

# THE MILFORD CONTRA DANCE

*Physically Distanced Yet Socially Connected!*



NEWSLETTER #5

NOVEMBER 2020

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

Greetings Dancers and Musicians -

We do hope you are enjoying these monthly newsletters! So here we are in November, a month in which we often are not able to dance at the Milford Town Hall because of the holiday and the Town Hall being closed. But who remembers last November? The fourth Friday (our usual night to dance) did not conflict with Thanksgiving. We held a free dance with 55 dancers and 10 musicians and collected donations for 2 local food pantries. In our records are two thank you notes, one from SHARE and one from the Open Cupboard Pantry for the boxes of food and cash donations they received. WHEN we next meet our first dance will be again be a benefit for SHARE and the Open Cupboard Pantry.



## AN ODE TO TRYPTOPHAN

There was once an amino acid  
Whose effect was to make people placid.  
On Thanksgiving day,  
You could see them all sway  
As they wish they had stayed home and fasted

~Nancy Tichanuk





# BONAPARTE'S RETREAT: FROM BALLAD TO "BEEF, IT'S WHATS FOR DINNER"

By Kate McClure

## NAPOLEON

The origins of the tune known as Bonaparte's Retreat are somewhat hazy, which is often the way with traditional folk music. One theory is that it originates from an old Irish tune named The Eagle's Whistle. Another places it with a Scottish piper who served at Waterloo, presumably celebrating Napoleons' defeat. Yet another places it at Waterloo, played at a slower tempo, with Irish musicians bemoaning the same event. (It's not that they would be particularly pro-Napoleon so much as anti-English.) It was generally played as a slow march which increases in speed to denote a retreating army. Forty-five years later, it had crossed the Atlantic and was being played as a military march in the American Civil War.

## "HERE'S THE BONY PART"

In the 1930's Alan Lomax, working for the American Folklife Center and the WPA traveled the South making field recordings of music "to gather a body of folklore before it disappeared." At this time Bonaparte's Retreat was a slow dance tune, ([Henry Reed Version](#)). The musician Lomax recorded in Salyersville, Kentucky William Hamilton Stepp, played a sharply different version. Using fierce bowing and strong drones, Stepp almost doubled the tempo of the tune, transforming it from a 4/4 march to a reel or hoedown. He altered the rhythm enough to make the melody sound different from typical performances. Stepp's sense of humor came through as during the recording pointing out, "Here's the bony part". ([Stepp's recording](#))



## AARON COPLAND

Stepp's version of the tune became the basis for one of the most famous pieces of American classical music ever composed, the "Hoe-Down" section of the ballet Rodeo. Composer Aaron Copland, who in 1942 was commissioned by choreographer Agnes De Mille to score the ballet, adapted almost note for note, Stepp's version as the principal theme. ([Hoe Down Ballet](#)) (It wasn't the first time Copland had adapted material found on the archive's field recordings; a theme from Copland's 1938 score for Billy the Kid incorporates "Goodbye Old Paint.")

The former "Bonaparte's Retreat" now "Hoe-Down" has been performed primarily as part of the symphonic suite Four Dance Episodes from Rodeo. Rock and Roll audiences heard in 1972 a version of "Hoedown" played on electronic keyboards, bass, and drums by

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)



## COCONUT CREAM PIE (VISUALIZE THIS DANCE) by Don Heinold

From the mind of Lynn Ackerson, a San Francisco Bay Area caller, years ago came this contra dance more popularly known as a "four facing four" dance (2 couples facing 2 couples). No, it is not a square dance even though it has 4 couples. It is my guess that Lynn may have written this as a variant of an earlier dance written by Ron Beeson called "Apple Pie Quadrille". (Note: this dance was also independently written as "Holy Cow Moly" by Brian DeMarcus.)

