation

by Mary Jean Linn

Bill and I left for our 3,500 mile road trip vacation on July 11th. Our first destination was Richmond, VA, where I lived for almost 20 years. We were invited to an international folk dance potluck party with the band 'Balkanize'. It was great to be folk dancing with friends to a live band in the backyard.

After a side trip to Williamsburg, VA, we were off to the Big Apple. While in New York City, we participated in the Lincoln Center's outdoor summer series with a teaching session by Michael Ginsberg. The Balkan brass band performing that night was Zlatne Uste. After visiting family in NYC and seeing the sights, we were off to West Virginia on the way to Chicago. We joined Bill's family reunion at our last stop in the Chicago suburbs.



Dancing in Richmond, VA, to the band Balkanize

Photo by Bill Byars



Brass band at Lincoln Center

Photo by Mary Jean Linn



Richmond, VA folk dancers and the band Balkanize. Don't they look like a young group? Can you spot Mary Jean Linn, Bill Byars, Pat Edwards (former Gainesville dancer) and Ed Hoffmann (formerly of Tallahassee)?

A Summer Dance Party

by Suzan Grinarnl

The South Brevard International Dancers hosted a dance party in Melbourne Village on July 25. The Flagler Beach and Orlando folk dance groups were invited and there were about 20 plus people in attendance. We enjoyed a delicious array of snacks and wine. It was almost like going to dance camp, with so many dancers together in one room sharing new and old dances. It would be fun to get together in larger groups more often. The Melbourne group appreciates the company and the effort of driving extra miles to attend. Thanks to one and all for coming and making our evening extra special.

Sarasota Grapeviners

by Marie Millett

We are glad to have Andi back with us and are looking forward to the return of our snowbirds. We did have a loyal bunch of dancers this summer and managed to have 12 to 20 dancers every week.

It was so sad to receive the news of Sydelle Singer's death. (See [In Memoriam](#).) I was also fortunate to know Marianne Taylor. She was the teacher on the "Dance on the Water" cruise I took to Alaska in 1997. Please stay healthy. I want to dance with you again in February.

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Dancing In Washington

by Pat Henderson

While Bobby and I were touring Washington and Oregon, we danced three times. Unfortunately, we did not make the group at Reed College in Vancouver, WA since we were in southern Oregon with our daughter. That is the group where David Digby got his start. Bobby and I danced twice with the same group in northern Seattle and with the Blacks in Tonasket. First, the Sno-King International Folk Dancers meet three nights a week; we were there on a Saturday and a Wednesday. On Saturday, the program was set with a few slots to put requests. They had a large wooden board with poster board strips for each dance that slid into the board plus a small easel where they listed the request dances. This set-up reminded me of Berkeley. Bobby and I were pleased that we do so many of the same dances. They did Sonia and Cristian's dances and Richard's Polonez Royale. On Wednesday, it was a smaller group and it was all request dancing. We enjoyed our two nights dancing. Two NFO members that we knew were there also.

Our big dance event was in Tonasket, WA where Tom and Linda Black live. Tonasket is in north central Washington and one night we went into Canada for dinner at a fine Italian restaurant. It was a little tricky getting back into the U.S. without our passports but, obviously, we made it. We had been invited to Tonasket to lead a folk dance session to

people who were interested in dance. Two women had taught a few sessions after attending a dance workshop but they did not know many basic dances. Bobby and I had a short workshop with the two teachers and then more dancers came later after we had dinner with the teachers. The dancers showed a lot of promise and excitement. Tom and Linda want to start a regular group in their small town. Tom video-recorded the dances, so they have a lot to keep them busy. I hope that Tom and Linda come to our Florida camp.



Dancing at the Blacks' home. Linda Black is second from the right; Bobby Quibodeaux fourth from the left.

Photo by Pat Henderson

How I Spent My Summer Vacation

by Catie Geist

We had to cancel the English Country Dance class in Melbourne Village on Tuesday, August 19 because of Tropical Storm Fay. The streets were flooded and most of the dancers couldn't leave their homes. It rained unceasingly all day Tuesday and Wednesday. I lost power for one and a half hours on that Tuesday but I found out that Willa Davidsohn lost power for eleven and a half hours. It was the storm that wouldn't quit!

