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New eLetter Editor

Deborah Robertson has volunteered to edit the TIFD eLetter. Please send calendar announcements and “news flashes” to editor@tifd.org. Many thanks to Ann McCracken for her past work in this position, and welcome, Deborah!

Nelda Drury Receives the Texas Dance Award

Nelda Drury received the Texas Dance Award at the San Antonio Folk Dance Festival concert on March 10. TIFD president Chris Broad presented her with a plaque inscribed “Nelda Guerrero-Drury Texas Dance Award 2007 — In appreciation of her many years of teaching, leadership, and promotion of international folk dancing in Texas — from her Texas International Folk Dance Family”. Chuck Roth read the following tribute to Nelda:

About 8 years ago, Nelda Drury asked the Texas International Folk Dancers to continue a process that she had started several years earlier — that of recognizing dancers who have been outstanding in promoting folk dancing in Texas over the years.



John Rodi, Nelda Drury, and Liz Newton

Although Nelda set up the Texas Dance Award to recognize others, this year, we would like to recognize her for what she has done for our dance community, for Nelda Drury is probably the most deserving, with years of dedication not just to teaching folk dance at various school levels and at college, but also at community organizations, at our annual Texas Folk Dance Camps, and in many places in the U.S. and overseas.

Nelda Guerrero Drury grew up in Laredo. She had a children’s dance performing group down in the Valley before she moved to San Antonio.

Because of her reputation with that popular school dance group, she was asked to start a similar program at San Antonio College. And so began her college teaching and all the years of folk dancing in the P.E. program at SAC, and some 49 years of Folk

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From the Editor—Muscle Spasms

Last winter I was sidelined from dancing by a combination of weather and health problems. When both cleared up and I returned to my former pace, I found myself waking up to the pain of muscle spasms, usually but not always in the calf. Fearful of even going to sleep at night, I dug into the subject and learned this. Muscle spasms usually occur during a period of rest, usually following strenuous activity. A buildup of lactic acid triggers painful muscle seizures. Lactic acid is usually disposed of by the body through the interaction of water, calcium, potassium, and sodium. If the body's access to any of these is compromised, muscle spasms may result. Prior to exercising it is beneficial to warm up and to stretch (these are not the same thing!). After said strenuous exercise but before bedtime, it helped me to do several things: 1) eat some salty snacks; 2) drink lots of water [better to get up in the night to use the bathroom than to wake up in pain]; 3) chew some Tums or drink a glass of milk; 4) eat a banana; 5) do some gentle calf-stretches; and 6) massage the calves and/or other muscles that may cramp up. One last note: some medicines may compromise the body's ability to metabolize certain minerals - read the fine print. To healthful dancing and a restful night's sleep!

Nelda Drury Receives Award

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Dance Festivals in San Antonio.

Nelda had started in the world of dance with Mexican dances. Serious study of dance began at the University of Texas with Gertrude X. Mooney and in Mexico City with Alura Flores de Angeles and other prominent folk dance teachers. While studying for a Master's Degree from Columbia University in New York, she stayed at the International House and began a lifelong friendship with Michael and Mary Ann Herman. Invitations to teach at camps across the U.S. followed.

In 1956, Nelda toured Japan, introducing Mexican dance to the Orient, and later, she toured Europe. Nelda worked with many early folk dance camps and introduced Alura Flores de Angeles to the U.S. folk dancers. As Professor of Dance at San Antonio College, Nelda taught Mexican dance as well as modern, ballroom, and international folk dance.

Nelda retired from San Antonio College in 1986, but then helped with dancing and as a Board member at the International Folk Culture Center at Our Lady of the Lake University. In 1995, she received the Ford Salute to Education award for her lifetime contributions to teaching folk dance to many students and educators in San Antonio and throughout the world.

In 2001, Nelda received the National Dance Association Heritage Award, given for a distinguished record of accomplishment. More recently, Nelda received an award from the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance (AAHPERD).

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Deadline for the next issue of TIFD News is July 18

The TIFD Quarterly Newsletter is published on the first of the month, in February, May, August, and November; the eLetter is sent on the first of the remaining months. Uncertain who to send your news to? Send to Sally and Deborah, both at editor@tiffd.org, and we will sort it out from there.

