

## Folk dance kept alive by rotating through communities around the area

Every first Friday of the month, the Pendleton Center for the Arts temporarily turns into a packed contra dance hall dubbed "Folk Night." It is part of a small but thriving regional dance scene that encompasses Walla Walla, Enterprise, La Grande and the Tri-Cities. Every week dancers and musicians from those communities commute to whichever town is holding a dance for a sweat-breaking evening.

Contra dancing, sometimes referred to as New England dance, is an American folk dance combining elements of 17th century dance from the British Isles and France, as well as incorporating African American elements.

Contra dancing is typically done with a partner though you don't necessarily need to arrive with one, and it is considered a tad rude to stick with the same partner throughout the evening. A couple usually pairs up with another who are referred to as "neighbors" in order to form a quartet. Throughout a single dance neighbors will constantly be shifting from one quartet to the next. The fast-paced mingling between partners almost makes a contra dance a speed dating scene. (More on that later...)

A caller dictates a series of steps that the dancers follow. Some steps are self-descriptive, while other have terms like "dosado" that require a few runs through to internalize. Rhythmic ability, although it is helpful, is not required — just a keen memory. It's best to think of a contra dance as a heightened form of Simon Says.

The accompanying music is provided by an Appalachian-style string band where the fiddle takes the lead over a backdrop of guitars, bass and mandolin. The largely instrumental selections cycle through two, sometimes three sections, extending the length of a single dance to around ten minutes. At the Center for the Arts, the lineup of musicians is a fluid body consisting of some local musicians and visiting players that range in age from middle school to senior citizens.

Mark and Diane Lewis, a couple from La Grande, are one of the many who drive to Pendleton once a month. It is one of many monthly stops they make on the regional contra dance circuit.

For Mark the attraction to contra dancing lies in being part of a continuum.

"One of the things I really like about it is the music," he said. "There's this whole tradition of dance-fiddle music that goes back hundreds of years, probably way longer than that if you really dig into it. A lot of this music is that music or people composing music in that style, or at least in a similar vein, so it's got this continuity of hundreds of years of people composing these pieces specifically for dancing, really."

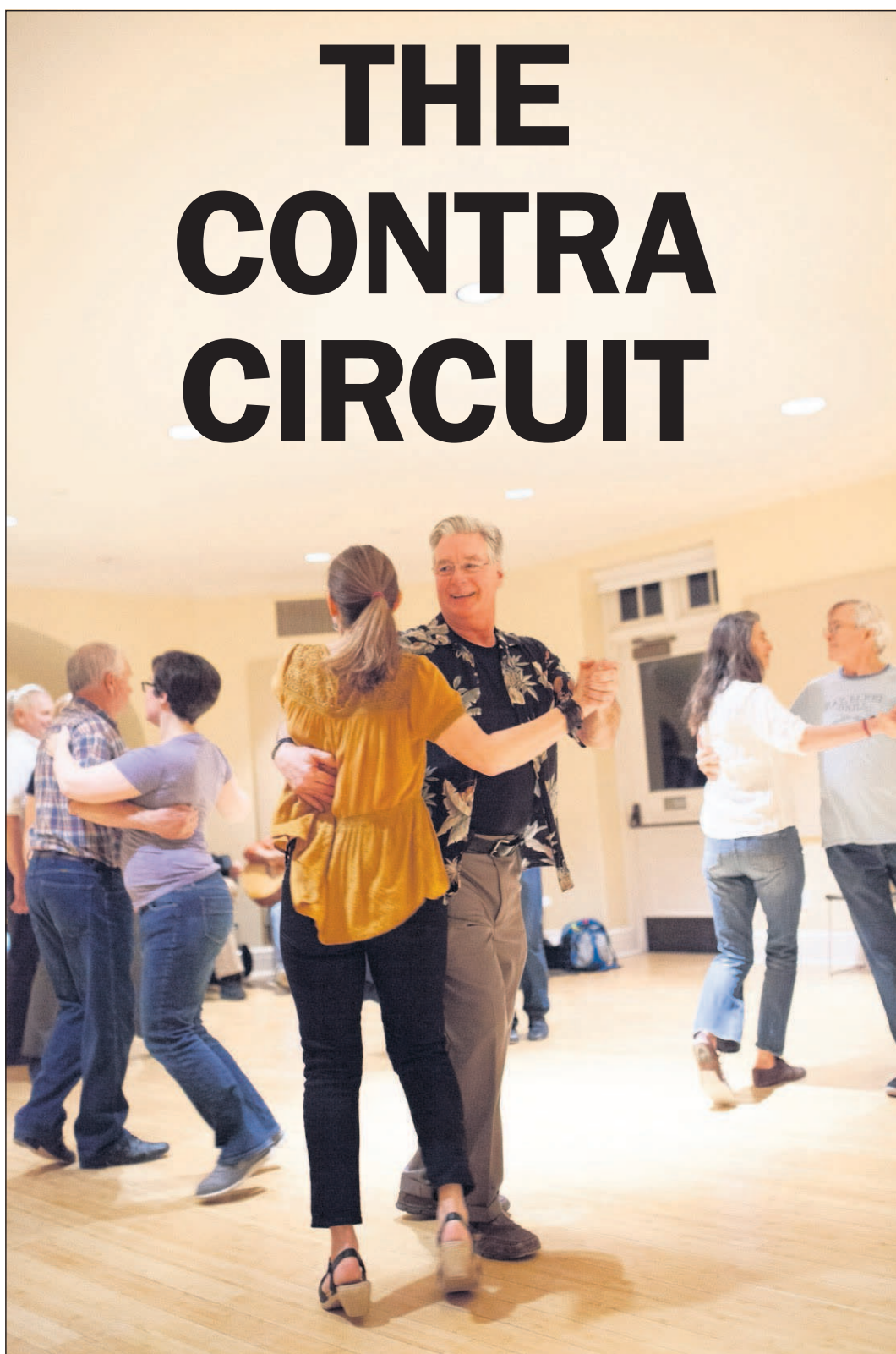
In addition to being experienced dancers and callers the Lewises are also organizers of a contra festival in La Grande. SpringAlive, which is entering its fourth year, is a day-long series of workshops on all aspects of contra dancing — music, calling and dancing. SpringAlive concludes with a potluck and dance in the evening. Scores of dancers pack the Arts Center East and the band amounts to a whopping 25 musicians. This year the marquee guest is fiddler, composer and caller David Kaynor from Montague, Massachusetts. Within the folklore community Kaynor is a veritable rock star, being a dominant influence on the New England dance scene for over three decades.

