



Puttin' on the Dance Session Notes

“Successful Family-Community-Barn Dances”

With: Paul Rosenberg and Delia Clark

Transcribed by: Quena Crain

Successful Family-Community-Barn Dances

To start off: What are family/community/barn dances? They really are a very different thing. They are:

- very fun
- do not require you to be quick on your toes
- styles and dances that come from all parts of the world
- fun for what it is
- involves just “regular” people (not necessarily people who call them selves “dancers”) dancing

These dances get back to the “Everybody is a dancer” mentality.

- dances don't have to be complicated to be fun
- dancing can exist and stand alone without turning into contra (ie. the goal is not to finally progress on to progressive contra dances, they goal is to have fun and to dance with people.)

These dances are great community builders:

- dancing is just the catalyst to further engagement.
- can be delightfully coupled with food, storytelling, sing-alongs

What do we mean by Community/Family/Barn/for All Dances?

- Family dance = age birth to 98
- Community Dances = easy dances for all; success for all
- Barn Dance = markets for these (??)
- Dances for All = easy dances for ALL, everyone is successful
- Difference between series vs. one-offs

A few different successful models:

- English Dancing Masters: teach dance and music in schools.
- Family Dance-Potluck-Contra Dance (Belfast Flying Shoes)
- Dinner (provided soup and bread)-Family Dance-Dessert-Contra (Delia's dance)
- One-offs (birthday parties, weddings, etc.)

We get tripped up by LANGUAGE when it comes to these dances:

What words should we use when promoting these dances? Welcoming dances? What makes them different from other dances?

Keeping the “vision” intact may help with the strength of the series/ community:

- how do you know what the need [for dance] in the community is?
- what will be the draw?

How to attract people to the dance?

- partner with other organization; “cross-over”