



Spokane Folklore Society

# FOOTNOTES

Serving folk arts in the Inland Northwest since 1977

January 2021

Volume 46

No. 1

## MEMBERSHIP!

By RD Beck

It is with great gladness and gratitude that I am passing on my membership duties. I will still remain a member-at-large and eagerly wait for our next safe contra dance. I think we have an awesome group of folks for SFS.

Judy Lungren graciously accepted the position of treasurer and because of her mathematical and organizational skills, she has already improved, fact checked and updated the spreadsheets I passed along. I am happy that I have been able to be a part of the board and this group.

We greatly appreciate the members that have already renewed but if you have not had a chance, gather your gumption and support our group.

Huge virtual hugs,  
RD

## MEMBERSHIP DRIVE!

Thanks to everyone who is supporting the Spokane Folklore Society . So far we have received renewals from about 50 percent of our membership from last year.

Please consider becoming a member for our 2020/21 Season by clicking on this link:

[Membership Form](#)

Special thanks to our Heroes, Advocates and Contributing Members who have given additional donations.



## December Holiday

Thanks to everyone who participated in the Spokane Folklore Society Holiday Zoom Party - over 50 people enjoyed performances by Arvid Lundin and Deep Roots, Darla Jean & the Something or Others, Louise Fix and Noah VanNorstrand, along with a poem by Tom Morgan. Participants also shared stories about meaningful tree ornaments and enjoyed seeing friends new and old who have been part of this tradition for 4 decades. And several people kicked up their heels at home, especially for the closing waltz!



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To all the folkies reading this newsletter—may the new year bring us all

## SFS Mission

The purpose of the Spokane Folklore Society shall be to promote a broader community awareness and involvement in cultural folk traditions, such as music, dance, and other folk arts through such social and educational events as concerts, dances, festivals, workshops, lectures, demonstrations, and newsletters.

[www.spokanefolklore.org](http://www.spokanefolklore.org)

# Spokane Fall Folk Festival Embraces the Virtual World

By Donna Graham

Fall Folk Festival Committee Publicity Coordinator



It's become a sign of the times. Annual festivals we are accustomed to attending annually have had to cancel their events or make drastic changes. After discussing and agonizing for months, the Spokane Fall Folk Festival Committee made the decision to go virtual in 2020.

Little did the committee know what the process would entail. Once the decision was made, they quickly realized that there was a steep learning curve involved. Who was qualified to do this? What format should they use? When and where will the performers be filmed? How long will editing take? Who will put it up on the website and monitor it for any problems that might arise?

A fair bit of research was done by several members of the committee, looking at formats other music festivals were using, the costs, and the quality of the finished products. "When we realized all that was involved it boggled our minds and frankly scared some of us," reported one of the committee members.



Bulgarian Dance Group

Once the committee picked a format, the next hurdle was the logistics of selecting performers and finding a place to record them. Fortunately, one member of the committee, Ken Glastre, has been involved in the recording and music industry for many years. He was able to advise them about the needed sound equipment, find techs to help him set up and in the end, provided a wonderful location to record some of the selected groups. Brandan Biele did remote recordings, including one outside St. John's Cathedral in Spokane.

The first recording sessions were scheduled for mid-September. The five days before the recording sessions Spokane was engulfed in the smoke from the wildfires. "What-if" discussions were held and contingency plans developed. Fortunately, it rained enough to clear the air but not interrupt performers from recording. Subsequent recordings were scheduled and, in the end, some of the groups performing arranged their own sessions and sent the tapes to the committee. In the end, over 35 groups will be posted to the website.

Another hurdle was publicity and advertising. Early in the pandemic invitations to submit graphic designs of the annual poster were sent out. The committee selected one by Larry Lotz of Troutdale, Oregon. Larry was a trooper when we needed to make changes in the design like adding the word "virtual" and the details of when the Festival is going to be online.

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## About *Footnotes*

*Footnotes* is published monthly except July. SFS dues include an e-subscription. Paper copies add a fee.

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Copy deadline is the 15th of the month. Articles from the membership are welcome and appreciated! Copy may be edited for space or clarity.

