**Ottawa Contra Dance – Talent Information Sheet**

**NEW for Fall 2015 - Please Read!**

**LOGISTICAL INFO**

**Contact information with Ottawa dance organizers:**

* **Last minute emergencies on the day:** Roger Williams - leave a message at both home (613-730-2137) and cell (613-294-4417)
* **Billeting:** Roger Williams 613-730-2137 RogerandElizabeth@gmail.com
* **Booking, contracts, programming & feedback:** Emily Addison 613-729-0798 EmilyLAddison@gmail.com
* **Sound:** Greg Brown (our sound technician). Contact Greg at least two weeks ahead with technical requirements greg.thomas.brown@gmail.com.

**Directions:** Our Saturday dances are held at the Churchill Seniors Recreation Center - 345 Richmond Road, Ottawa, ON.

Directions from the East OR West:

1. From the Queensway (HWY 417), take the Kirkwood exit.
2. From the exit ramp …. If coming from the west, turn left onto Kirkwood….If coming from the east, turn right onto Kirkwood.
3. Drive 1.3km/0.8miles and then turn right at Richmond Rd.
4. Drive 0.7km/0.4miles and then turn right onto Churchill Rd. The parking lot is immediately on your left.
5. Parking is free but you may need to sign in/get a pass. Check with staff at the front desk.

**Billeting & food:** If you need billeting, contact Roger as soon as possible. Let him know (1) number of people and room requirements as well as (2) food limitations, pet or other allergies. Billeting hosts will provide breakfast and very occasionally they will offer dinner. If your billeter doesn't offer dinner, you are responsible for your own.

**Timing:**

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| *Afternoon sessions*  *(Usually 3:30-5:30 pm)*  *Evening dance (8-11pm)* | The hall opens at 2pm. Sound check is promptly at 3pm. You are expected to be loaded in and set up prior. Dance is from 3:30-5:30pm ( family dances 3:30-5pm). The exception is if the session has a workshop from 3-3:30pm, in which case, there will be a line check and then a rolling sound check. Talent is still expected to be loaded in by 3pm. |
| 6pm | Hall opens & sound technician and volunteers begin set-up. You are welcome to enter the hall. |
| 7pm | Sound check begins promptly. You are expected to be loaded in and set up prior. |
| 7:30pm *Beginner lesson* | Sound check ends. Caller begins the introductory/beginner workshop. The caller can push the workshop start time back 10min, THEIR choice, as long as done by 8pm. |
| 8pm | Dance begins. |
|  | A committee member will do announcements between the second and last dance before the break. |
| Begin 9:15-930 | First half finishes. Band plays a waltz. |
| 15 minute break | After 12-15min break, band starts the second half with a waltz (optional – caller & band decide). |
| 11pm | Dance finishes. Band finishes with a waltz and if time, possibly a hambo or schottische if they like.  Please be timely in your tear-down to facilitate our volunteers getting out of the hall ASAP.  Note: There's optional socializing at the pub right across the street after the dance. |

**Compensation & cancellation policy:**

Compensation amount is set at the time when the gig is booked. (There is no additional pay for travel costs.) A formal letter of employment will accompany this info sheet. If Ottawa Contra has to cancel a gig within three months of the event, we will compensate the talent for the full agreed upon amount. If the caller or band needs to cancel the gig, please let us know ASAP. Bands can substitute a member if agreed with Ottawa Contra (no additional pay). If you don't perform, we don't compensate. Please note that cancellation is difficult for us as we promote all bands/callers over the whole season.

**Publicity:** ASAP, please send updated publicity photos, social media & website links, videos, etc for us to use (email Ed - contra@acrewood.net). We finalize our publicity in late July before the start of the season but will do updates throughout the year.

**Equipment:** If you need a keyboard or special equipment, let us know at least two weeks ahead. We will attempt to accommodate.

**Merch:** We will provide table space to sell CDs or other mechanise. Upon arrival, please let us know if you have any.

**Callers & Bands - Feedback both ways:**

We would like to foster an open dialogue of feedback from you to us and from us to you! If you are uncomfortable with feedback, please let us know ahead of time. And, if you have any feedback for us regarding any aspect of your experience with Ottawa Contra, please begin the dialogue!