After attending the English Country Dance weekend in Brasstown, NC, at the John C. Campbell Folk School on the first weekend of May, I drove to South Bend, Indiana, to visit my daughter. Then I drove to Chicago to attend my grandson's First Holy Communion. From there, I drove out to San Francisco to visit my older sister and my nephew. My sister and I danced at the San Francisco contra dance on May 17th. Charlie Fenton was the caller.

We danced at the English Country Dance in Sebastopol on Sunday, May 18th where Alan Winston was the caller and Rebecca King and Jon Berger were the musicians. I danced every dance at both dances! I also drove up to Ashland, Oregon to visit my younger sister and her family. My sisters and I spent three days in Mendocino, California, and we had a delightful time. I met Elizabeth Zekely in Mendocino; she calls English Country Dancing in Caspar (in between Mendocino and Fort Bragg).

On the way back from Ashland, I stopped in South Bend, Indiana, to attend my 40th college reunion at Saint Mary's College. My husband joined me in South Bend and we celebrated our 40th wedding anniversary by attending mass in the Basilica on the Notre Dame campus, where we were married 40 years ago. We went to lunch with our children and grandchildren and spent the afternoon with them. And then I drove home! It was an absolutely fabulous trip.

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Orlando International Folk Dance Club

by Pat Henderson

I write this on September 11 wearing my appropriate t-shirt in my red, white and blue seersucker capri pants. I remember that seven years ago, my work schedule had me off in the morning and I was in the garden planting tomatoes. I wear a headset playing radio 60s music when I work the garden or mow (still do!), so I heard the first announcement of a plane hitting a World Trade Center. They thought it might be a small plane until the next one was hit a few minutes later. I ran back to the house; we turned on the TV and, in horror, we watched the towers tumble. I did go to work later, but the mood was so somber that the college closed around 2 PM and, about that time, Disney World closed. We will all remember where we were that day and what we were doing when we heard about the attack - just as I remember that I was going to my band class in junior high school when I heard that Kennedy was shot. Now, from a serious digression on my part, I will report the news from Orlando after our summer hiatus.

First, the summer travels not yet reported in the newsletter: Juanita Schockey and her husband, Fred, traveled to Alaska to visit her daughter, who has a few cabins for rent on a river on the Kenai Peninsula. Fred caught a 55 pound king salmon and a 65 pound halibut - they brought a lot of fish back with them. Juanita returned home and left a couple days later for a visit with family in West Virginia and to attend her 60th high school reunion. Larry Wartell also went to Alaska and cruised the inside passage and then did a land tour by bus and train to Denali National Park.

Joe and Lucy Birkemeier visited family in West Virginia, Illinois and Michigan. Lucy had another trip to Washington DC for a reunion of her nursing school. Phyllis Dammer and her husband, Ed, enjoyed an over-three-week trip to the Pacific Northwest. They flew to Salt Lake and drove to Blaine, WA, close to the Canadian border. While there, staying in a timeshare, Phyllis attended a yoga class. It turned out that an eagle also liked yoga and hung around outside a window during the entire class. From there, they did some sightseeing in Vancouver and then headed down the Oregon coast and on to Sacramento where Phyllis' two sons live. Phyllis and Ed enjoyed the trip but never saw the sun.

Finally, Bobby and I also traveled to Washington and Oregon. Unlike Phyllis, who traveled earlier, we had great weather in August and had the sun almost every day. We saw our daughter, who is working in the Portland area and she joined us for a trip to

southern Oregon and Crater Lake National Park. It is truly one of the "WOW" sights of the world with the bright blue water from the lake that is almost 2,000 feet deep. Bobby and I then drove the Washington coastline and almost every part of Olympic National Park. We rented a minivan and actually camped in it two nights, once in an RV park on the Pacific Ocean where we froze and second in Sol Duc Springs campground among huge cedar trees, enjoying warmer weather and soaking in three hot mineral springs. We had dinner our last night at Anthony's with Gary and Caroline and some of their Seattle friends. It was a fabulous meal of seafood on the water at the ferry in Edmonds. See [Dancing in Washington](#) about the three times that we danced in Washington.

We had a few sad events over the summer. First, we consoled Joy when her husband, George passed away in July. Then, August 1, we lost one of our original members, Ellie Hall. Ellie had been losing strength since last October so we had not seen her dancing for quite awhile. Many of us attended a visitation and memorial service for her. We miss her greatly. Then, I discovered that Marianne Taylor had passed away on August 19 after cancer in her leg spread. See [In Memoriam](#) for more about Ellie and Marianne.