### SFS BOARD MEMBERS

**President:** Brendan Biele

**Vice-President:** Joy Morgan

**Acting Treasurer:** Judy Lundgren

**Acting Secretary:** Sylvia Gobel,

**Members at Large:** RD Beck, Jim Angle, Penn Fix, Carol Pinkerton

[www.spokanefolklore.org](http://www.spokanefolklore.org)

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Since the early beginnings of the festival, posters have been printed and distributed to locations in the Spokane area. Because of the pandemic, our printing sponsor had to close their print shop so a new source had to be located. Fortunately, another local business was able to pick it up and got the posters to us quickly. Adjustments had to be made in poster locations because many have closed or are not accepting them this year. Next came advertising. All of Festival's past media outlets have come through and print media is once again able to help get the word out.

Another challenge was vendors. The Spokane Fall Festival has a reputation of arranging for a variety of vendors for the two-days in November. Many of them are sole entrepreneurs and non-profits who have suffered some difficult days this year. Committee member Nora Scott contacted the vendors to find out if any of them would be interested in advertising their goods on the Festival website. About a dozen of them responded "yes." People will be able to access them on the website until December 31, 2020, just in time for Christmas shopping.

For the past 20 years or so, KPBX, Spokane Public Radio has broadcast a live show at the Festival. When it was determined that the Festival was going virtual, KPBX came up with an alternative for the radio. They broadcasted a Festival Retrospective featuring performers from past years. The retrospect was aired on Saturday, November 14, and again on Sunday, November 15.

It has taken a strong "village" to put the Folk Festival together this year. Thanks go to the committee: Sylvia Gobel (Director), Carolyn Wright (Treasurer), Margaret Herron (Secretary) Llyn Doremus (Grants), Ken Glastre (Sound), Nora Scott (Vendors & Posters), Dan Fears (Sales), Linnell Hinchey (Venue), Clint Hill (Website) and Donna Graham (Publicity).



Alma Brasileira  
with Dan Gore & Jesse Tinsley



Indian Youth Group

### Support Folklore Society Business Members

*Business memberships not only provide valuable support to SFS, but the businesses receive extra benefits. New business members are listed monthly in the newsletter and have links on our website: [www.spokanefolklore.org](http://www.spokanefolklore.org).*

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The 2020 Virtual Fall Folk Festival was available on their website, <https://www.spokanefolkfestival.org>, from Saturday, November 14 until December 30, 2020. For questions, contact the website or call (509) 828-3683.

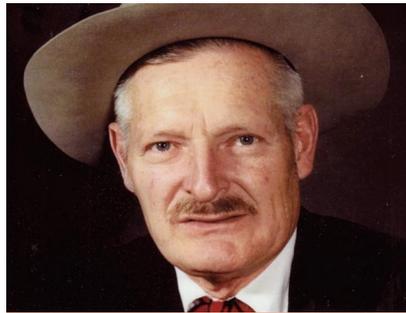
# Old Time Music and Square Dancing

By Penn Fix

The Forty Years Ago column relies on information from two sources for its inspiration.

Country Crossroads was a bi-monthly newsletter that provided a calendar of dances through out the Northwest as well as a related article. The newsletter written by Penn Fix began in November 1980 and continued to 1986. The other source comes from long time volunteer and founder of SFS, Eric Johnson who provided a detailed list of SFS sponsored events from 1977 to 1992.

Forty years ago, one hundred and thirty dancers came to the Woman’s Club to dance squares. Long before there was contra dancing in Spokane, there was old time square dancing. It all began during Expo ’74. The Gypsy Gypo String Band from Seattle featuring Sandy Bradley, Jack Link, Jerry Mitchell, and Warren Argo had been hired for the Smithsonian sponsored Folklife Festival. One night the band had just finished a rousing set of old time fiddle tunes; Jack Link asked the crowd what else they wanted. And out of the audience came Bill Reagan; he offered to call a square dance. The response from the audience was so positive that Bill and the band were hired for the rest of that summer.



