

# Princeton Country Dancers

## NEWSLETTER

Vol. 5, no. 3 October 2005

### **Rum & Onions XXVI Halloween dance Saturday, October 29, 3–11 pm**

PCD's biggest contra dance of the year features the Rum & Onions band—forty-some musicians under the direction of Michael Bell and Susie Lorand—and visiting caller Kathy Anderson, from Ohio (who called R&O in 2001).

The dance will take place Saturday, October 29, at a NEW location: the John Witherspoon Middle School in Princeton (across the street and down the block from Princeton High School).

The R&O committee is hard at work planning the logistics of the afternoon and evening dances and the potluck. Can you help at the door? checking shoes? transporting sound equipment? putting up signs? buying refreshments? setting up or cleaning up food? To sign up, email [srjohn@sprintmail.com](mailto:sjohn@sprintmail.com) or call 609-443-3782.

### **“English Country Dance: Austen & Beyond”**

Just in time for the next movie version of *Pride & Prejudice* (coming out in November), Sue Dupré and Judi Rivkin will offer a course at the Princeton Adult School on **Tuesday nights, Oct 11 through Nov. 29, 7:45-9:45 pm.** It's open to anyone who preregisters. If you're new to English country dancing, would like to brush up your skills, or as an experienced dancer could be a helpful presence, see <http://www.ssreg.com/Princeton/classes/> or <http://rivkinetic.org/ecdbio.html#gigs>.

### **Head for the Hills weekend, Nov 11-13**

PCD's famous friendly weekend of dance, music, & other fun returns to Camp Harlam, near Kresgeville, PA, 2 hours' drive from Princeton or 1-1/2 hours from Philadelphia. See the yellow flyer for details and registration information, or go to <http://head-for-the-hills.com>.

Staff will include some of New Jersey and Philadelphia's finest performers, such as Raise the Roof, A Band Named Bob, and A Joyful Noise.

Special features of the weekend this year will include expanded opportunities for couple dancing (including waltz and Cajun dance), a tribute to Ted Sannella, and a longer cocktail party (still featuring live swing dance music) followed by a buffet dinner.

### **Winter Cotillion—Sunday, December 11**

5 pm potluck; 7 pm dancing

Save the date for PCD's annual festive candlelit potluck followed by contra & English country dancing, singing, and seasonal entertainment with a cavalcade of callers and great visiting musicians.

### **Cotillion Singers welcomes new members**

This group of amateur singers, founded by Annie Anderson and now led by Robert and Janet Mills, has provided entertainment at nearly every PCD Winter Cotillion since the event began. Whether or not you can read music, if you love to sing in harmony with a group, you are invited to join. This year's Cotillion is scheduled for December 11.

Rehearsals will be held on Sunday afternoons starting in November. **RSVP by October 21** to [janetmills@verizon.net](mailto:janetmills@verizon.net).

### **Community dance series resumes**

**Sunday afternoons** at Suzanne Patterson Center

Have you heard about the series that is getting the next generation involved in traditional music and dance? All ages are welcome. Here are the dates and callers for 2005-2006:

October 16	Sue Dupré
November 20	Richard Fisher
January 22	Janet Mills
March 12	Jenny Beer
May 7	Ridge Kennedy

The organizing committee consists of Nancy Barbour, Margoleath Berman, Carol MacAdam, Louise McClure, Janet Mills, and Louise Senior.

If you have questions about these dances or would like to get involved, call 609-688-8847 or email [lsenior@patmedia.net](mailto:lsenior@patmedia.net).

### **Tom Gibney Memorial Concert—Fri Oct 14**

The New York Pinewoods Folk Music Club (<http://www.folkmusicny.org/>) is sponsoring a memorial concert for Tom Gibney. Here are the details:

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Fri, Oct. 14: Tom Gibney Memorial Concert, 8 pm at the Community Church, 40 E. 35 St. (near Madison Ave), Manhattan.

This concert brings together some people who knew and performed with Tom over the years, including his sons David Gibney and Michael Gibney; Murray Callahan; and David Jones & Heather Wood, who sang with Tom as Poor Old Horse. (Michael Gibney took his dad's place in the group during their recent appearance at the Champlain Valley Festival.) Also performing will be several of Tom's bandmates from the Princeton area. The concert is FREE to NYPFMC members; all others \$5. Information: 212-957-8386.

Patti Gibney writes: "Tom had many friends in the New York Pinewoods Club and was a member for many years, enjoying the traditional music they support through their activities and their concert series. They decided to sponsor this memorial concert and to charge a nominal fee to cover their expenses. I'm sure they'd be happy to receive contributions above and beyond that from anyone who's able to attend."

### Thanks from the PCD Executive Committee

The Princeton Country Dancers would like to thank Sarah Gowan for designing this year's (and the past four years') wonderful Rum & Onions flyers!

Sarah, a Pennsylvania-based member of R&O, has been playing concertina and guitar in the band for a number of years now. We greatly appreciate Sarah's artistry and skill in creating these beautiful flyers. Thank you Sarah!!

### Dancers respond to Hurricane Katrina September 7 benefit a great success

PCD's regular contra dance on Wednesday September 7, 2005, was turned into a benefit for the relief efforts in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. At this well-attended dance, a total of \$801 was received, with \$421 designated to the Red Cross (general relief efforts), \$253 to Habitat for Humanity (rebuilding efforts), and \$127 for Project Hope (medical supplies/services).

The Executive Committee thanks all who were able to come and support this community fund-raising effort on very short notice. And a very special thank you to our caller, Sue Dupré, and band, Fire Hazard (Ross Harriss, Susie Lorand, Paul Prestopino, and Pete Soloway), who contributed their time and talents to support this benefit.

