

## NFO NEWS

THE NATIONAL  
FOLK  
ORGANIZATION  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES  
OF AMERICA

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# Folk

## ORGANIZATION



May  
2016

## NFO CONFERENCE: WE HAVE MOMENTUM!

Joe Crawford, Boston, Massachusetts

Every spring, the NFO holds its annual conference that gives its members a chance to meet together, share ideas and move the organization forward. Following our usual rotation, this was the year to be somewhere on the west coast. On March 10, 2016, about fifty folk dance enthusiasts from around the United States came together at Mariani's Inn in Santa Clara, California. Below are some highlights of the following few days.

The event started off on Thursday morning with some very efficient business meetings, including electing three new Board members and passing the gavel to the new President (See *Summary of the 2016 Conference*, page 8).

After the President's Reception in our hospitality suite – a great opportunity to catch up with what everyone has been doing since our last conference – we got to dance with Loui Tucker's folk dance group in nearby Saratoga. A lot of attendees were very impressed with the material and the pace of presentation. Loui does not keep dancers waiting around!

On Friday, we enjoyed hearing from our keynote speaker, Elsie Ivancich Dunin; learned about the ancient Indian concept of *Rasa*<sup>(1)</sup> from Nirupama Vaidhyannathan; heard how Bollywood and Bhangra are making themselves felt in our dance communities through Indian film; and got some hands-on tips and tricks for using iTunes. Friday evening we enjoyed the Awards Banquet where we honored two wonderful people in our field, Elsie Dunin and Bill Lidicker (see page 12). The banquet also included entertainment by a local performing group, and an opportunity to dance a bit on the small floor provided by the hotel.

Saturday had more relevant presentations in the morning including one on Folk Dance in Schools. Then we headed to the lovely St. Bede's Church in nearby Menlo Park and enjoyed workshops with instructors Elsie Dunin, Richard Powers, and Bruce Hamilton. We not only learned some fun dances, but we heard, in Elsie's case, about their ethnological background. From Richard and Bruce we experienced some easily taught/easily learned dances to use in certain social dance situations.

*(continued on Page 4)*



<sup>(1)</sup> *Rasa* "relates to any artistic experience where the artist and the beholder are held by an invisible electric symbiotic moment, when the art that is performed finds absolute resonance in the viewer. It is a moment that moves you to a higher plane of consciousness. *Rasa* is the single reason artists thrive on making art throughout their lives and it is what draws audiences to any artistic experience." Nirupama Vaidhyannathan

## PRESIDENT’S CORNER

Greg Lund, Eaton, Indiana

I want to start by thanking all of you for the opportunity to serve as your new president. It is my desire to have NFO build upon the momentum that has been created during Ed’s tenure. We all owe him a big thank you for the progress made during the past three years. One thing I really have enjoyed is the abbreviated business meeting schedule, which has allowed us to provide more meaningful and interesting workshops and presentations, plus more opportunity to dance!



For those of you who may not know me, let me give you a brief introduction. I have been involved in folk dance for about 50 years. It all began with a beginning folk dance class at Brigham Young University, followed by several years performing with the BYU Folk Dancers. I then moved to Indiana to teach folk dance and direct a folk dance company at Ball State University. I am currently an Assistant Professor of Dance and Technical Director in Strother Theatre at Ball State University. I was first introduced to the National Folk Organization in the mid 80s, but didn’t join until 2000. In a whirlwind of activity in the organization I became treasurer in 2001, president in 2003 and 2005, and treasurer again in 2011.

Beginning this journey as your president reminds me a little of the ebb and flow of the seasons. Spring is a wonderful time of year; the days are getting longer, temperatures are rising, trees are turning green again, and soon the growing season will be in full swing. Like the seasons, NFO is also undergoing some significant changes and positive things are happening.

1. In 2001 the decision was made to create a foundation account that would one day provide

grants to would further the goals of the organization.