“Wild Bill” Reagan 1919—2010

Bill Reagan, later known as “Wild Bill,” had grown up in Colorado in the 1930s where he learned to dance and call. One of his peers was “Pappy” Lloyd Shaw who is acknowledged as the founder of the modern square dance movement. Bill served in the Air Force during WWII and remained overseas until he retired in 1963. During his time in Europe and Asia he called square dances but when he returned to the states and moved to Republic, Washington with his family he quit calling until that fateful night at the Expo 74. Bill’s absence from the United States right after the war and his decision to not call once he returned meant that he missed the continued development of the square dance scene started by Pappy Shaw. Square dances became much more complicated which necessitated dance lessons and classes. Bill’s dances were simple and easy to teach at public dances.

After that summer, Sandy Bradley and the Gypos returned to Seattle and the bar, the Inside Passage, where they held weekly concerts. But instead of just playing old time fiddle tunes, Sandy began calling squares. She developed a repertoire of dances gathered from Bill Reagan, Lloyd Shaw, and other older callers. At the same time club square dancing was wrapped up in clubs that hosted classes, asked members to wear matching costumes, and danced to recorded music. Sandy, on the other hand, offered an alternative: simple easy to learn dances held in public settings with live fiddle music. Sandy brought the “old time” square dance revival to the Northwest.

Here is an example of one of the dances he called.

## Tumbleweed

First couple swing your partner and scatter the seed like a tumbleweed

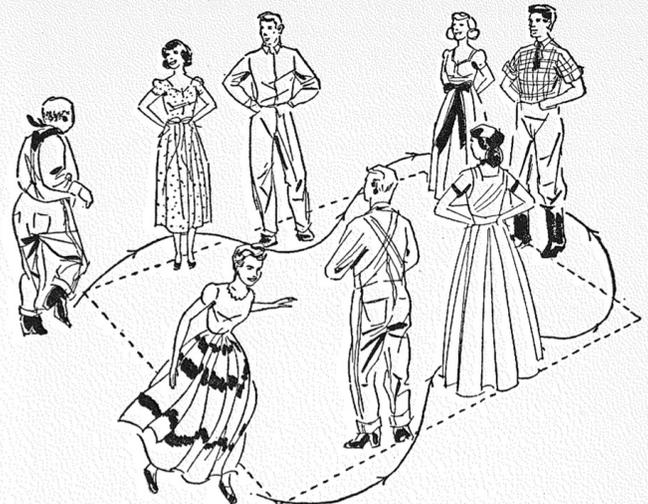
First couple dosidos your partner

And then sashay into the center of the ring and swing

And sashay back

Scatter the seed like a tumbleweed

Meet your partner with a right and left grand



22. GO AROUND THE SQUARE LIKE A TUMBLEWEED

Square Dance. Ralph McNair. 1951

For the move “scatter like a tumbleweed” the first couple separates and walks around the outside of their own corners and back into the center and then out again between the corner couple and the couple across from them (third couple). First couple then dosidos behind the third couple. Together they sashay through the third couple and swing in the center. After the swing they sashay back through the third couple and then separate to retrace their weaving around their corners.

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One of the first sponsored events of the newly incorporated Spokane Folklore Society In 1977 was a square dance with Sandy Bradley calling. While most of its events were concerts, the Spokane Folklore Society did sponsor two more square dances in 1979.

In January 1980, the Spokane Folklore Society offered its first series of dances. For the next two years, the SFS held two dances a month, one contra and the other squares.

The house band for the square dances was Sweetwater String Band led by fiddler Geoff Seitz. And "Wild Bill" Reagan called the dances. Other square dance callers came to Spokane during this time. Pop Wagner and his brother Bode from Minnesota were hired to play for the Expo '74 festival. They returned in 1980 to play and call square dances on two separate occasions. The following year Sandy Bradley returned as well as two of her proteges, Sherry Nevins and Debbie Nagusky.



The Hurricane Ridgerunners (left to right): Armin Barnett, Mark Graham, Jerry Gallaher, and Paul Kotapish

The interest in square dancing in Spokane culminated with a dance held forty years ago, February 21, 1981. The Hurricane Ridgerunners, a powerhouse band from Seattle, played for 130 dancers at the Women's Club that night. The band featured Jerry Gallaher calling and on guitar, Mark Graham on harmonica, Armin Barnett on fiddle, and Paul Kotapish on mandolin.

