

# THE MILFORD CONTRA DANCE

*Physically Distanced Yet Socially Connected!*



NEWSLETTER #6

DECEMBER 2020

## MESSAGE FROM SANDY, PETER, RICH, KATE, AND BILL

Greeting Dancers and Musicians!

Welcome Yule! The winter solstice arrived early morning on December 21st at 8:30. From here the days grow longer! Last December at the Milford Dance we celebrated the solstice with a reading of Susan Coopers' poem "The Shortest Day" and then circle danced around a glowing crystal bowl decorated with evergreen boughs. The poem is now in a gloriously illustrated book and is recited here: [The Shortest Day](#). We trust that you are staying safe and warm and finding creative ways to stay connected with friends and family and celebrating the season in your own traditions. Remember this: Every day we are one day closer to dancing together!



### THE 4TH FRIDAY CONTRA DANCE by Sylvia Miscoe

John Redemski started a Milford contra dance on the 2nd Friday as a fundraiser for the Town Hall auditorium which was in disrepair. The Milford 4th Friday dance, the brainchild of Dave Bateman and John Redemski, followed shortly after. It began in 1992, 3 or 4. Dave can't recall the year.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)





HAPPIEST OF  
BIRTHDAY  
WISHES TO  
SANDY  
LAFLEUR!

## Birthday Round

Dorothy Dushkin

$\text{♩} = 130$



*mf*  
We wish you a ha ppy birth-day, A



joy- ous and ce- le- bra- tive bi- irth- day! To our dear



friends, May you have a long long life!







(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

The open band idea was Dave's and was inspired by the sight of great musicians lining up on the side of the Nelson Hall waiting for a chance to play. Thinking that was a shame, he suggested having them all play!

The idea was to have a monthly dance that would not conflict with other dances and would serve as a venue for any level caller and any level musician. It would need an experienced caller and a Band Boss.

The Milford Town Hall was available on 4th Friday evenings. It has a nice wood floor, an upright piano and a stage. Dave was the designated caller. Bob McQuillen agreed to play piano for the inaugural dance.

The first evening was successful. Nobody remembers how many people showed up or who the musicians were but there was a mix of experienced and beginner. Some musicians brought their tune books and we worked off Randy Miller's New England Contra Tunes and the general repertoire of the other musicians.

By the next month the format was beginning to take shape. Bob said he was too busy to take on another dance and I assumed the Band Boss title. Most people had copies of the NE Fiddlers Tune Book and others just looked over a shoulder. I realized that in order to create a band we would need printed music and copies for everyone. Learning the tunes by ear on one's own would take many weeks and we met to play for a dance only once a month.

I had many Quebecois tunes in my library and they are great for dancing. Each month I would bring 3 or 4 new tunes, with copies for everyone, and distribute them. Other people did the same. The band grew and so did the number of dancers.

After about 3 years I decided we were ready for prime time. The Ralph Page Legacy Weekend was always held in early January and I hired The

Milford Musicians to play for the Friday Night Dance.

There were 2 rules. First: The participating musicians had to attend three dances and attendance was taken. This was easy as the RPLW was 8 months away. Second: I gave our tune list to the participating callers, ensuring the musicians would not be surprised by a new and probably difficult tune. At the monthly dances we chose tunes from The List. The Friday dance at the RPLW was a rousing success with compliments from dancers and callers. Even the original skeptics were pleased.

The 4th Friday Milford dance is in its 28th year. In 2016, a collection of the current tunes was published. Musicians and callers have come and gone. However the basic premise of the dance has remained the same. Any musician is welcome as is any caller and any dancer.



Sylvia Miskoe is life long dancer, musician (accordion) and caller/prompter in the New England Contra Dance, and Scottish and English Country Dance traditions. She was one of the founding members and music directors of the Strathspey & Reel Society of NH, and a member of the Ralph Page Dance Legacy Committee. In 1999 she, along with others, represented NH at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival. In 2011 she received the Governor's Arts Award for traditional arts. Before her retirement, Sylvia was a microbiologist and worked for the State of NH as a laboratory inspector. Sylvia is a world traveler, an avid birder, and horsewoman who enjoys carriage driving.




(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

I love this dance because of its delightful flow, smoothness, connectivity and the feel of doing an English Country Dance in a contra dance setting. I feel the best music for this dance are smooth marches, reels or jigs, with tunes that emphasize flow and that have more of a tranquil or meditative feel. "Bulgur in the Pot" by one of my favorite groups, the Moving Violations works well for the dance.



CHRIS RICCIOTTI started calling as a part of dancing with 4-H back in 1979. From there he went on to start his own dancing groups. In 1987, he started sharing his love of dancing with LGBTQIA community. By request from this community Chris developed a style of calling traditional contra and square dances using non-gender terminology to identify the roles. In 1988 he founded the Lavendar Country & Folk Dancers.