### Send-off for Ross Harriss

The Sept. 7 dance was the last local performance for a while for Ross Harriss (whistles, sax, piano, guitar), who is beginning his college studies in jazz at the University of Cincinnati Conservatory. Ross has been active in PCD as a contra dancer and musician, Pick-Up Band leader, and occasional musician & dancer with Handsome Molly. PCD greatly appreciates all his contributions to our community. We will all really miss him, and we wish him success in his new musical adventures.

### "Dance Angels"

You may have noticed some of PCD's dancers wearing wings. Their "dance angel" badges indicate that they have volunteered to be helpful and friendly presences on the dance floor—especially for newer dancers, but also for anyone who'd like help developing dancing skills and learning ways that dancing together can be more fun. "Dance angels" are not "dance police"; they are offering help only, never criticism.

Maggie Grant is coordinating this new program. She welcomes your questions and comments. . . and new volunteers. Contact her at 609 844-0999 or grant.maggie@gmail.com.

### Publicity and Outreach

PCD's Publicity and Outreach Committee is looking for ways to increase our dance attendance and would like to hear any ideas you have for increasing the number of attendees at our dances.

For the past few years our average attendance has been very stable at just under 40 dancers, and we'd really like to get back to 50 or even 60 dancers, where we used to be.

We are particularly interested in your ideas for attracting younger dancers from nearby schools and colleges. Please contact Larry Koplik, chair of the Publicity and Outreach Committee, 908-359-4837 or lkoplik@monmouth.com, with your ideas.

Also contact Larry if you can help distribute and post quarterly PCD flyers by taking them to other dances you attend, or posting them at schools, churches, libraries, community centers, gyms, etc.

### FEEDBACK INVITED

To contribute to this newsletter, or give feedback to the editor (Susie Lorand), call 609-252-0248 or e-mail <pcdinfo@aol.com>.

## PCD COMMUNITY MEETING EXPLAINS THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE'S 2005-2006 GOALS

Eileen Hayes

The PCD Executive Committee (PCD EC) presented its 2005-2006 goals at a community meeting during the Wednesday night dance on September 7. The meeting was intended to enhance understanding of how PCD functions, build community, encourage member involvement & volunteerism, and promote the long-term sustainability of traditional dance & music in the Princeton area. This meeting, which coincided with PCD's Hurricane Katrina Benefit and the farewell for Ross Harriss, was well attended.

PCD has held weekly traditional dances (contra and English country) in the Princeton area for over 25 years. It currently sponsors over 70 dance events annually, including Wednesday dances, 4th Saturday dances, Sunday Community dances, and special events. PCD has gained a national reputation through several of its callers and bands, notably Rum & Onions. Most of its performing group affiliates—Cotillion Singers, Millstone River Morris dancers, Griggstown Lock Rapper Sword dancers, and Handsome Molly dancers—have performed around the U.S. and internationally. PCD's annual budget, which includes space rental, performer pay, insurance, and refreshments, is in the tens of thousands of dollars. PCD is run by volunteers, and every bit of effort helps.

The five main goals for 2005-2006 consist of two major efforts aimed at

- 1) More fun dancing
- 2) Building community

together with 3 enabling goals:

- 1) More and better information/transparency for volunteers
- 2) Outreach & publicity toward new dancers and returning dancers
- 3) PCD website redesign.

Maggie Grant and Larry Koplik are leading the **More Fun Dancing Goal**. Aims are to: support new dancers through use of helpers (Dance Angels), provide opportunity for all PCD dancers and callers to enhance their skills through various workshops, encourage former dancers to return, and solicit input from dancers via feedback forms.

Barbara Simpson Vadnais is leading the **Community Building Effort**. This is a broad-based goal with several co-leaders, intended to cover:

- 1) establishing a social committee—helping dancers and volunteers to get to know each other,
- 2) evaluating membership issues (defining who is a PCD member, who should be able to vote in elections, dues?)—Pat MacDonnell,
- 3) tracking event proposals—Lynda Lee,
- 4) investigating donor opportunities—Carol MacAdam,
- 5) establishing a musicians' forum—John Vadnais,
- 6) holding community meetings and providing an annual report to the community—Eileen Hayes,
- 7) informing members about PCD's connection to the larger dance community.

Spence Wilcox and Pat MacDonnell are working to enhance the transparency, availability, and quality of information available for PCD volunteers and the consistency of decision-making. This includes maintaining contact lists of who does what within PCD—a pretty substantial list! They are also developing and maintaining documentation of standard policies and procedures for running PCD activities so that those who volunteer will experience being part of a smooth, well-run group. They also aim to link new volunteers with mentors.

Larry Koplik and the **Publicity and Outreach** groups have been busy publicizing PCD dances within other dance communities, in newspapers, through local athletic and/or outdoor groups, libraries, etc. They have organized outreach dances at Communiversity, the Princeton Public Library, Princeton University staff picnic, and the NJ Folk Festival. They are exploring partnering with organizations that sponsor classes or continuing education courses where dance callers/instructors could teach contra or English country dance. They have developed coupons and special recruiting posters and are focusing on reaching the younger generation—high school and college students.

**Website redesign:** Most of PCD's current dancers and musicians use the web as their main source of dance information. According to our surveys, it is also the way many new dancers find out about us. We save a lot on postage and flyer reproduction costs if members get information from our website. So Barbara Greenberg and her team of John Vadnais, Carol MacAdam, Loretta Brooks, and Spence Wilcox are working to redesign the PCD website from both a technical and content view. They will determine if a consultant is needed to support this effort.

The PCD EC hopes that you find this report helpful and that we will see more of you at dances & helping to keep our community vital and growing!