

## CONTRA DANCE ETIQUETTE

**WE ARE HERE TO HAVE FUN.... all of us.**

### **HONOR YOUR PARTNERS:**

Contra dancing is a dance in which you have multiple partners while moving up and down the contra line. Individual dancers vary in their ability to swing and move on the dance floor. Be sensitive to the safety of your fellow dancers. Never force a partner to twirl or jerk a partner's hand, arm or shoulder. Do always ask your partner if it is ok, before doing your own special swing move. Do not hold onto someone's hand too long in a courtesy turn or swing, since this can mean your partner's shoulder is stressed

In Contra dancing people dance in close physical contact. Please hold yourself and your partners so both of you are comfortable. Remember that your partner's comfort zone may be different than yours. Smiling is part of the fun and eye contact is necessary to reduce dizziness but predatory or intimidating behavior is not allowed. **Respect your partners at all times.**

Dancing generates heat and keeping clean and dry can be a challenge. As a courtesy, consider packing a hand towel and fresh shirts.

Some dancers are hypersensitive or allergic to highly scented products such as perfume, aftershave, etc. and others react to odors such as spices, onions or garlic. Please be thoughtful in your pre-dance scent application and fresh mints are always appreciated.

Anyone may ask anyone to dance, and couples are encouraged to switch partners and dance with others in the dance community. Experienced dancers, please ask a newcomer to dance. We were all beginners once and each of us can thank the experienced dancers who took time to teach us along the way. If you and your partner are newcomers, split up and seek out experienced dancers. You will learn faster.

### **HONOR THE DANCE LINES:**

Our Friday Night Contra Dances often draw more than 300 people. What energy! But with so many people the lines can be long and tight. So consideration of others in the line is necessary. **Do not lift your partner off the dance floor.** This can cause issues for others in the line who need to get out of your way since by definition lifting someone means you are taking lots of space on the line. Be energetic in your dancing, but remember that swinging arms and feet need to be controlled so as not to get into someone else's side or onto someone else's feet. **Respect others' personal dance space.**

Many experienced dancers improvise during a dance. But being on time and respecting the space of your partners and the others in the line are always more important than nifty embellishments.

### **HONOR THE BALLROOM DANCE FLOOR:**

What a treasured space we have in the Spanish Ballroom. Be energetic, but remember that the dance floor is over 80 years old and heavy stomping is not appreciated. Remember your grandmother may have danced here and we would like the floor to be a heritage we can pass on to future generations. Wear shoes with clean, soft soles, and as always, no drinks, food, or gum on the dance floor. When applicable, work with the caller to keep the dance lines off the center of the dance floor, because the center line is the weakest part of the floor in the Spanish Ballroom.

### **HONOR THE CALLER AND THE BAND:**

When the caller is doing a walk through, silence should prevail. Pay attention, follow the instructions, and be patient while others learn. Take "hands four" promptly, so everyone can start the fun of dancing.

Each week we are honored to have live music and experienced callers. Please thank them.

## **CONTRA DANCE ETIQUETTE SUMMARY**

Respect your dance partners. Make sure that you don't hold your partner too close or too hard.

Respect the Ballroom. Try not to dance on the center of the Ballroom floor where there is some structural weakness. Do not jump or stomp on the dance floor.

Make sure your partner is comfortable.

Making eye contact with your partner may help reduce dizziness, but be sensitive to your partner's comfort level.

Make sure your partner is OK with any dance moves that you make--if you're not sure or they aren't, then DON'T.

Please wash your hands and try to be as fresh, clean and dry as you can on the dance floor. Consider changing shirts/clothes during the dance if you perspire a lot. You'll feel better and so will your partner!

Be aware that some dancers may be sensitive to perfume and aftershave, so please use sparingly. Applaud the band and the caller.

**HAVE FUN - IT'S A DANCE.**