2. Pourparler has become an annual NFO event. Starting in 2004, NFO made it a policy to provide financial support for Pourparler each year. With the passing of Mars Longden, who was essential in its planning and organization, and in an effort to ensure its continuation, NFO offered to assume responsibility for Pourparler, and to make it an annual event under the umbrella of NFO.

3. One of the most popular benefits of membership in NFO is the recent addition of liability insurance, automatic for all members.

4. Just last year the NFO began offering two types of grants – the Discovery Grant to provide assistance with travel expenses to camps, workshops, festivals, etc., and the Folk Arts Grant to provide support for special projects that further the goals of NFO.

5. All of this has fueled a period of growth that has seen NFO grow from 167 members (individuals and groups) in 2005 to 385 members today, with 16 new members in the last month alone.

The question I asked of those attending the conference in Santa Clara this year, and the question I pose to you today is this: *Where do we go from here? What else can we do that will take us closer to fulfilling the goals of NFO?* Realizing that we do not have unlimited resources, and that we cannot do everything we would like to do, what can NFO do that would be a benefit for you?

Next year our annual conference will be held in St. Louis from April 6-8. This will be your opportunity to have an active voice in the direction NFO will take, and in the benefits that will accrue to you and your group. Will you join us in St. Louis and have a voice in those decisions? I hope so.

— Greg Lund —

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## FIRST NFO FOLK ARTS GRANT AWARDED

The NFO Folk Arts Grant was created in 2015 for the purpose of providing financial support for outstanding projects in the folk arts which support the mission of the National Folk Organization. The 2016 Folk Arts Grant has been awarded to Erica Goldman as seed money for the creation of Ma'agal, an annual intensive dance teacher education program for teachers of Israeli dance. We are excited to be a small part of a program that we hope will become a self-funded event. Congratulations to Erica.

For information about the grants programs, applications, guidelines, and deadlines, please visit the NFO website and look under *Money Matters*.

## NFO CONFERENCE

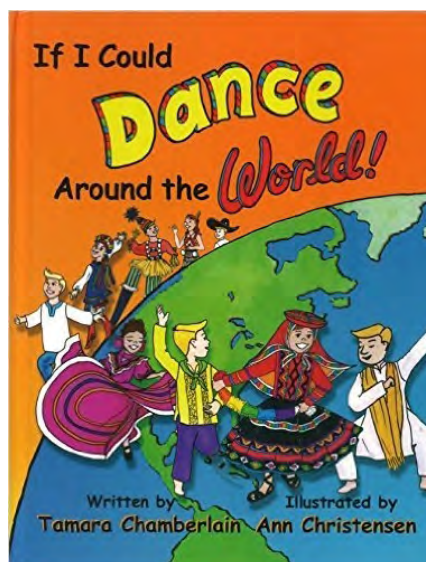
(continued from Page 1)

After a yummy on-site dinner, it was time for the Peninsula Folk Dance Council's monthly dance party. This group knows how to decorate! We celebrated Spring in style. We also got to see Adony Beniares' iTunes dance images, which were part of the Technology Workshop, on Friday in action. We've come a long way from 78 rpm records and chalk boards!

While travel and time off are always pricey, the conference itself is a great value considering all the dances, workshops and presentations it includes. Vice President Cricket Raybern did a great job negotiating a good rate at a comfortable hotel, too. Splitting that cost with a roommate or two helps make that economical, and is another chance to do more idea-sharing and problem-solving – just try to get some sleep, too!

I always enjoy seeing how other dance groups operate and what dances are popular in different parts of the country. It's a treat to catch up with other folk dance leaders and organizers, my colleagues and friends, and to see the progress NFO has made. Thanks to the insurance program, and now the grants program that is up and running, we have significantly raised our profile. What will we work on next? Save up those Frequent Flyer miles, or apply for a Discovery Grant, and make plans to travel to St. Louis April 6-8, 2017 to help us decide.