Moving on to other news in our group – eleven of us traveled to Melbourne to dance with their group on Friday, July 25. That includes the ones who came from Palm Coast, since they still come regularly to Orlando (thanks Jan and others for driving so far!). See [A Summer Dance Party](#).

We resumed our regular dance on September 3 at the Jewish Community Center because we had a lake in the dirt road before our driveway. After having gravel hauled in, we met at our home's dance studio last night, September 10. Two weeks with little rain really help. When we met at the JCC, it was a big birthday night. Phyllis Dammer celebrated her 75th birthday with us and Manuel Mora-Valls' birthday was the next day, September 4. We also recognized the birthdays during our hiatus of Claudia Terrence and Eva Gaber. We put on the birthday polka - everyone tries to get around to polka with the birthday people of the opposite sex.

What a summer we had with all the storms that hit the U.S.! Bobby and I left between Tropical Storm Fay passing and Fay stalling and went Karmiel USA. See more about that in [Tampa!](#) When we returned on August 24, we had water standing everywhere and then on August 25, we had four inches of rain in

an hour! I believe it was the most that we have ever had in such a short period of time in the 30 years we have lived on the property. One of our new dancers, Janine Lampe, had a laurel oak tree come through her roof and now she has a tarp while waiting for repairs. Larry Wartell worked at the Red Cross shelters during Fay. My sister's in-laws from Houma, LA have been in Orlando for almost two weeks due to Hurricane Gustav. They were without power for ten days. Gustav may have missed New Orleans but others were sorely affected.

I believe that this is the longest article that I have ever written. I guess that I am making up for lost time. I hope to see a big crowd at Fall Fling on October 11-12 in Melbourne.

Joyce Story Comes to Gainesville

by Julieta Brambila



On July 25, when Joyce Story was with us in Gainesville for our Friday folk dance, she told us about her nine day trip to Russia in late June of this year. She joined other folk dancers on a small cruise ship that went from Moscow to St. Petersburg on a tour organized by Mel Mann. Not all on the boat were folk dancers, so they were amused when dancing began; Lee Otterholt taught

and led the dances on the boat. She said that about 90 dancers attended, so it was a bit crowded for her taste and she sometimes danced behind the lines. Lee taught dances mainly from Russia. The ability to speak Russian was a big asset for Joyce, especially when she was treated to an escorted two-hour private tour to a museum on the political history of Russia.

They stopped at various historical locations, including Uglich, where it is thought the last surviving member (a boy) of Ivan the Terrible's line was killed in the seventeenth century. She recommends the next Dance on the Water trip, in 2009. See [International Folk Dance Tours and Workshops](#).

We also learned that Joyce has just retired and will be moving permanently from Arizona to Florida, spending vast amounts of time in Gainesville. On the left is a picture of Joyce, taken in Ireland by Liz Warren in 2007. She will be teaching us at least three dances from the Phoenix group next year.

If you want to learn more about our new member, she was featured in the Phoenix International Folk Dancers website at www.fastq.com/~pifd/spotlight_archive.html#story.

From the Editor

First, my apologies to Bobby Quibodeaux for not getting his Spring Fling article ([page 7](#)) into the last newsletter. Well, maybe hearing about it now and seeing the fun we had will entice you to come to Fall Fling, which is coming up soon (see [Events](#)). The Melbourne group is hosting and, if the dancing isn't enough incentive, Melbourne's potlucks are great.

In August and September, Gary and I took an almost four week trip to the West Coast. That seems to be a popular area to visit this year. We first flew to Seattle, for Gary's 50th high school reunion, and saw Pat and Bobby there. (See [Dancing in Washington](#).) We next took in some of central and eastern Washington, including Pullman, where Gary attended Washington State University, a bit of Idaho, the Columbia River Gorge, Corvallis, OR, Crater Lake (like Pat and Bobby), Ashland (like Catie Geist), Sacramento (like Phyllis and Ed Dammer and Joy Herndon), Castaic, CA (on the north side of the Los Angeles area), and the San Diego area. Ashland is known for the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, which goes on all summer. We couldn't get tickets for a Shakespeare play, but we saw a new play, "The Further Adventures of Hedda Gabler". It's a comedy, actually.