TIFD News is published four times a year for the members of Texas International Folk Dancers, a non-profit educational organization. Submissions for publication are welcome, yet subject to editing. All opinions expressed are those of the author exclusively. Material herein may be reproduced with the editor's permission.

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Nelda participated in the Texas Thanksgiving Folk Dance Camp every year for many years. She's been known to have worked in the kitchen and planned parties as well as having taught and served on the Board. Nelda was one of the first dance leaders to be inducted into the TIFD Hall of Fame. She is also well-known at the summer dance camp in Maine where she has gone almost yearly, and could be found working in the kitchen as well as on the dance floor.

Nelda has said, "I am so blessed to have had the opportunity to be involved with folk dance since the late 1940s, early 1950s, and to have gotten to know, work with, learn from people such as Michael and Mary Ann Herman, Vyts Beliajus, Madelynne Greene, Jane Farwell, "Uncle" Ralph Page, Dave Rosenberg, Dick Crum, Alura Flores de Angeles, and so many other wonderful folk dancers."

Well, so are we, too, blessed, with having had the pleasure of studying from Nelda. We honor Nelda Guerrero Drury here, today, because perhaps more than any living folk dance teacher or leader, Nelda has guided and enriched what we know as international folk dancing in and around Texas as well as around the world for almost 60 years. For everyone here, and for countless not able to be here, we say "Thank you, Nelda. Muchas gracias!"

Board News

Our Mission Statement

The mission of the Texas International Folk Dancers (TIFD) is to promote dance, music, and culture from around the world through community dance activities and education, in order to promote multicultural understanding in a fun recreational environment.

From The Board

The TIFD Board of Trustees met in Houston on April 21. We heard a presentation from our new investment advisor, Ann Miller. Ann is a registered investment advisor who will recommend a diversified investment portfolio to the Board. She is waiving her usual fees because we are a non-profit organization. Funds to be invested include a reserve fund for Texas Camp and an endowment fund which was started by a bequest from TIFD member Larry Botimer many years ago. Some of the income from the endowment fund will be used for our grants program to support special projects initiated by TIFD member groups.

Other topics discussed at the Board meeting include plans for Texas Camp 2007, group insurance, improvements to the TIFD database, camp scholarships, long-range planning, and ways to involve college students in international folk dancing.

Calendar

May 4-6, 2007 *When in Doubt, Swing* in Dallas. Joseph Pimentel calling to music by Latter Day Lizards. www.geocities.com/nttds/wids2007/flier07.html

May 25-27 *National Polka Festival* in Ennis, TX featuring 15 polka bands, Czech food and entertainment. www.nationalpolkafestival.com

May 25-27 *National Button Accordion Festival*, Yukon, OK (just west of Oklahoma City). Dance, eat, perform, jam. www.czechhall.com

May 25-28 *Strawberry Statewide* in Oxnard, CA, featuring Željko Jergan, Cristian Florescu, Sonia Dion. www.socalfolkdance.org/

May 25-28 *Northwest Folklife Festival*, Seattle. www.nwfolklife.org

May 27 *Dance around the World*, 12 noon – 7 pm, Dougherty Arts Center, 1110 Barton Springs Rd., Austin, TX 78704. Admission \$10 for adults, \$5 for children and students with ID. For more information: tsurikov.mailcan.com/DATW/index.html

June 7-10 *Texas Folklife Festival*, San Antonio. HIFD will present a Romanian dance performance directed by Sue Griffin. Though this website says 2006, it has info for 2007. www.texancultures.utsa.edu/tff/tff2006/index.html

June 23-30 *EEFC West Coast Folk Dance Camp*. Mendocino, CA. Michael Ginsburg, Joe Graziosi, Steve Kotansky. Instrumental & vocal music, children's programs. www.eefc.org/site/

June 23-July 1 *Dance on the Water Cruise*, Provence/Burgundy. Dancing led by Sandy Starkman. Info Mel Mann, (510) 526-4033, www.folkdanceonthewater.org

July 4-8 *Door County Folk Festival* in Door County, WI. Dance, music, culture, children's programs. Live music by Nick Bratkovich and others. Website still in progress. Dates are correct. www.dcff.net/

July 22-August 4 *Stockton Folk Dance Camp*. Celebrating 60 years. Two 1-week sessions. Both sessions are full but you can add yourself to the waiting list at <http://www.folkdancecamp.org/>