## IF I COULD DANCE AROUND THE WORLD!



Finally: A book for children about folk dance! Not about ballet, or about dance in general, or about animals that like to dance. It's specifically and enthusiastically about folk dance.

What if you could "skip a jig to the coasts of Ireland" or "tap your feet to the shores of

New Zealand?" *If I Could Dance Around the World* is an educational journey of two children as they travel around the world, learning about people from other lands through their costumes, music and dance. "I could hop my way to the Great Wall in China twirling my ribbon so high. It's fun to see squiggles and loops I make, like painting a dance in the sky!"

Both the author and the illustrator are a former folk dancers who toured with the Brigham Young University International Folk Dancers.

We dance for laughter, we dance for tears,  
We dance for madness, we dance for fears,  
We dance for hopes, we dance for screams,  
We are the dancers, we create the dreams.

-Albert Einstein-



## GREAT TEACHERS, DANCING, PERFORMERS, & CAMELLIAS !

60th Annual Camellia International Dance Festival 2016

Barbara Bevan, Sacramento, California

After searching for an appropriate and affordable venue for the **Camellia International Dance Festival**, March 18-19, 2016, we settled on the Polish American Hall in Roseville, California.

Attendance was very good with dancers from Sacramento, Davis, Placerville, Chico, Stockton, Redding, the San Francisco Bay Area, Southern California, even San Diego and Spokane, Washington! The parties Friday and Saturday nights were great fun. Thanks to technology, we were able to do all requests Friday night plus have a very exciting performance by Veselka, a Ukrainian children's group directed by George and Irina Arabagi who were featured teachers in the Saturday workshops.

Saturday's workshops were outstanding, with Zeljko Jergan

teaching Croatian non-partner

dances and George and Irina Arabagi teaching Ukrainian and Moldovan couple dances. The workshop participants included many of the young (teenagers!) dancers who would be performing later that evening.

The Saturday evening party featured a delightful performance by Skalinada, the Sacramento Croatian ensemble of dancers aged 5-17 doing a choreography by Zeljko, followed by a suite of Bulgarian dances performed by 29 middle-school dancers from Sherman Oaks, California (near Los Angeles) under the direction of Billy Burke. The rest of the evening was a review of the workshop dances and requested dances.

Many people helped to make the festival a success with registration, decorations, refreshments, sound equipment, programming, clean up, etc. On top of it all, we had perfect weather!



Skalinada Croatian Ensemble (Photos by B. Bevan)



Tanza, the dance group from Millikan Middle School in Sherman Oaks, California, under the direction of Billy Burke. (Photo by B. Bevan)

### QUESTIONS I GET ASKED....

What is a "classic" dance and what makes it a classic? Is being of a certain age enough to qualify or does it have to be popular or well-known or forgotten except by a few people and also old? Who decides?

Do dance movements have to have a meaning in order for a dance to be meaningful? If a dance isn't meaningful to me should I be dancing it? Do I have to have a reason for not liking a dance or not liking a piece of music or the lyrics – can't I just not like something for no reason?

What is styling exactly? Is it the way the choreographer looked when first teaching or dancing the dance? If so, how can you expect at dancer who is 4'11" and weighs 150 pounds to mimic the style of a choreographer who is another gender, and a foot taller?

Is styling the way the best dancers do the dance... or the way an average person does the dance... or the way the choreographer originally intended the dance to be done ... or the way the ethnic group the dance movements are based on do this type of dance? Is styling the footwork or the arm positions or the head movements or the curve of the back or all of the above or WHAT?? And why is styling so important to some dancers and unimportant to others?

What does syncopated really mean and do the people who use the term really know what it means?

Where did teachers who teach beginners get the idea that all beginner dances are slow dances, and all slow dances are appropriate for beginners – and how can we change their minds on this?

[Excerpted from the internet.]