That isn't to say that Folk Night is for veteran dancers only, though. Longtime attendees seem to take a thrill in helping newbies along. Mikal Wright, a first-time contra attendee at a past Folk Night, was ecstatic about the evening and the encouraging atmosphere.

"I really, really enjoyed it," says Mikal. "I've



J.D.  
KINDLE  
Comment



Photos by Brandy Anderson/Pendleton Center for the Arts

### Dancers enjoy a recent contra night at the Pendleton Center for the Arts.

never done anything like it. I think everybody should give it a shot. There were a lot of experienced people that come to this event that were very helpful."

On the romantic possibilities of contra dancing Mark admits that it has its pros and cons.

"It was pretty good for me," says Mark. "I met my wife at a dance and we have another couple in our community that met at a dance. Sometimes it doesn't always work out quite

that way: We had a couple get divorced after they started dancing but they each found other partners eventually. I'm not sure if you'd call that romantic potential. Your mileage may vary!"

*James Dean Kindle is the East Oregonian's entertainment columnist, the executive director of the Oregon East Symphony and a Pendleton musician. Contact him at jamesdeankindle@gmail.com.*

## BRIEFLY

### HHS musicians to perform with orchestra

HERMISTON — A handful of Hermiston High School brass players will perform with the Inland Northwest Orchestra.

The event also features Sofia Marina of Richland and Hanna Schafer of College Place, winners of the Inland Northwest Musicians' Young Artist Competition. The free concert is Sunday at 4 p.m. in the auditorium at Hermiston High School, 600 S. First St. Donations are accepted.

The six HHS students — trumpet players Noah Roberts, Josh Hinkley, Alec Wilson and Allison Galdamez, and Colton Katsel and Isabel Bartley on trombone — will perform during the classical work "Pines of Rome," a symphonic poem written by the Italian composer Ottorino Respighi in 1924.

Formed in 1999 by a group of instrumentalists and vocalists interested in classical music, ensembles of the Inland Northwest Musicians provide free live performances throughout the region. For more information, contact 541-289-4696, [inwm@machmedia.net](mailto:inwm@machmedia.net) or visit [www.inlandnorthwestmusicians.com](http://www.inlandnorthwestmusicians.com).

### Concert features Whitman College faculty

WALLA WALLA — The public is invited to a free First Thursday concert.

The event features Whitman College faculty, including Sally Singer Tuttle and Ed Dixon, cellists, with Kristin Vining on the piano. The program is Thursday, May 4 at 12:15 p.m. at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 323 Catherine St., Walla Walla. People are invited to bring their lunch and enjoy the music. Donations will be accepted, which will be given to the Walla Walla Youth Symphony.