**BAND-SPECIFIC INFO**

* **Couple dances:** We finish the first half, start the second half, and finish the dance with a waltz – that's three! The band may also play a hambo or schottishe to finish the evening if they are keen.
* **'Sit ins'**: If you are willing, 1-2 of our local contra musicians would love to 'sit in' with you for 1-2 sets. This is a purposeful attempt on our part to build capacity in our dance musician community – having locals get to feel your amazing energy will help them a lot! This is only if you are willing and we'll confirm with you ahead of time. (These sit ins could be mic'd or not.)
* **Mostly Waltz:** If you are doing a mostly waltz afternoon session, please see the additional handout.

**CALLER-SPECIFIC INFO**

***We are excited that you will be calling in Ottawa! We asked you because we think you are a great fit for our community****.*

*We believe that callers are leaders, establish the tone of the evening and can influence a beginner's experience.*

*We know you can help the dancers and band have a great night. We have provided a few hints to help make the evening a success.*

**Dancing level & style:** On average, we have 120 dancers a night. Dancers range in age from six to eighty and are used to the basic contra figures (e.g., contra corners or 'dancing outside your set' are not impossible or discouraged but they are not common in Ottawa). Our overall style has been described as friendly and fun-loving. We have many long-time dancers of mid-level experience, a smaller group of very skilled dancers, and many new or newish dancers.

**Beginners – we welcome new dancers!**   
On average, we have 15 brand new dancers plus others coming back for their second or third time.  We are currently working hard to enhance the beginner experience so that they 'catch the bug'. **Anything you can do to help would be wonderful.**

* In your own way, please make sure to encourage regulars & beginners to ask each other to dance. Other ways of encouraging & supporting brand new or relatively new dancers are welcome!
* The introductory (beginner) lesson is from 7:30-8pm. Unless you tell us otherwise with a few weeks' notice, we expect you to teach the lesson. We appreciate as much of a focus on connection, having fun, dance structure, being on time, and transitions than on learning specific moves. The one particular move we wish to have taught is the swing.
* Note that in Ottawa, beginners tend to collect in the back corners of the contra lines so those are good spots to watch.
* **Clarity and brevity in teaching & calling** is very much appreciated by all dancers (e.g., clear walk throughs with no more than 2X through the dance).

**Style tips, etiquette & safety:** We appreciate judiciously sprinkled tips and reminders of ways to make dancing fun and safe for everyone.  A few style tips described from the stage or demonstrated on the floor, issued with good cheer or humor, are encouraged by the committee and will be welcomed by most dancers.  Not to outweigh other skills but visiting callers have pointed out that being on time is a challenge for our dancers (i.e., many are late!).

**Programming:**

* **Variety:** Variety in programming is appreciated in Ottawa. Although dancers will expect a program that has many duple improper or becket contras, we encourage inclusion of other dances as well.  'Other' could be a different formation such as a square, four-face-four, Sicilian circle, or triplet; or another type such as chestnuts or mixers.
* **Choreography:** We prefer dances with logical flow and a bit of interest (enabling us to enjoy the music and each other) over complex/difficult choreography that requires intense concentration (hampering our enjoyment).
* **Mixing folks up:** (Optional.) In the interest of mixing dancers and getting used to dancing with different partners, we encourage the programming of a mixer (e.g., scatter, circle) sometime in the first three dances.
* **Mentoring local callers:** (Optional.) If you are willing, we would like to arrange a time of your choice during the evening where one of our local callers could call one dance. We would love for you to take a few notes and provide them with some constructive feedback on what they did well and what they could tweak (i.e., stop-start-continue). Our local callers would really benefit from calling with varied professional bands and from your tips!
* **Gender-mixer dance:** (Optional + we're not decided if will include!!) In the second half, we would like you to announce (a full dance ahead) that there will be a gender-mixer for those who want it. Randomly choose a line for folks who want to play opposite gender roles, swap roles throughout the dance, etc. A few dancers do this regularly but some folks who are learning the opposite gender role want a more safe time to experiment where they won't be embarrassed if they make mistakes, etc.

**Archiving:** We have started an archive that lists past programs which you may refer to before/during the dance.  Please record your called program there – name of dance, composer/author, comments, etc. This is shared with other visiting callers to get a sense of pacing, types of dances called, and challenges they come across.

We do much to develop the culture of our community in terms of being a welcoming, friendly, and safe space.

Thanks for your help in that regard!

**-**The Ottawa Contra Dance Organizing Committee