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by Misi Tsurikov

All the SAFDF questions you have but were afraid to ask by Misi Tsurikov, for the SAFDF steering committee

Most, if not all, of you are very familiar with the San Antonio Folk Dance Festival (SAFDF). It is famous for its workshops, concerts, parties and folk-dance-village camaraderie. But you may be curious for more! Here now are answers to some questions you may have, compiled from actual questions and comments that the steering committee receives.

How do you decide on festival dates? We are completely at the mercy of our host, Our Lady

of the Lake University (OLLU). We must have SAFDF during OLLU's spring break, and OLLU administration determines spring break dates only a year in advance.

How do you choose teachers? We start by looking at suggestions from our surveys. In fact, right now we have a special survey [here](#) for SAFDF 2018 -- feel free to take it! We then look at who's taught in TIFD's active cities before, and how that teaching went. We also consider local talent. For all teachers, we consider their personality and how easy they are to work with.

How do you determine your festival schedule? It's a delicate balance of giving our participants enough of a dance fix to make it worth their while -- but without overloading them. Based on survey feedback, we have certain start and end times, and always have at least 15 minutes' break between dance sessions. We know that each night will have a party, that Saturday will have a lunch and the concert, and that Sunday will have the Henry Lash Bash. After we subtract all that time from our weekend, we divide the teaching time equally among the teachers. The equal division is necessary to eliminate any sour feelings between the teachers. Even with the resulting full schedule, each teacher only gets about 4 hours of teaching/review time! Most teachers will not come for any less time.

Why can't you have dance reviews on Sunday morning, like in the past? Because of teacher scheduling and our dance-review video. We videotape the review session, but we also have dancing on Sunday afternoon. Thus, in the past, any Sunday-afternoon dances did not get reviewed or recorded on video. We received multiple survey comments about this, and addressed it by having all the teaching before the reviews.

What's the story of your concert announcer? For the last several years, we've had Elizabeth Ruiz as the emcee of our concert. Elizabeth is a well-known and admired radio personality in San Antonio. She has graciously volunteered her emcee time every year, and used her radio connections to help promote the festival. Prior to Elizabeth's presence at the concert, the organizers had a really difficult time finding an emcee who had the required stage presence and reliable availability. So we were and are delighted by Elizabeth's involvement.

Why is it so hard to allow dorm reservations in advance? Here too we are completely at the mercy of OLLU. The housing director allows us to rent dorm rooms for the festival only if they are uninhabited during Spring Break. That depends on the number of students in the dorms. Until approximately 2015, OLLU always had a large number of uninhabited rooms during spring break. That changed after OLLU's recent and successful promotion of its programs. Suddenly, dorms were at near-100% occupancy. So everything that we got was by special arrangement, and none of it is guaranteed year-over-year.

I heard a rumor that OLLU is trying to force SAFDF out. Is that true? Not in those exact words. OLLU is applying for a grant to establish an engineering school. That school would need a building on campus for its classrooms and offices. Right now, the preferred building for that is the one that hosts the International Folk Culture Center (IFCC) -- which is where SAFDF occurs. If OLLU gets its grant, it will take the IFCC building for the engineering school, and it will no longer be usable as a dance space. The steering committee is actively engaged in conversations with OLLU and other locations to ensure that SAFDF continues uninterrupted as a yearly San Antonio tradition. Want to help? Write to OLLU's president, Diane Melby (dmelby@ollusa.edu), and tell her about the good dance times you've had at IFCC -- whether at SAFDF or another dance event there!

Got more questions? Contact us at info@safdf.org!

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Memorial for Janice Mendelson *by Terri Chadwick*

Excerpt from Terri Chadwick's San Antonio Dance Newsletter, for August 2016.

Those of you who didn't get to go to the Memorial Service for Janice Mendelson missed a memorable experience. Janice, was the benefactor for the International Folk Culture Center (IFCC) at OLLU. The Memorial Service was held in her church, the Episcopal Church of Reconciliation, on Starcrest off NE410, a beautiful church. The sanctuary was in a round shape with a huge skylight, or window, at the center of a dome-like space. To me it was what I would call a "high" Episcopalian service, similar to a Catholic Mass with a leader, the minister in this case, making statements and the congregation speaking a response. One leader read several pages about Janice's amazing life as a military surgeon specializing in burn treatment and serving in a MASH unit in Vietnam to folk dancing. Communion was available. Then afterwards there was a meeting in Brown Hall for food and folk dancing. Lissa Bengston coordinated the folk dancing and Denes Marton led many dances. The last dance was a simple new Native American dance to New Age music that Lissa taught us. We did it in memory of Janice.

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33rd Annual Old Country Weekend *by Bill Byrd*

Oklahoma City International Folk Dancers will host their 33rd annual Old Country Weekend on November 4-6, 2016 at Cross Point Camp, Kingston, Oklahoma. This camp will feature Jana Rickel teaching with live music by Don Weeda & Anne Alexander.

Jana Rickel took tap and jazz dance and piano and violin lessons as a child. At sixteen she discovered folk dancing in a class taught by Israeli instructor Yossi Sasson. Shortly after becoming involved in Israeli dancing, Jana discovered the many other types of folk dance by joining the Tulsa International Folk Dancers, and becoming their teaching director a year later. In college, Jana taught folk dances from Eastern and Western Europe and Mexico in elementary school classroom workshops. In 1981, Jana spent four months dancing her way through Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey, and Yugoslavia. The next year, living in Germany, she continued to attend workshops in Bulgaria, Germany and Yugoslavia and taught in Germany.

After returning to the United States, Jana danced with a performing group in Salt Lake City. When their band needed help in the rhythm section, she started playing bass and tapan. Later, as director of the group, she took up other instruments and now, in addition to the bass and tapan, plays tambura and various chord instruments.

Moving to Seattle, she taught weekly folk dance classes for the University of Washington's Experimental college and the Greenlake Folkdancers. She also taught week-end workshops in Richland and Olympia, Washington; Victoria, British Columbia, and Tulsa and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, as well as teaching at Northwest Folkdancer's Seattle Festival for 10 years.

After a sabbatical to earn a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree at Oklahoma State University, Jana has returned to Seattle. She currently is teaching director for the Seattle Balkan Dancers, directs the Balkans and beyond band Zakuska, plays and sings with Balkan traditional band Okestra Radio Televizija Woodinville, as well as playing with the bitov band Druzhba.

Download the flyer and registration form here.

http://www.okcifd.org/files/6713/4974/0202/OKCIFD_Registration_Form_2012.pdf

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Calendar

2016

September

Riku Dallas 10th annual workshop with Ohad Atia. Temple Emanu-el, Dallas, Texas. For more information: Anita Friedman afried51@yahoo.com or Galit Ribakoff gribakoff@gmail.com. September 16-18.

November

33rd Annual Old Country Weekend. Cross Point Camp, Kingston, Oklahoma. Featuring Jana Rickel. Email: bbyrd7@cox.net for more information. November 4-6.

Texas Camp. Bruceville, TX, November 23-27.
tifd.org/

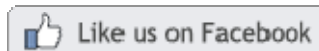
2017

February

Florida Folk Dance Council Presidents' Weekend Folk Dance Workshop. Sonia Dion and Cristian Florescu. Radisson Park Inn, Kissimmee, Florida. February 17 -20.
<http://www.folkdance.org/>

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The TIFD Newsletter is produced monthly. The deadline for story submission is the last Saturday of the month. Please submit your articles to editor@tifd.org.

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Texas International Folk Dancers, P.O. Box 4516, Austin, TX 78765

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