For more information, call Tanya at 509-529-1083.

### Arts center announces May shows

PENDLETON — A pair of upcoming shows at Pendleton Center for the Arts offer unique concert experiences.

Hanneke Cassel, Mike Block and Christopher Lewis will perform Friday, May 12. The trio creates sounds on the cutting edge of acoustic music while retaining the integrity and soul of the Scottish fiddle tradition.

Cassel is the 1997 U.S. National Scottish Fiddle Champion, cellist Block tours with Yo-Yo Ma's Silk Road Ensemble and guitarist Christopher Lewis is a fixture in the Boston indie rock scene.

Seffarine will take the stage Friday, May 19 at 7 p.m. The duo features Moroccan singer Lamiae Naki and oud player/flamenco guitarist Nat Hulskamp. They perform classical Arabic and Andalusian music and original compositions influenced by Spanish flamenco, classical Persian music, American jazz and others.

The arts center is located at 214 N. Main St., Pendleton. Tickets for each show are \$15. For more information or to reserve a seat, call 541-278-9201.

### Conference highlights rock art

REDMOND — Rock art, special cultural activities and field trips are featured during the American Rock Art Research Association annual conference.

The event is set for June 1-5 at the Lodge at the Eagle Crest Resort, near Redmond. Registration is \$115 for adults and free for college students.

The conference offers guided field trips, including to a variety of intriguing rock art sites in the area. The program also includes presentations on current rock art research.

The event is open to all. Participants are encouraged to go to the conference website to view field trip options. Also, conference lodging discounts are available.

Registration and more information is available at [www.arara.org](http://www.arara.org). For questions, contact Monica Wadsworth-Seibel at [wadsworth-seibel@cox.net](mailto:wadsworth-seibel@cox.net).

## WHAT TO DO

### Festivals

#### Walla Walla Kennel Club Dog Show

•April 28-30  
•Pendleton Convention Center, 1601 Westgate  
[www.wkcc.org](http://www.wkcc.org)  
Free. The public is invited to watch dog shows, obedience and rally trials. Also, the public may enter coursing events for a fee. Only entered dogs are allowed on the show site.

#### Spring Release Weekend

•May 5-7  
•Various wineries in Milton-Freewater, Walla Walla region

[www.wallawallawine.com](http://www.wallawallawine.com)  
Some events free. Cellar doors are open and new releases are available for tasting. Celebrate the end of harvest season with special pours, winemaker dinners, live music and more.

#### Cinco de Mayo

•May 6-7  
•Butte Park, 1245 N.W. Seventh St., Hermiston  
Free. Features a carnival, food, entertainment, competitions, a speech by Portland's consul general of Mexico, a youth dance, an adult dance and fireworks. A parade is Saturday at 1 p.m.

#### Pendleton Cattle Barons Weekend

•May 12-13  
•Blue Mountain Community College  
[www.cattlebarons.net](http://www.cattlebarons.net)  
Free/many activities. Selected as Pendleton's Tourism Event of the Year, its goal is to preserve the regions ranching heritage and raise money for scholarships. It features a select gelding sale, a working dog

ale, ranch rodeo events and the North American Stock Saddle Bronc Championship. Also, the Bit, Spur and Engraver show, a world-class Saddlemaker's Show, a Tradin' Post and the Buckaroo Barbecue Challenge.

### Art, Museums & Authors

#### Chuck Close: Portraits

•Saturday, April 29; noon-4 p.m. Last day  
•Pendleton Center for the Arts, 214 N. Main St.  
[www.pendletonarts.org](http://www.pendletonarts.org)  
Free. Selection of Close's works from the collection of Jordan Schnitzer. Runs through April 29.

#### Gorge Artists Open Studios

•April 28-30; 10 a.m.-5 p.m.  
•Various locations between Cascade Locks to Hood River  
[www.gorgeartists.org](http://www.gorgeartists.org)  
Free. More than three dozen artists open their studios to share their craft with the public. Artwork on sale at many locations. A map is available for the self-guided tour.

#### Open Regional Exhibit

•Saturday, April 29; noon-4 p.m., accept entries  
•Thursday, May 4; 5 p.m., opening reception  
•Pendleton Center for the Arts, 214 N. Main St.  
[www.pendletonarts.org](http://www.pendletonarts.org)  
\$10/adults; \$5/youths entry fee per piece of art. Cash prizes awarded.