They also held a dance in the Coeur d'Alene at the Ivalee Dance Hall the night before and the following weekend they were in McCall and Boise, Idaho. The tour, noted Jerry recently, was the "zenith for the band." In 1982, they returned to Spokane for the first of several Spring Festivals sponsored by SFS but shortly after that event, the Ridgerunners broke up. Mark explained, "when Ronald Reagan's era struck the flimsy old time music economy like an asteroid, everyone put on clean clothes and went to school or

got a job."

The band's fate reflected that of square dancing. The popularity of contras had begun to overcome the old time square dance world. Square dance callers like Sandy Bradley, Sherry Nevins, and Debbie Nagusky first added contras to their repertoires and then later called contras almost exclusively. String bands remained popular because their music could be used with contras but bands that focused on traditional contra dance music from New England, Ireland, Scotland, and French Canada were in more demand. In January 1982, the Spokane Folklore Society discontinued the monthly square dance and moved to a single contra dance on 3rd Saturdays of every month.



Bill Reagan calling a square dance at Yakota Airforce Base, Japan circa 1953



## Callers Corner

By Ray Polhemus

After decades of calling, the most difficult part of calling is still, for me, when to back out of the calling and let the music and the dancers take over. That's where the magic happens. When the dancers remember the dance, and it's just them and the music, there is an enlightened new reality that transcends "normal" dancing.

Now, in order to reach that goal, the dancers need to take some responsibility for learning the dance, so the caller can exit the call. It is not supposed to be the caller's job to call every move for the entire dance. In the end though, it is always for the dancers, so as I back out of the calling, I always watch for points of difficulty where I should jump back in to keep the dance flowing smoothly. Often the more experienced dancers will prompt others on the floor as they dance. This works well as long as they get it right. Otherwise, things can get messy pretty fast. I personally have been the remedy for, as well as the cause of some of these messy occurrences. If you've danced near me, you are aware of this!



The point of all this, of course, is to improve the dancing, making the experience better for all.

I sure wish we could dance together . . . I miss it very, very much.

## *Penn Pals.....*

### **Dave Smith**

By Penn Fix

*This column, Penn Pals, highlights those who have made a difference in music and dance communities across the Northwest. Their stories share common themes: the impact of volunteering, the easy access to organizations and tasks, and their passion for music and dance. Today we are faced with the need for new and younger volunteers. Hopefully these stories will inspire others to follow their passions and help continue to create the magic found in the world of music and dance.*

Dave Smith was tired of seeing nothing but urban sprawl in Dayton, Ohio. He moved to Missoula in 1978 for the forests, the wilderness and access to outdoor experiences. What he didn't expect to find was a love of music and dance.

Like so many dancers before him, Dave was introduced to "old time country dancing" in the early 80s by a friend, Robert Logan, from the Missoula Bike Club. It wasn't long after, that Jim X Borzým the resident caller in Missoula told Dave that he was moving out of town and was hoping someone would step in. Without much thought, Dave offered to learn and Jim taught him the basics. In 1983, Larry B Smith moved to Missoula, following his wife Jill who was in a PhD program there. Larry was an accomplished caller from North Carolina. He offered to help Dave. He advised him to put aside the calling cards and instead feel the music and call from the heart. Dave later said that Larry had "really kick started me."

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By then Dave was traveling to Spokane in search of more “country dancing.” He remembered the 1984 SFS Spring Festival held at the Woman’s Club with Sandy Bradley and the Small Wonder String Band and Penn Fix with Kevin Burke and Laurie Andres. For a short time, he lived in Seattle where he participated in the open mike sessions held in the New Melody Tavern. Organizer Sherry Nevins liked what she heard and gave Dave the opportunity to call more dances. The level of dancing in Seattle and Tacoma allowed callers like Dave to offer more intricate dances.