Despite spending most of our time with non-dancing friends and relatives, we managed to dance twice in San Diego – at the last Scandinavian dance party of the summer and a contra dance. We saw dancing friends Kevin Johnson and Suzanne Papp at both of those events. They arrived at contra late and all dressed up, as they had been out celebrating their wedding anniversary – 19th I think. We also brought my niece, who lives in San Diego, and my sister, who was visiting, along to the contra dance. Since they are beginners, we made sure to arrive for the teaching. There was a guest caller who started off with a nice introductory lesson. The first few dances she called were easy ones that beginners could get through, too. But then she shifted gears abruptly, and the next few dances, all featuring hays, had a lot of people scrambling. My sister and niece bailed out then.

– CL

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Spring Fling 2008 (Barely)

by Bobby J. Quibodeaux

I say barely because the snowbirds had flown the coop and we were rubbing up against summer. That Terry Abrahams doesn't give up. Thanks to her determination, she managed to squeeze it in and found a place within budget. The Pinellas Park Auditorium is used for contra dances by the Tampa Friends of Old-Time Dance (TFOOTD). It has a great wooden floor and a fine sound system.

The fling started slowly with about a dozen eager dancers. We peaked shortly after noon with twenty-something. Our covered dish lunch break was great, as usual. There were great selections and enough food to feed forty-something.

Andy Pollock kept the music going with requests and also choices unique to Tampa, which were mostly easy to follow. The formal request system was comprised of scribble something on this pad or yell out a request. That easily kept us going until five. During the course of the afternoon we managed to cover a few of the dances from the "Uncamp".

The after party, with almost all the Fling attendees, convened at the St. Pete Greek Festival only a few blocks away. We ate, danced more, and enjoyed a wonderful performance by a young Serbian dance troupe. A great finish for a great day. Thanks so much for the hard work of the Tampa gang. These events do not happen by accident!

Letters

Dear dancing friends,

I have had a hard two years with my husband George. I put a lot of my activities on hold; George needed me at this time. He was the love of my life. He was always there for me and it was time for me to be there for him. On his last trip from the hospital to home, Hospice was there. We had a hospital bed and a tray with all his belongings for his health. Hospice was wonderful. I had them round the clock. There was nothing the doctors could do. His body was shutting down is the nice way of saying he was dying.

He died at home peacefully, July 16, 5:20 AM. He was 91 years old. He had a beautiful military funeral. There's nothing like the best. He retired as Master Sergeant in the Air-Force after 24 years of service. I want to thank you all for all the cards and flowers; they were truly appreciated.



Jan Lathi, Ann Robinson, Pat Henderson, Bill Schwarz, Judith Baizan and Terry Abrahams



Andy Pollock, Bobby Quibodeaux, Jan Lathi and Judith Baizan



Delores Lustig



Lila, Eva and Felissa Gaber

Photos by Caroline Lanker

I am now planning a trip to Sacramento, California on September 20-30, to visit my brother and sister. I'll also spend a few days in San Francisco. My daughter will go with me - a well worthwhile and needed trip. I'll let you know how our trip was later.

Love you all, Joy

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In Memoriam

This year has been hard on the folk dance world. The sad emails have arrived one after the other. Thanks to all of you who have contributed your memories of those dancers who have passed. The notes give us wonderful glimpses not only of the lives of those we have lost, but also of the dance experiences of those who wrote.

Ellie Hall

Orlando dancer Elinor Mae "Ellie" Hall passed away August 1, 2008. A service was held on August 15, 2008 at All Saints Episcopal Church in Winter Park.

– Editor



It is difficult to know what to write when you lose a life-time friend. That is what Ellie Hall was to me. She was an original member of the Orlando International Folk Dance Club, so I first met her in 1974 when I started dancing. Since we were both librarians, we had a lot in common. Bobby

and I were in the Pacific northwest when we found out that she had passed away. The day after our return, her family had a very nice memorial service for her; she had selected the music and scriptures that made up the service. Her family compiled a beautiful memory book with color pictures and remembrances of family and friends.

Ellie was born Elinor Mae Rundles in Detroit in 1926. Her father was a physician and her mother was a Swedish immigrant. She had an older brother and sister. She was an athlete and valedictorian at Flint Central High School. She met her husband, Trevor Hall, Sr. at the high school. After they married, she had five children by the time she was 28 (five children in seven years). After the youngest child started school, she completed her education with a master's degree in Library Science from Wayne State University. She worked a couple years in Michigan and then moved to Orlando in 1971 and worked as a librarian at the Orlando Public Library.