August 2-5 *New Mexico Folk Dance Camp* featuring Erçument Kiliç teaching Turkish dances and Jim D'Apice & Jodi Fleischman teaching Latin dances. At New Mexico Tech in Socorro, NM. www.unm.edu/~lpetri/swifdi

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

August 11-18 *EEFC East Coast Folk Dance Camp*, Iroquois Springs, NY. Cristian Florescu, Sonia Dion, Nina Kavardjikova, Kyriakos Moisisdis. Instrumental & vocal music, children's programs. www.eefc.org/site/

August 11-September 3 *Mainwoods Folk Dance Camp*. 1-week sessions featuring well-loved teachers; many ethnicities of dance and culture. Children may come but there is no programming for them. www.mainwoodsdancecamp.org/index.html

New Mexico Folk Dance Camp

Now in its 24th year, the New Mexico August Folk Dance Camp promises yet another fabulous "long weekend" with Erçument Kiliç teaching Turkish dances and Jim D'Apice and Jodi Fleischman teaching Latin dances, August 2-5, 2007.

The camp is entirely run by volunteers. Attendees stay in college dorms and eat fantastic food - fuel they will need for hours of dancing on a suspended wooden floor, the best in the Southwest. Like all the best camps, this one offers full programs for children, and everyone has an opportunity to order camp T-shirts and DVDs. If that's not enough, don't forget the theme parties! And last but not least, of course, you will return home with many great new dances to bring to your home clubs, and with new friends to look forward to seeing at camp again next year. <http://www.unm.edu/~lpetri/swifdi>

News from Local Groups

Austin IFD News

AIFD has a new domain name and website: <http://www.aifd.cc/>

AIFD members had a wonderful time at Spring Fling on April 14. (See article this issue.)

Dallas IFD News

An estimated 60 enthusiastic Dallas area folk dancers from several different dance groups converged on the beautifully renovated Plaza Arts Center in old downtown Carrollton on Sat., Feb. 24, for the second combined folk dance sponsored by folk dancer and Plaza owner Clarence Teng.

Members of the Chinese, Dallas International and Israeli folk dance groups, the North Texas Traditional Dance Society, and country-western dancers joined in on dances whose origins ranged across the globe. The afternoon even included an Argentine tango lesson given by a professional instructor. Dance highlights also included the Wallendar, Bela Kawe, contra, the Electric Slide, and several Israeli folk dances.

View the photos here: http://www.texasfolk.us/difd/photogallery/comb_dance_party_022407/index.htm

Contributed by Shelley Allison and Gary O'Berg

Oklahoma City IFD News

Carol Barry presented a wonderful evening of English Country Dance on April 21, possibly the best and biggest yet. Peerless musicians Julia Harris, Miranda Arana, Sheaukang Hew, and friends played 12 beautiful dances for 40-50 enthusiastic dancers from all over Oklahoma and Kansas.

Houston IFD News

At the Mediterranean Festival at St. George Orthodox Christian Church, 15 dancers from HIFD performed a variety of dances from countries around the Mediterranean: Menim Balam, Neapolitan Tarantella, Güzelleme, Rençber, Telloo Se Yedee, Yoh Yoh, Haroa Haktana, Dayagim, and Syrto. The dancers were Katie and John Pedersen, Emily and John Clement, Agnes and Frank Smejkal, Kristin Lucas, Basia Sobas, Augie Gaona, Dale Pollack, Bud Bearce, Sharon Samson, Chris Broad, Sherry Lindee, and Lisa Smith. After the performance we all enjoyed Mediterranean food.

"Explore UT" Dance Events

Folk dancing received some good exposure at the University of Texas on March 3 during campus-wide exhibits, lectures and performances on activities at and around UT. Dancers and musicians from the Austin area thoroughly entertained their audiences. Csárdás Hungarian Dancers performed dances from Mehkerek, Tardonai, Vajdaszentivany, Somogy, Mezoseg & Szatmar. Slavadillo performed music from the Balkans, eastern Europe, and the Middle East. The Austin International Folk Dancers taught folk dances to the audience after first showing them some of the dances typically done on Saturday night. Thirty to seventy kids responded well to fast lively dances such as Savila Se Bela Loza, An Dro Returné, Hashual, Pata Pata, and Carnavalito. The folk dancers maintained their enthusiasm and good stage presence, and the chaos of the kids made for a happy dance event.