Dave moved to Spokane in 1987 where he attended Spokane Community College and then later Eastern Washington University majoring in engineering. For the next ten years, Dave totally jumped into the music and dance scene. As Ray Polhemus observed, “if Dave wasn’t calling, then he was dancing.”

Penn Fix turned to Dave in 1991 to assume calling responsibilities for the Wednesday night dance series started by Penn three years before. Because of his enthusiasm and skill, the dance series was well attended, establishing it as the only weekly dance east of the Cascades. Dave made some changes as dancers became more comfortable with dancing. “ContraMania” was a monthly feature in which Dave only prompted two times through a dance. The purpose of “ContraMania” was not to call complicated dances but instead challenge the dancers to remember the dance and not rely on constant prompting by the caller. Dave felt that it “kept them from being lazy and ultimately improved their dancing.”

It was during this time that Dave formed a musical relationship with Jack Lindberg and Arvid Lundin, the musicians for the Wednesday night dances. At an early age Dave had learned to play bass guitar and percussion. During the Wednesday night dances, he began playing the bodhran as he was calling. The Traveling Lundbergs as they became known toured frequently along the I – 5 corridor from Eugene to Vancouver, BC. Their sound, referred to by Dave, as “power music” inspired both dancers and musicians with band’s energy and dynamism.

In the spring of 1996, Dave moved to Seattle and a year later to Portland where he has been working in the tech industry ever since. Much like Jim X Borzým, Dave wanted to make sure that there were callers to take over his responsibilities before he left Spokane. He announced at a Wednesday night dance that he would be leaving and offered to teach those interested how to call. From that class came a group of callers who have led the Wednesday night dance series ever since including Ray Polhemus and Nora Scott. Ray recalled that Dave was “an excellent dancer and superb caller so of course he was an excellent teacher.” Added Ray, “I tried to model calling on his. He was my idol.”

Dancer, musician, caller, and mentor. Dave Smith left his mark on our music and dance community.

To see a clip of Dave in action, click [here](#).



Dave Smith calling—circa 1990



The Traveling Lundbergs

# Yule Log and Caroling on Twelfth Night

Editor's note: Click [here](#) for a nice soundtrack for this article!

The events of Yule were generally held to have centred on [Midwinter](#) (although specific dating is a matter of debate), and feasting, drinking. Scholar, [Rudolf Simek](#) comments that the pagan Yule feast "had a pronounced religious character" held for the West European [Stone](#) and [Bronze Ages](#).<sup>[1]</sup> Yule customs and the traditions of the Yule log, [Yule goat](#), and Yule boar ([Sonargöltr](#)) are still reflected in the [Christmas ham](#), [Yule singing](#) (Wassailing), and others, which Simek takes as "indicating the significance of the feast in pre-Christian times."<sup>[1]</sup>

The tradition of **wassailing** (*alt sp wasselling*)<sup>[1]</sup> falls into two distinct categories: the house-visiting [wassail](#) and the orchard-visiting wassail. The house-visiting wassail is the practice of people going door-to-door, singing and offering a drink from the [wassail bowl](#) in exchange for gifts; this practice still exists, but has largely been displaced by [caroling](#).<sup>[2]</sup> The orchard-visiting wassail refers to the ancient custom of visiting [orchards](#) in [cider](#)-producing regions of [England](#), reciting [incantations](#) and singing to the trees to promote a good harvest for the coming year.<sup>[3]</sup> Notable traditional wassailing songs include "[Here We Come a-Wassailing](#)"

Traditionally, the wassail is celebrated on [Twelfth Night](#) (variously on either January 5 or 6). Some people still wassail on "Old Twelvey Night", January 17, as it would have been before the introduction of the [Gregorian Calendar](#) in 1752.<sup>[4]</sup>

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

## Here We Come a Wassailing



Here we come a- was- sai-; ing a- mong the leaves so green, Here we come a- was- sai- ling so



fair to be seen, Love and joy come to you, and to you our was- sail too, and God



bless you and send you a hap- py new year, and God send you a hap- py new year.

We are not daily beggars that beg from door to door  
We are your neighbor's children whom you have seen before

God bless the master of this house, likewise the mistress, too  
And all the little children that round the table go