#### "The Path of Totality"

•Monday-Saturdays; 10 a.m.-5 p.m.  
•Crossroads Carnegie Art Center, 2020 Auburn St., Baker City

#### www.crossroads-arts.org

Free. Amateur and professional artists' work depict the theme inspired by the upcoming Aug. 21 total solar eclipse. Show and sale runs through April 29.

#### Creative Spirits Art Party

•Thursday, May 11; 6:30-9 p.m.  
•Historic Balch Hotel, 40 S. Heimrich St., Dufur  
[www.balchhotel.com](http://www.balchhotel.com)  
\$40. Participants will create their own guided painting. Food and drinks available for purchase.

### Music

#### Blue Mountain Old Time Fiddlers

•Saturday, April 29, 6 p.m.  
•Stokes Landing Senior Center, 195 N.W. Opal Place, Irrigon  
\$5/adults, free/12-and-under. People are invited to come at 5 p.m. for dinner, which will be available for purchase.

#### The Phoenix

•Saturday, April 29; 8 p.m. No cover  
•Wildhorse Sports Bar, Wildhorse Resort & Casino, off I-84 Exit 216, Mission

#### Easy Rider Brotherhood Band

•Saturday, April 29; 9 p.m. No cover  
•The Pheasant, 149 E. Main St., Hermiston

#### Martin Gerschwitz

•Sunday, April 30; 3-6 p.m.  
•Sno Road Winery, 111 W. Main St., Echo  
No cover. Kid-friendly. Formerly with Iron Butterfly, Meat Loaf, Walter Trout and more.

#### Inland Northwest

#### Orchestra

•Sunday, April 30; 4 p.m.  
•Hermiston High School, 600 S. First St.

[www.inlandnorthwestmusicians.com](http://www.inlandnorthwestmusicians.com)

Free/donations accepted. Program features winners of Young Artist Competition. Also, six Hermiston High School brass players will perform with the orchestra.

#### Mike Coykendall

•Wednesday, May 3; 7-9 p.m.

•Great Pacific Wine & Coffee Co., 403 S. Main St., Pendleton  
No cover, all ages.

#### Live Music Thursdays

•Thursday 7-9 p.m. No cover

•40 Taps, 337 S.W. Emigrant Ave., Pendleton

#### Raucous

•Friday, May 5; Saturday, May 6; 8 p.m. No cover

•Wildhorse Sports Bar, Wildhorse Resort & Casino, off I-84 Exit 216, Mission

#### Tyler Brooks

•Friday, May 5; 9 p.m. No cover

•Hamley Saloon, 8 S.E. Court Ave., Pendleton

#### The Weather Machine

•Saturday, May 6; 7-10 p.m.

•Great Pacific Wine & Coffee Co., 403 S. Main St., Pendleton  
No cover, all ages.

#### The Desert River Band

•Saturday, May 6; 9 p.m. No cover

•Sub Zero Restaurant & Lounge, 100 W. Highway 730, Irrigon

#### Dakota Brown

•Friday, May 12; 7 p.m.  
•Sno Road Winery, 111 W. Main St., Echo  
No cover. Kid-friendly.

#### Hanneke Cassel, Mike Block & Christopher Lewis

•Friday, May 12; 7 p.m.  
•Pendleton Center for the Arts, 214 N. Main St.

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

\$15. Features a unique trio that creates sounds on the cutting edge of acoustic music while retaining the integrity and soul of the Scottish fiddle tradition.

### Night life

#### DJ music

•Saturdays, 8 p.m.  
•The Pheasant, 149 E. Main St., Hermiston

#### Karaoke w/DJ David

•Saturdays; 8 p.m.  
•Riverside Sports Bar, 1501 Sixth St., Umatilla

#### Lock, Stock & Lipstick Ladies' Night

•Saturdays; 8 p.m.-2 a.m.  
•Sub Zero Restaurant & Lounge, 100 W. Highway 730, Irrigon

No cover. Drink specials from 8-10 p.m. Live DJ with female-friendly music.

#### Whiskey Wednesday Game Night

•Wednesdays; 3-7 p.m.  
•The Pheasant, 149 E. Main St., Hermiston

No cover. Xbox 360, Nintendo Wii, PlayStation 3 and Nintendo 64.

#### Digital Karaoke

•Thursdays and Fridays, 8 p.m.

•The Pheasant, 149 E. Main St., Hermiston

#### LOL Comedy Jam

•Thursdays; 8 p.m.  
•Wildhorse Sports Bar, Wildhorse Resort & Casino, off I-84 Exit 216, Mission.