She and Trevor both were dancing when I started with the Orlando international group. They eventually divorced; Ellie kept dancing, both international and Israeli, until late fall last year, when her health started to fail. Ellie was always there for any group activity, including performing, over the years.

Her pleasant smile and sense of humor made her a vital member of both dance groups. Not only was she an active dancer, she was also a volunteer for the American Red Cross, League of Women Voters, Hospice and Planned Parenthood. The folk dance world of Orlando and Florida lost a great one on August 1, 2008.

– Pat Henderson, Orlando, FL

Ellie was part of the Orlando Israeli dance group for many, many years. In the last couple years she was being treated for multiple myeloma and had gotten quite frail. She was living in Winter Park Towers. She will definitely be missed.

– Debbie Meitin, Altamonte Springs, FL

I will miss Ellie very much at Fall Fling. She was always so gracious and friendly and interesting and I loved talking to her.

– Catie Geist, Palm Bay, FL

I am very sorry to hear of Ellie's death. She and I had a special bond.

– Donna Young, Ocala, FL

Sydelle Singer

Florida dancer Sydelle Singer passed away in early September. Her funeral was held on September 14, 2008 in Brooklyn, NY. Sydelle was a former member of FFDC and danced in Sarasota and later in Palm Beach County.

– Editor

Today I attended Sydelle Singer's funeral. Many, many folk dancers attended. (There was a folk dance weekend that prevented an even larger group from being present.) Nevertheless, Sydelle would have been proud to see how her many friends came to see her off. Of course her daughters and their families, as well as family friends, were there and the chapel was filled.

Her daughters Candy and Holly gave an eloquent, heartfelt and loving tribute to Sydelle, followed by a granddaughter's memories of her grandma's wonderful and happy personality.

We have all suffered a very great loss.

– Esther Kushner, NY



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I am still in shock to hear about Sydelle. I knew her well when we were starting out back in Brooklyn, NY. She was always a great teacher and a terrific dancer. Her programs were so diversified that no one could come close to competing with her. She attracted the best dancers and teachers from the New York area. She taught Scottish, English, Old Tyme, and Rounds in addition to the International dances. When I worked for New York City Recreation, I provided her the room and equipment to start out her classes. We will all miss her.

– *Russell Ericksen, Ann Arbor, MI and Plant City, FL*

Sydelle was our teacher in Sarasota beginning in the early 1980's until 1991. She received her degree from Ringling School of Art and Design in 1986 and continued teaching folk dancing along with enjoying her painting. She was living in St. Pete then and stayed the night with us after dancing, going home early the next morning. We came home and had a party and she gave me an extra teach so I could lead the dances in the summer while she was off teaching at Sunny Oaks in the Catskills. I treasure the good times we had together.

– *Marie Millet, Sarasota, FL*

I started teaching folk dancing in 1979 in adult education, and by 1980, I had my own dance studio on Long Island, New York where I taught ballroom and folk dancing. As my family of folk dancers grew, I soon learned about this terrific folk teacher up in the Catskills at a small resort called Sunny Oaks, if I remember correctly. This teacher was Sydelle Singer, and she spent the summer up there, sharing her talents with others. Many of my dancing friends made this an annual excursion, spending a week, or sometimes two, to dance with Sydelle. But at that time, I never met Sydelle nor ever danced with her.

I left Long Island with Fred, in 1990, to come to live in sunny Florida and some time later Marie Millet asked me to come to Sarasota to teach the Grapeviners. I agreed to give it a try every other week, starting in January, 1992, and I was so thrilled with the dancing and a lot of wonderful people that soon I came every week. As a result, I had the privilege of teaching this wonderful, thriving group for almost 14 years. I bring this up because I soon learned that Sydelle Singer had somewhat crossed my path again; she had been the originator of the Sarasota Folk Dancers (now named "Grapeviners", but I think that Sydelle called them "Singer's Dancers").

When Sydelle left Sarasota for Florida's East Coast, I was the next teacher to follow in her dance steps, but I still had not yet met or danced with her. Later on, returning to Long Island for visits, I finally met her at some of the teachers' classes, and then even later at some of our own FFDC camps.

I was saddened to hear of Sydelle's death. It is a loss to the folk dance world; she was not only a wonderful teacher, but also a wonderful dancer and person. May she rest in peace and not be tiring out all those angels by insisting that they learn a Yemenite step.