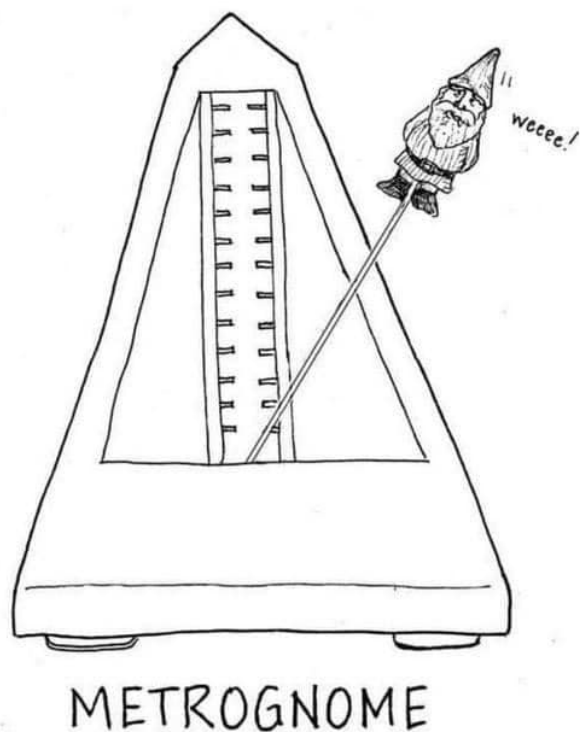
**balter**



*(bôl'ter) v.*  
To dance gracelessly, without particular art or skill, but perhaps with some enjoyment.

[MIDDLE ENGLISH]

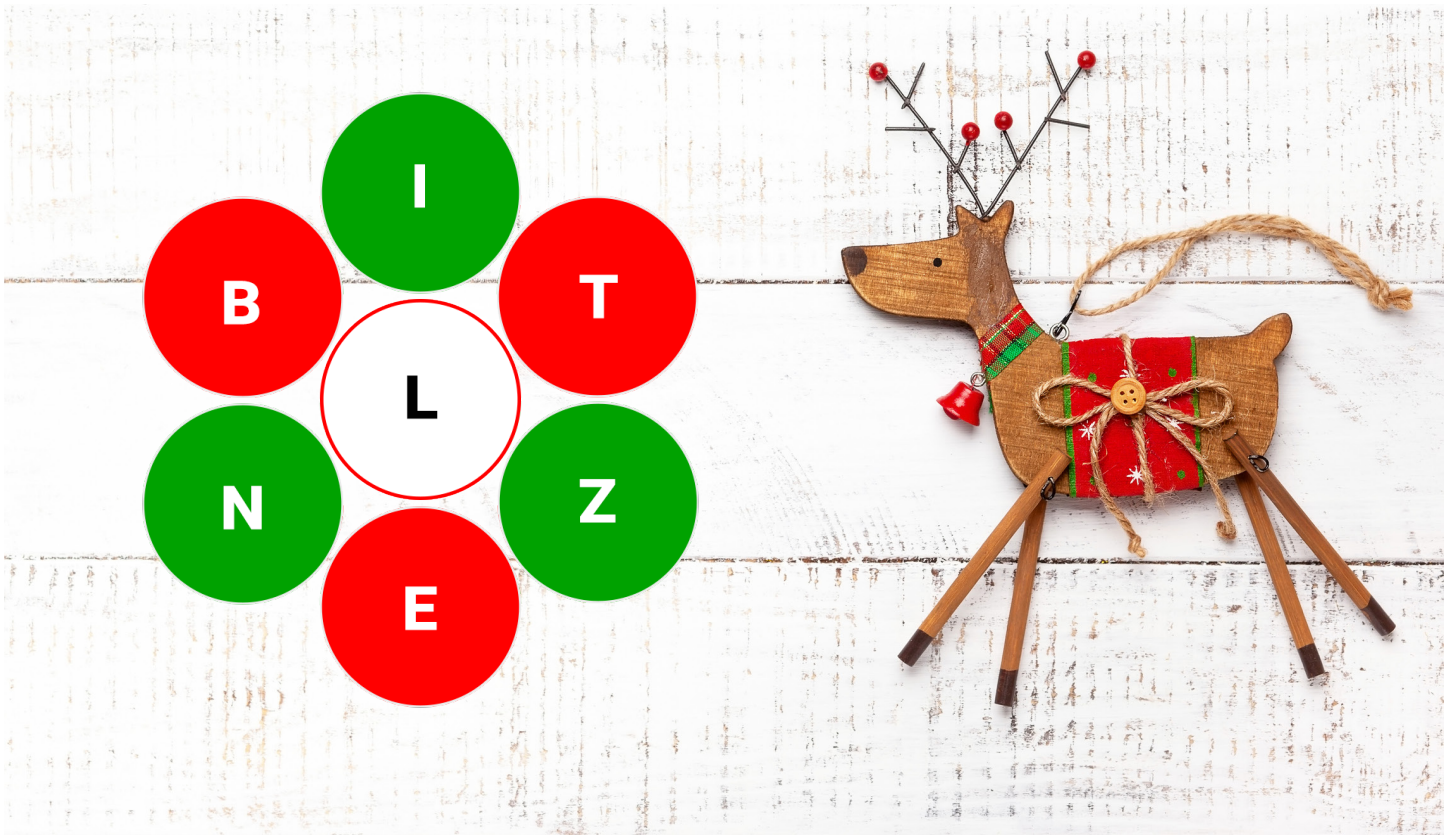
**I HAD NO IDEA THERE WAS A WORD FOR WHAT I DO.**





# WORD BLITZ<sub>(EN)</sub>

Find words of four letters or more. The words must contain the letter L.  
There are 24 familiar words and 33 words in all. Click [here](#) for the solution.



## SUGGESTION BOX

Forward your feedback, article ideas,  
and personal updates to Sandy Lafleur at  
strumma@aol.com. Prefer the phone? Call  
Kate at 654-9854

**The Milford Contra Dance is sponsored by the Milford New Hampshire  
Recreational Department**