The NFO Board at work 2016. (Photo by L. Tucker)



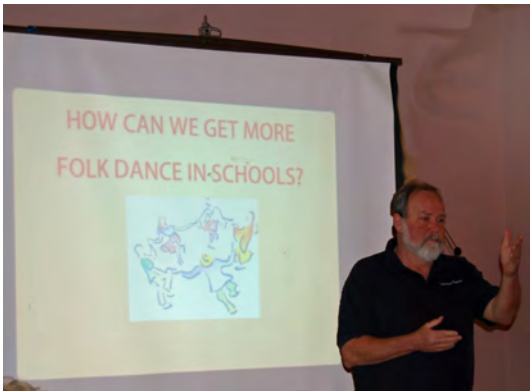
Dancing with Loui Tucker's group in Saratoga. (Photo by D. Rawson)



Some of the presenters at the 2016 NFO Conference, from left: Adony Beniares, Billy Burke, Amy Jex, Elsie Dunin, Mirage Marou, Richard Powers, Ed Austin, Cricket Raybern, Jeanette Geslison. (Photo by L. Tucker)



Performance by Farima Dance Company at the NFO Friday night banquet. (Photo by D. Rawson)



Presentation Saturday by Billy Burke. (Photo by L. Tucker)



Elsie Dunin leading the line at Saturday's workshop. (Photo by L. Tucker)



Reviewing a new children's book about folk dance by a former BYU dancer, see Page 5. (Photo by L. Tucker)