– *Ann Kessler, Palm Harbor, FL*

I have been a member of the Sydelle Singer 'Fan Club' ever since I met her in 1995. I had just graduated from Snowbird status to full time Florida resident and was looking for local folk dance groups. The grapevine led me to Nissim ben Ami, Freddie Sverdlove, Ira Weisburd, Sydelle Singer, Gary and Caroline Lanker and a dance cooperative facilitated by Gert Kole. What a treasure trove. I was dancing five days a week at the height of the winter season.

Losing Sydelle saddens me greatly. She had become a friend and a mentor over the years. It was she who introduced me to FFDC and the Presidents' Weekend Dance Camp. Her classes ran the gamut of the folk dance repertoire and were taught with enthusiasm. We embraced the new and reveled in the oldies. Complicated footwork was reviewed week after week until we were comfortable enough to really 'do' the dance. Regular attendees at Sydelle's classes internalized a collection of dances that were 'ready to go' when the music started.

My Thursdays will never be the same.

– *Doris Wolman, Royal Palm Beach, FL*

Many, many of us knew Sydelle – she was a wonderful dancer, a really good teacher, and always had a big smile. How very sad.

– *Terry Abrahams, Tampa, FL*



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Marianne Taylor

Marianne Taylor passed away on August 19, 2008. Memorial celebrations are being planned for September 28 in Newton, MA and October 4 in Deerfield, NH. Marianne's most recent visit to Florida was for the National Folk Organization (NFO) Conference and workshop in Orlando February 28 – March 2, 2008, which was reported in the March/April Florida Folk Dancer. Visit <http://caringbridge.org/visit/mariannetaylor1> to read plans for Marianne's memorials and information about her final illness.

– Editor

I met Marianne just last year at the NFO Conference in Salt Lake City; then she was a special guest to the NFO Conference in Orlando this year. She received NFO's Heritage Award at the banquet on Saturday night and those in attendance had the opportunity to see her get this award. She was so vibrant, especially when she taught us an English dance, that it is hard to believe that she left us so quickly. I know that the dancers in New England are in shock.



– Pat Henderson, Orlando, FL

We met Marianne, Conny, and kids back in 1957 when we lived in New York City. Then we (FFDC) brought her to Florida for one (I believe actually 2 or 3) workshop and also danced with her at Pinewoods. I feel so lucky to have been part of her "fan club"!

– Jeanie Whitehead, Franklin, NC

In April of 1962, Marianne and Conny Taylor conducted a folk dance workshop at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. My husband, Amar, and I, as well as several folk dancers from the Syracuse, New York, area attended the workshop. Amar and I slipped out of the workshop during a break, went for a short drive, and got engaged! I remember a couple dance the Taylors taught at that workshop, at least I remember the melody and the steps. However the name of the dance escapes me. Every time since that day, whenever I hear the Taylors' names, I remember that very special day in our lives. Marianne will certainly be missed.

– Jan Lathi, Palm Coast, FL

Moti Alfassy

Israeli dance choreographer and teacher Moti Alfassy passed away February 28, 2008. He held a workshop in Orlando in November 2007, reported in the Florida Folk Dancer December 2007 issue.

– Editor

It was quite a shock when, at the end of February 2008, I received an e-mail saying that Moti Alfassy had died. He had just completed an extensive and amazing tour of the U.S. in November and December, followed by some time in France. How lucky we were to have had the honor and



privilege of learning from him here in Orlando on November 11. An automobile accident and surgical complications a number of years ago had left him without full use of one of his legs. But he continued to dance and teach, using crutches and a rolling stool, as well as the able assistance of his wife, Rachel.

A month or so after he returned to Israel, he attended the funeral of Mira Ashriel, beloved wife of Yoav Ashriel, whom we had the pleasure of hosting recently, along with Yoav's daughter Rakefet, in Tampa and Gainesville. Yoav and Rakefet related that Moti came to the funeral in a wheelchair, but that he looked healthy. Yet two weeks later, February 26, he died of complications from pneumonia.

Moti's first dance was Al Kanfey Hakesef, choreographed in 1970, still part of the classic Israeli dance repertoire. He continued to choreograph for over 20 years. Some of his other dances include El Haderech, Ani Oseh Li Manginot, Hora Tzchok, Kan Badarom and Lo Naatzor. He lived in Dimona, in southern Israel, and many of his dances reflected his love for the south (Darom in Hebrew) - Simona Midimona (Simona from Dimona), Laila Badarom (Night in the South) and Kan Badarom (Here in the South). He will be remembered fondly for his great joy and enthusiasm for Israel and Israeli dance, as well as his courage.