National Accordion Association Convention

This annual convention took place in Richardson, Texas in early March. It has grown from two days to five days over its lifetime and attracts about 200 accordionists. This year, for the first time, a program of folk dancing was included. About 15 Dallas IFD members attended a Thursday night dance. Dr. Daniel Kott of Killeen, Texas taught an international folk dance workshop for the NAA members during the day and played various dance tunes throughout the night. Some events were also open to the public. Accordionist/folk dancer Jan Erdman from Tulsa has attended this conference for years and was thrilled that folk dancing was (finally) included. She says, "It was great having the Dallas Folk Dancers! It would not have been a success without them. I hope more folk dancers can get involved in the future. The accordionists are there to play—for whom? Dancers! So there needs to be a marriage between the two: My dream and goal."

View the photo gallery here: http://www.texasfolk.us/difd/photogallery/NAAC_030807/index.htm

Featured Artist: Franklin Houston Getting Started

Franklin is one of those rare individuals who have “grown up” in folk dancing. He’s been dancing since before some current Texas folk dancers were born, having started square dance lessons in a children’s summer program in Austin in 1956 with George Lowrey. Franklin’s father, David, was an enthusiastic dancer and wanted his sons, Franklin and Ron, to share the fun. Franklin learned his first folk dance, Ersko Kolo, in 1958 at a square dance class and asked George to teach more of those “neat dances” and fewer of the square dances! He began folk dancing regularly with the “big people” in 1960 in what was to become Austin International Folk Dancers (AIFD) and performed on stage for the first time in 1963 at SAC dancing Partalos. While attending the University of Texas at Austin and dancing with AIFD, he met a really cute coed named Dena. Franklin and Dena were married in 1969 and continued to dance and perform with AIFD. They took a break from performing while raising their children Adam and Rachel. In 1995, with Adam in college and Rachel heading there, they began performing again, this time with Csárdás, Austin’s Hungarian performing group. In December of 1999, the group performed in Budapest, Hungary, to a very appreciative Hungarian audience.

Franklin also started music very young. He learned piano from his grandma, then took up cornet in 6th grade and trumpet in high school. He took up accordion and prim in the early 1970’s and even tried recorder and zurna briefly.

Memorable Moments

- Trying to play The Eyes of Texas on the trumpet outside, in sub-freezing weather against a stiff north wind
- Belting out Vlach tunes with clarinets and other trumpets to an enthusiastic line of Balkan dance devotees
- Performing the trumpet solo on Ekremov Čoček while accompanied by members of Zlatne Uste
- Playing accordion with extraordinary musicians such as Loretta Kelley and Nick Bratkovich
- Receiving genuine, enthusiastic responses from dancers

Beyond Dance and Music

- Electrical Engineering degree from the University of Texas in 1970

- Designed water and wastewater systems for the City of Austin
- Civil engineering consultant for seven years
- Storm water engineering and land development
- Masters degree in Public Administration
- Professional civil engineer 1977 to 2003

Now retired, Franklin and Dena more than fill their time with folk dance, playing music, house and yard projects, playing Grandma and Grandpa to Tyler and Peyton Bruce, travel, scuba diving, soccer, learning Hungarian, and converting all of the family’s 35mm slides, 8mm video tapes, VHS tapes and audio cassette tapes to digital format.



Dena and Franklin Houston

Accomplishments

- Attended Texas Camp all but 2 years since 1962
- Live Music Coordinator at Texas Camp both officially and unofficially from 1986-2006
- Texas Dance Award recipient in 2000
- TIFD Hall of Fame Award recipient in 2001
- Recipient in 2007 of plaque honoring his years of service in live music for TIFD
- TIFD Treasurer 1968
- Board member 1979-85, 2000-2005
- Camp Co-Chair 1981, 1982, 1983
- Attendee and teacher at many workshops and camps, especially adept at teaching dances with syncopated patterns and mixed rhythms
- Repeat Officer and frequent teacher and volunteer in AIFD, including live music programming
- Csárdás performance group member
- Member of Austin Scandi Dancers

Into the Future

"I hope that live music will continue to move forward and be even better than it has been in the past. Dancing to live music is really about experiencing the emotions and the aspirations of the musicians playing at that time, rather than hearing a technically accurate and predictable rendition of a familiar recording. A personal connection between the musicians and the dancers is a joy that for me surpasses just about any other emotion in live music. I hope to have to make choices between dancing and creating music for many years to come! And I have a personal goal, even after 50-plus years of folk dancing, of dancing Arkan at many more Texas Camps!"