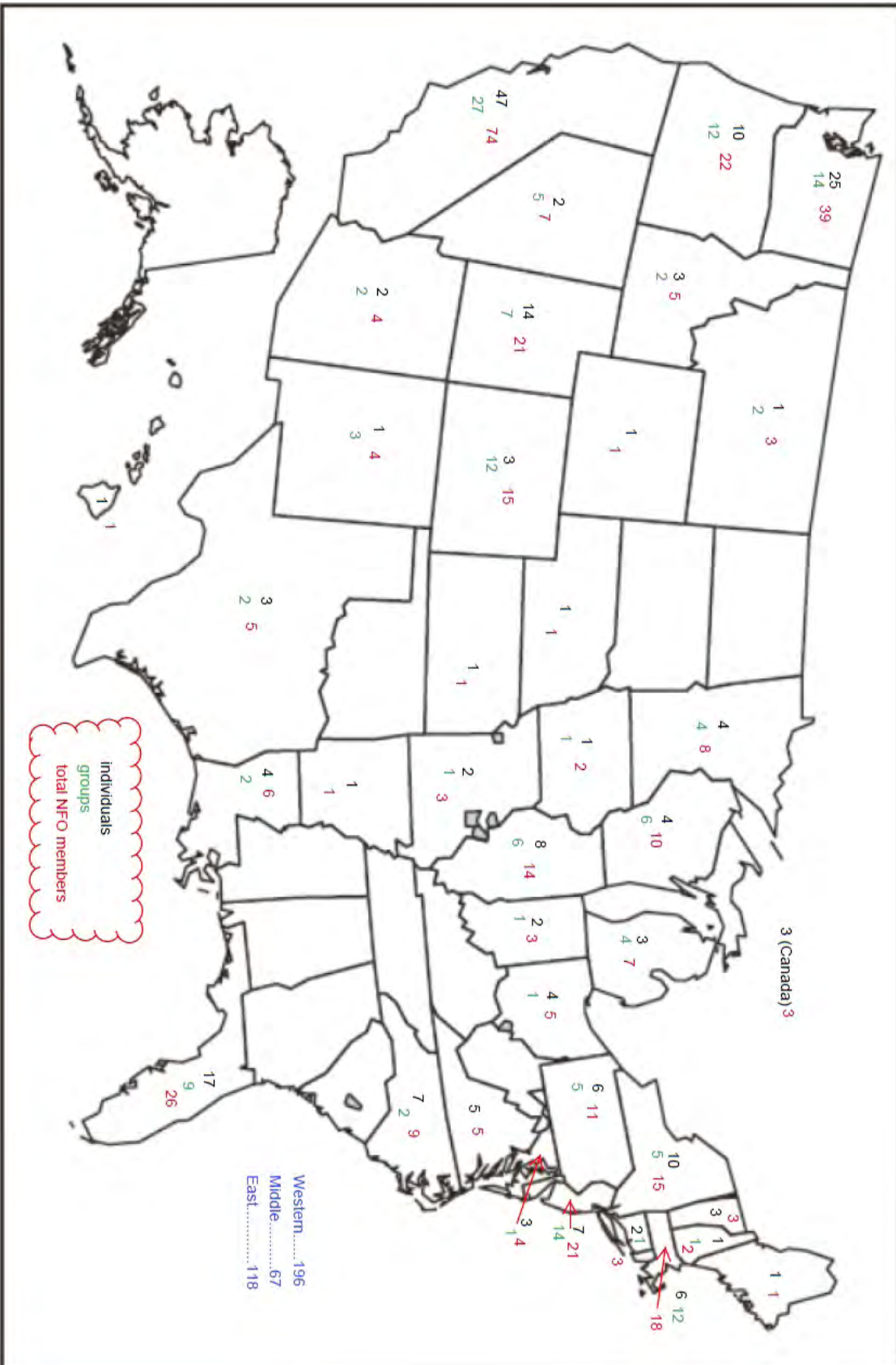


Dancing at the Peninsula Council Party Saturday night. (Photo by L. Tucker)



# WHERE ARE NFO MEMBERS?

This map, generated by NFO Treasurer Taunya Lund, shows the distribution of NFO members in the United States and Canada as of April 2016. See the legend in the lower right for an explanation of the color of the numbers.



## 2016 PRESERVING OUR HERITAGE AWARD

### Elsie Ivancich Dunin

Early childhood provided Elsie Ivancich Dunin with many opportunities to dance and socialize in the Croatian and Yugoslav communities, first in Chicago where she was born, and later in California where she moved with her Croatian-born parents. Classical dance training led to performing in an acrobatic act on stage in Muscle Beach, California, a part in the movie *A Star Was Born*, and performances on the Carol Burnett Show. The 1956 performance in Los Angeles by the Tanec & Kolo Folk & Music Ensembles from Yugoslavia helped to set Elsie on another path – she decided to travel to Yugoslavia to learn all she could about folk dances.

During her decades of involvement in folk dance, Elsie became a professor at UCLA in the Dance Ethnology program of the Dance Department, danced with several performing groups, taught and directed dance groups, and was active in the Folk Dance Federation of California.

She is well-known as a dance ethnologist (ethnochoreologist), choreographer, professor and author specializing in folk dance from Croatia, Macedonia, and Romani in Macedonia. Her studies focus on Croatian diaspora communities. The major focus of her research is on identifying social dance changes that are related to cultural changes. She is also currently a dance research advisor with the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research in Zagreb, Croatia.

In 2006, Elsie was awarded the “Outstanding Leadership in Dance Research” by Congress on Research in Dance (CORD).

Other major influences included: (1) her personal experiences of dancing since childhood with neighborhood dancing schools, (2) the availability of social dance events held in the South Slavic

communities, (3) the California Folk Dance Federation and its model of written dance descriptions for every dance taught in its camps and workshops, (4) UCLA's leadership in developing a Department of Dance with graduate studies expanding into a dance ethnology program; and (5) UCLA's leadership supporting one of the finest research libraries.

Elsie's career path ranged from dancing, performing, leading and choreographing for performing groups, documenting dances and events, addressing dance and culture, educating students and colleagues, categorizing and organizing documentation, studies and presentations, and decades of research in Croatia, Macedonia, Chile, Peru, Australia, the Vatican, and the United States.

