

Stovall

# Miami Valley Folk Dancers Newsletter

Thursday, December 9, 1993

## Calendar

Sunday, Dec. 12

International Ethnic Sunday

Friday, Dec. 31

New Year's Eve Party

**Sunday, Jan. 9**

**MVFD Annual Meeting**

Sunday, Feb. 13

Irish Ethnic Sunday

Feb. 26-27

Yves Moreau Workshop in Columbus

## Details, Details, ...

**Dot Santi** has once again graciously invited us to her house for the New Year's Eve Party this year. **Eileen Rehg** is preparing a scrumptious midnight feast for us. Don't forget to bring a snack to share. Dancing will start at 9:00 pm. See you there!!

## Annual Meeting Time

The year is winding down to a close, and it's fast becoming time for our Annual Meeting - consider this your official notice of such. The meeting will begin promptly at 3:00 pm, Sunday, January 9, 1994; potluck dinner at 5:30 pm as in past years. There are lots of interesting things to discuss at the meeting (for instance, see below); of course, an agenda will be available at the meeting. If you have items to be put on the agenda, please see me pronto! For your information, **Carolyn Stovall**, **Pat Gehring**, and *yours truly* are going off Council; **Sam Ballinger** and **Mike Clark** are continuing Council members.

As you know, Carolyn Stovall has painstakingly conducted a survey of members' preferences for workshop offerings. In trying to determine the very best way of analyzing the data from Carolyn's hard work, I mustered all of the statistical knowledge and training

that I've accrued in ten years of college and thereafter, thereby putting thousands of education dollars and years of classroom learning to effective use for our Club. This is what I came up with (see what you think). First, I meticulously wrote each of the workshop choices on a separate slip of paper. Then I carefully, and most randomly, mixed up the slips of paper in a large container. Fearing a lack of randomization, and considering the importance of my endeavor, I mixed them up again, just in case I didn't do it right the first time. With utmost care and delicacy, I then dumped the container out onto a stairway (chosen specifically for this purpose). Now the procedure is straightforward: those slips landing on the top step correspond to the most preferred workshops, those falling on the second step correspond to the second most preferred workshops, etc. Satisfied that my procedure is completely unbiased and methodologically pure, I take pride in being able to apply my profession for the good of the Club!

Would you like to know the results of the survey? Well . . . then you'll have to come to the Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 9, because that's where the results of the survey will be announced!!

## Membership News

At the final MVFD Council meeting held at Carolyn Stovall's house, we voted unanimously to make **Pat and Babe Hennessey** honorary MVFD members. Along with **Jewel Steed**, that makes three honorary members that we are fortunate to have in the Club -- individuals who have been members for so long, and who have helped our Club in so many wonderful ways that we want to say "thank you" by keeping them in the Club as our valued guests!

## Miscellany

*Council, give us light!!* When you leave the Pavilion late at night through the kitchen door or through the door at the south end of the building, just turn the timer light knob located by the door. This will provide light in the parking lot for the length of time set by you with the timer (I think it goes up to at least 30 minutes).

There are several places that you can write to in order to inquire about obtaining ethnic dance music, as well as other things such as costumes, accessories, etc. Here are a few:

Ed Kremer's Folk Showplace  
155 Turk Street  
San Francisco, CA 94102  
Phone: (415) 775-3444

Jane Farwell  
Folklore Village  
Dodgeville, WI 53533  
Phone: (608) 924-3725

Joan Amsterdam  
International Folk Rhythms, Ltd.  
P. O. Box 1402  
Northbrook, IL 60065  
Phone: (708) 564-2880

Folkraft Records & Tapes  
P. O. Box 404  
Florham Park, NJ 07932  
Phone: (201) 377-1885

Following is the preface that I include in the syllabus for my International Folk Dance Class at Wright State; I thought you might find it interesting.

International Folk Dancing is alive and well in America. This vast and many-faceted activity has never achieved the national attention that disco dancing received in the 1970s, or that aerobic dancing received in the 1980s, or that country line dancing apparently enjoys now, but there are literally hundreds of folk dance clubs across the country, and they are compiled in a listing entitled the People's Folk Dance Directory.

The popularity of folk dance has increased a thousandfold since the early 1930s; the growth of folk dancing is especially noticeable among college students. Ohio ranks among the ten states in the country having the most folk dancers. In Dayton, the Miami Valley Folk Dancers, with 100 members, is the only dance group that has a truly international repertoire. Formed in 1952, it ranks among the oldest recreational folk dance groups still in existence in the country. The cost of attending an evening of folk dance in Dayton is 50 cents, exactly the same price as in 1952! But how did folk dancing develop in this country?

The United States, a relatively young country, was formed by peoples from every corner of the world. They brought with them their hopes, their dreams, and their unique traditions of religion, food, music, and dance. Those who became interested in these customs of music, arts, and dance gave rise to the Folk Dance Movement of the twentieth century.

The pioneers of this movement (1900 - 1930) included Elizabeth Burchenal (founder of the American Folk Dance Society), Mary Wood Hinman (leader of Chicago's Hull House and the New School for Social Research in New York City), Vyts Beliajus (editor of Viltis Magazine, and the very first workshop teacher for the Miami Valley Folk Dancers in 1952), and Anatol Joukowsky (former ballet master of the Yugoslavian State Theatre).

In the period 1930 - 1960, the growth of international folk dance in the form of festivals, clubs, classes, workshops, and camps was promoted by such individuals as Mary Ann and Michael Herman, Jane Farwell, and Richard Crum. In particular, the non-

partner dances of the Balkans became increasingly popular in the late '40s and '50s. At the same time, Israeli dance was growing in popularity through the efforts of Dvora Lapson and others.

The period 1960 - 1990 saw a flood of records, tapes, choreographers and teachers. The newer material appealed to the young and to the counterculture movement of the '60s and '70s. As a result of the growing dance offerings, many folk dancers in the 1980s began to specialize in particular ethnic areas: Scandinavian, Hungarian, Scottish, English, Israeli, etc. The organized international movement lost many of its dancers, attendance declined, and the population aged. Nevertheless, today there are innumerable folk dance workshops, camps, and festivals offered throughout the year. Enough history! Let's talk about why you should become involved in folk dancing.

International folk dancing is an invitation and opportunity for you to learn more about your foreign neighbors, to understand their customs and beliefs, and to learn about their history and geography. The richness and diversity of the musical rhythms, melodies, dance patterns and formations is enormous, providing you with a lifetime hobby.

Folk dancing promotes positive social, physical and psychological values. Socially, folk dancing provides you with a cosmopolitan atmosphere in which you can meet and interact with other people while learning about the cultures of other countries. Physically, folk dancing helps you to develop rhythm, neuromuscular coordination and balance and, if done on a regular basis, it can contribute to your overall physical fitness. Psychologically, folk dancing affords you the satisfaction of achievement and the enjoyment of learning new skills and techniques in an interactive group activity.

In summary, folk dancing is one of the few activities that is physically, intellectually and culturally stimulating while being great fun at the same time!

#### References

1. Casey, Bette, International Folk Dancing U.S.A., 1981.
2. Heenan, Denis, "A Brief History of the USA Folk Dance," Viltis, Vol. 51, No. 1, 8-10, 1992.
3. Jensen, Mary Bee and Jensen, Clayne R., Folk Dancing, 1973.
4. Khamis, H. J., "International Folk Dance as a College Course," Viltis, Vol. 51, No. 4, 4-5, 1992.

Ethnically and Terpsichorically yours,

*Harry*

Harry Khamis, Chair  
Miami Valley Folk Dance Council