– Debbie Meitin, Altamonte Springs, FL

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Events

October

October 11 - 12 Fall Fling 2008

Host: South Brevard International Dancers

Place: Historic Community House, Melbourne Village, Florida (map below)

Times: Saturday 11 AM to 11 PM, Potluck at noon.
Bring a dish to share. Carry-in (plus leftovers) at supper; Sunday 9 - 11 AM

Price: \$5.00 Saturday for hall rent

Make it a weekend:

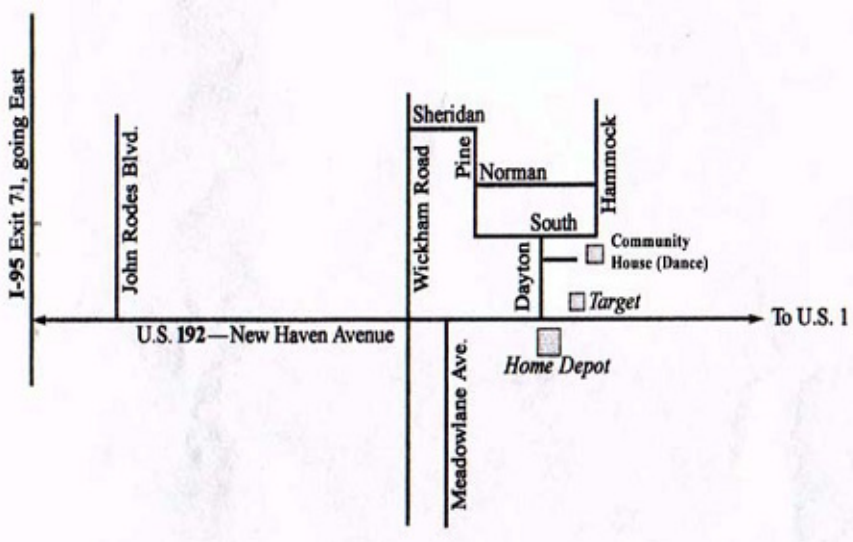
Come to the regular weekly dance night

Friday October 10, 7 - 10 PM

and/or the monthly set dance

Sunday October 12, 1 - 4 PM

Contact: John Daly 321-482-6818 or Jean Murray
321-506-7918



October 17 - 19 Sharpes Assembly

English Country Dance, featuring Robin Hayden of
the Country Dance and Song Society
Music by Full Circle Band

Place: Historic Kenilworth Lodge, 1610 SE Lakeview
Drive, Sebring, FL 33870

Contact: Catie Condran Geist, 321-427-3587,
catiegeist@att.net

More information at:

<http://chagalo.org/ecd/StCloudECD.shtml>

International Folk Dance Tours and Workshops

2009

Notices of selected tours will be published in the newsletter and changed with each issue. The full list of tours will appear in the FFDC calendar on the website.

April 9-24 Greece, the Greek Islands, and Greek Easter

Jim Gold Tour, led by Lee Otterholt. Classical tour of the Greek mainland plus Greek island cruise – Easter on the island of Mykonos.

Contact: Jim Gold International, Inc. 497 Cumberland Avenue, Teaneck, NJ 07666; (201) 836-0362,
jimgold@jimgold.com.

[A flyer with the full list of Jim Gold's 2009 tours is available on the FFDC website – see the FFDC Calendar entry for "Jim Gold Tours - 2009" on 2009-03-15 and click the More Information link. 2009 tour information is now on the web site, www.jimgold.com.]

July 6 - 22 Dance on the Water

Seventeen-day Dance on the Water cruise with dancing led by Lee Otterholt. Visit Ukraine, Bulgaria, Romania, and Turkey. Sail the Knieper River and the Black Sea.

Cruise/land cost is \$2,299 if reservation is made by September 30, 2008.

Contact Mel Mann, 510-526-4033 or
meldancing@aol.com.

More information at:

www.folkdanceonthewater.org

Please note: The Florida Folk Dancer prints information on folk dance tours, camps and other events that may be of interest to our readers. This does not imply an endorsement or recommendation of any tour or camp (except our own FFDC events!).

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FLORIDA FOLK DANCER

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FFDC Website: www.folkdance.org