She is a member of numerous professional organizations, and arranges and organizes international conferences for several of the groups. She is widely published in Croatia, Macedonia and the U.S.

Elsie's contributions are that she is gifted and dedicated to research, is an educator who believes in, inspires, and encourages students and colleagues, and is someone who sees the big picture and also focuses on details. The care and positive energy Elsie Ivancich Dunin offers and shows in all aspects of her life and work is truly inspiring.

[Excerpted and edited from original speech by Roo Lester at the Heritage Awards Banquet]



NFO 2016 Preserving Our Heritage Award Recipients Elsie Dunin and Bill Lidicker. (Photo by L. Tucker)

### Bill Lidicker

With an academic background in zoology, Bill Lidicker landed a job at the University of California, Berkeley in 1957. He has been heavily involved in ecology, systematics, behavior, evolution, genetics, reproductive physiology, conservation biology, and the history and philosophy of science. He has published over 165 papers in his field, including 4 books. If you think that's a lot, consider that he's also published more than 170 folk dance descriptions and articles.

In 1963-64, Bill was talking to an undergraduate student who mentioned the Berkeley Folk Dancers, and suggested Bill might be interested in joining the class. Bill persuaded himself that, since he was a workaholic, that it would be good for his health and stress levels to do something different for one evening a week. Not having a musical background, it was definitely challenging, but Bill persevered. He remains active in the Berkeley Folk Dancers (BFD) over 45 years later.

Approaching folk dance with his usual attention to detail and hard work, he was elected Vice-President of BFD in 1968 and President in 1969. Bill and his wife Louise chaired the Folk Dance Federation Statewide Festival in 1996 and were elected Honorary Members of the club about a decade ago. Bill even claims that teaching dance has had a synergistic influence on his main professional activity of teaching and researching in science.

Bill Lidicker is currently Chair of the Dance Committee, serves on three other committees, and for many, many years, he and his wife have taught BFD classes at all four class levels. He helped write BFD's scholarship policies and procedures. He is working with a group that is writing a history of the last 25 years of BFD's history. Not just Berkeley Folk Dancers, but the whole folk dance movement of Northern California is far better run than it would be if he were not a part of it.

Bill and Louise Lidicker have been involved in international folk dance as dancers, teachers, and performers for decades. They were invited to teach at five institutes sponsored by the Folk Dance Federation of California, were invited for a 4-day

teaching stint in Taipei, Taiwan; taught on an Alaskan cruise; and taught "classic" couple dances at Stockton Folk Dance Camp three times.

Bill has served as Vice-President and President of the Folk Dance Federation of California, and is currently the Parliamentarian.

Bill and Louise Lidicker joined the NFO in 1999. In 2005, Bill was elected to the Board of Trustee in the first of two 3-year terms. Bill served as NFO President 2011-2013. Most recently, as chair of the Rules and Regulation Committee, Bill went through the NFO bylaws with a fine-toothed comb, making important revisions to them that paved the way for a more efficient organization.

[Excerpted and edited from original speech by Jo Crawford at the Heritage Awards Banquet]



## WANT TO SEE YOUR NAME IN PRINT?

Do you have some interesting news or information about your community, your event, or some aspect of folk/world dance or culture that would make interesting reading in the NFO News?

- ✓ If you've done some traveling that involved folk dance, music, art, etc., consider writing something to share in the News.
- ✓ If you've read a dance-related book, seen a video, or visited a website that you think others would enjoy, please submit that information.
- ✓ If you are or were involved with a workshop, festival, performance, or the like, consider either a short article or an advertisement.
- ✓ If you've been taking photos at dance events, consider forwarding them for inclusion.

Written submissions should be 750 words or less, and will be subject to editing for space, style, and content. If you have an article that is significantly longer than 750 words, please contact the NFO Editor ([loui@louisutucker.com](mailto:loui@louisutucker.com)) to discuss. Due dates: April 10 for the May issue, August 10 for the September issue, December 10 for the January issue.