The interesting aspect of this dance is that it is fairly accessible to new or infrequent dancers after a few dances earlier in the evening. I love this dance and have called it frequently at dances all over New England. Here it is:



### COCONUT CREAM PIE by Lynn Ackerson

A1: In lines of 4 go forward & back

Center 4 right hand star go all the way round return to your...

A2: Partner by the left (allemande) go 1½ round to trade places

New center 4 right hand star, go all the way round, find your...

B1: Partners balance & swing, end facing in, join hands 8

B2: Circle left 4 places (half way round to trade the way you face)

Balance the ring & California twirl (twirl to swap),  
remake your lines of four

Coconut Cream Pie done at Catapult Showcase:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MwHnw5YvrGg>

Don Heinold is a dance caller and organized Mostly Waltz, R.I. He also redesigns residential gardens. You can follow Don on Facebook at "Don Heinold, Dance Leader and Instructor".







(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

Emerson, Lake and Palmer. ([ELP Live](#)) It was used in the opening ceremonies of the 2002 Salt Lake City Winter Olympics and it was used, starting in 1992, in a series of TV commercials for beef, with the slogan “Beef—it’s what’s for dinner!” ([Commercial](#))

The widespread success of “Bonaparte’s Retreat” must be credited partly to Copland’s genius as a composer and an arranger. Its success is also seen as a testament to the vision of Alan Lomax who sought out the tune, recorded it, recognized its distinctive charm, and chose it for inclusion in his collection.

The greatest recognition must be given to William Hamilton Stepp, the fiddler whose artistry turned the tune from a sad retreat march to vigorous reel. Stepp, whose family was so poor he literally lived in a cave until he was five, grew up to be a farmer and fiddler in Kentucky and Indiana. Even with the music transformed with tympani and horns, reeds and brass, a xylophone and wood blocks, we’re hearing the Kentucky fiddler Bill Stepp.



Kate McClure plays bass ukulele with the Kukuleles and is a Child Protection Attorney for New Hampshire. She lives in Lyndeborough, NH with her family and pink flamingos.

Happy November Birthday to Contra Dancer Donna Pereira! Health and happiness in the year to come!



### Birthday Round Dorothy Dushkin

$\text{♩} = 130$

*mf*  
We wish you a happy birth-day, A  
joy-ous and ce-le-bra-tive bi-irth-day! To our dear  
friends, May you have a long long life!

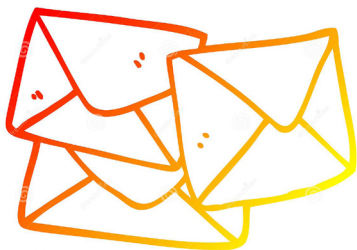




## Happy Thanksgiving!

M D J F U P X E G H D I Z V V  
 A M Y D T I W R D T M B A E C  
 C O E J H Y A O O B U T I I K  
 Y Y D Z F V E R T V S T P P Q  
 S H F X Y O T Q F Y J N O B F  
 P Y S T S Y O R Q S N G C E X  
 B R V C E C T D G Z C E U G W  
 I C V K B G G Z C E F P N J Z  
 H B R E H L M U Q O C W R G H  
 D U S C B A N X N W M U O H B  
 T G X D Y C T Y P D Q A C R T  
 C X N O X R S O H P X F W R T  
 Y L E V E Q B L X N R O C A W  
 T O F U R K E Y F T J M B R A  
 G V M V I F T W E N Z M U J Y

**ACORN  
 CORNUCOPIA  
 FOODCOMA  
 GRAVY  
 MACYS  
 NFL  
 TOFURKEY  
 TURKEYTROT  
 PIE  
 YAM**



## WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!

"Writing is an adventure", Winston Churchill.  
 Be like Winston! Send us some writing or an  
 idea for some writing and we'll take it from  
 there!

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

*Bonaparte's Retreat citation: Folklife Today, 11/25/2013: Bill Stepp & Aaron Copland  
 "No one has ever become poor by giving" Anne Frank*

