

Centennial Tour 2015—Halifax, Nova Scotia

To celebrate CDSS's Centennial we're going on the road! Each Tour stop will be a community residency, an opportunity for each participating group to use its existing strengths to focus on their longterm resilience and growth, create a "pipeline" of new talent, or reach out to new audiences.

We're very excited about these partnerships, and are looking forward to kicking off the Tour next spring. For information about the Tour and other Centennial projects, see <http://www.cdss.org/centennial-tour.html>.



Photos by Glane

A Network of Fun

The Halifax Tour Stop is a joint effort by the two contra groups who run monthly contra dances on Saturday evenings. Our musicians play traditional jigs, reels, waltzes and polkas, with influences from Cape Breton, Québec, New England, the British Isles, Scandinavia, bluegrass and elsewhere. We avoid date conflicts and encourage dancers to attend all events.

CONTRA TIME DANCERS grew out of a previous group and includes a core of experienced dancers. Their caller has years of calling and teaching experience in modern square dancing and a love of contras nurtured by her New England childhood. The program usually includes mixers, contras of various types, and one English country dance. HALIFAX CONTRA DANCES formed when a group of musicians were inspired by contra experiences in Ontario and Massachusetts to form a band and encourage their friends to support them. Their caller began when the band formed and developed his skills through attending workshops and mentoring by the callers of the other group.

We are delighted to report benefits so far from planning Contra Fest 2015, the local CDSS Centennial Tour stop:

- Volunteers eager to call resulted in a series of caller workshops and some new skills are already being used.
- To inspire interest outside of Halifax we have held pre-events in three communities with encouraging results.
- Communication, cooperation and cross-pollination between the groups have increased.
- Halifax Contra Dances has become part of the Nova Scotia square, round and contra community and now benefits from the services offered.
- We have also strengthened our connections to leaders of English country, Scottish country, Irish and step dancing.
- Our publicity efforts included a feature article in the main Nova Scotia newspaper in August that increased interest and resulted in several new dancers.

Excitement is building and already we see progress in pursuit of our vision: “We aspire to providing a network of fun, friendly and multi-generational community and contra dances in Nova Scotia; therefore our mission is to develop the skills of dancers, dance leaders and musicians, so that we can share our enthusiasm for this healthy recreation with new participants.”

For more information, see our website, <http://www.contrafest.ca>; the article about our groups in the Spring 2013 issue of *CDSS News*, <http://www.cdss.org/newsletter-archives/search/welch.html>; and an article this summer in the *Chronicle Herald Arts and Life*, <http://thechronicleherald.ca/thenovascotian/1233095-halifax-group-dancing-up-a-storm>.

Dottie Welch, Halifax Dance Community

Halifax Tour Staff



The staff for the Halifax Tour stop are musicians Betsy Branch and Sue Songer (Portland, Oregon), musician Eric MacDonald (Portland, Maine), musician/caller Erik Weberg (Portland, Oregon), and caller Lisa Greenleaf (Bolton, Massachusetts). This staff group is full of performers at the top of their field. Individually they are also strong teachers, with vision, and the ability to create goals and provide practical tools to help students achieve and grow. The Halifax community has shown from the start of the Tour planning process that they also have a strong vision. Community and staff are meeting to combine their ideas; by the time the Tour stop happens in September the experience will be exciting, rich and rewarding for all involved. I can't wait!

~ Nils Fredland, Tour Manager

CDSS Centennial Tour

Halifax, NS
Sept. 26-Oct. 3, 2015

<http://www.cdss.org/centennial-tour.html>