AIFD members Misi Tsurikov, Holly Plotner, Mike Revesz, Genevieve Kent, and Kristina Kinsel put the deck through its paces at Spring Fling.

Spring Fling in Austin by Genevieve & Carol Kent

Thank you to everyone who attended this year's Spring Fling. It was a pleasure to host a folk dance party on our newly constructed deck. We had it built in our backyard with visions of dancing and parties, and a vague plan for my brother's outdoor wedding in mind. Now with the wedding a mere two weeks away we decided to give the deck a trial run which turned out to be a smashing success! In the early afternoon we had workshops led by Bill Ogilvie and Misi Tsurikov, who both taught Turkish dances—some oldies and some fresh from Europe where Misi learned them. Later we had wonderful live music brought to us by the talented Don Weeda (accordion), Mike Revesz (tapan), and Mary Blaha (flute), followed by a delicious potluck and barbecue. Living in a neighborhood that never sleeps and loves its music, we had no qualms about letting the party go late, and were delighted that it lasted until around midnight, when we were all danced out. The next day my legs felt like I just came back from Texas Camp, and reminded me of wonderful dances and a great party that we hope to repeat soon.



Review: Hungarian State Folk Ensemble Performance

The Hungarian State Folk Ensemble toured the US recently, and a fair number of area folk dancers attended one performance or another. Three shared their experiences and observations.

The Ensemble was professional, skilled and energetic. Their dance motifs represented the folk sources quite well and were done with precision. The 5-member gypsy orchestra was excellent. However, there were some disappointing aspects to the performance.

In the first half, the women's costumes were plain black and white. According to an interview on PBS, this was supposed to evoke old black-and-white photographs of dancers across the broad panorama of old Hungary. And indeed, the backdrops consisted of B&W photos of the countryside. All in all, the effect was drab rather than magically nostalgic.

The transitions from one region's dances to another and even medleys within a single region were rather strange and more reminiscent of folk ballet patterns than folk dance "cycles" (although the dances themselves were definitely folk dances). Rather than using huge numbers of dancers moving in exquisitely choreographed precision, it seems the artistic director went the other way, and used huge numbers of dancers to display choreographed chaos. At least the costumes in the second half were more colorful than in the first half.

The male lead dancers played to the audience a little too much, as if to say "look at me; I'm great," and the boot-slapping dances did go on and on. In short, the performance was a nice entertainment experience rather than a representation of Hungarian folk dance as we have seen it done in Hungary and by other Hungarian performing groups.

The women's singing-dances were the bright spot of the evening. The singing and the dancing were beautiful, with lines and circles constantly morphing into other shapes. It was a pleasure to recognize tunes and dance movements we are familiar with.

It was still a memorable evening. The cimbalom player received huge applause, and the memory of the women's dances remains a delight.

Lyrics: Ersko Kolo

While it's true I've never heard a recording of Ersko Kolo with singing, there's nothing to prevent dancers from singing during the sideways-moving part:

/Ja idok, idok, idok
Dok devojku jedva stigok/

/Ja brdom, brdom, brdom,
A devojka dolom, dolom/

Translation:
I come, come, come,
Until one girl I reached.

I am walking the high road,
And the girl, the low road.

Recipe: Moroccan Raisin & Carrot Salad

A most unusual mixture of flavors!

1 pound baby carrots
2 T lemon juice
1 tsp sugar
1/2 tsp paprika
1/4 tsp ground cumin
1/4 tsp ground cinnamon
1/4 tsp salt
1/8 tsp cayenne pepper
1 T olive oil
1/4 cup minced parsley
1 cup raisins

Slice carrots diagonally into 2 or 3 pieces. Cook in boiling water until crisp-tender, about 5 minutes. Drain, rinse with cold water, drain again. While carrots cool, combine lemon juice, sugar, paprika, cumin, cinnamon, salt, & cayenne pepper. Stir to dissolve sugar & salt. Stir in olive oil, parsley, raisins, & cooled carrots. Toss. Cover and refrigerate at least 1 hour (or preferably longer, even overnight) to blend flavors. 6 servings.