



Denes Marton <dennypoxy@gmail.com>

TIFD News - SAFDF; Farewell, Theodor Vasilescu; Camp survey results

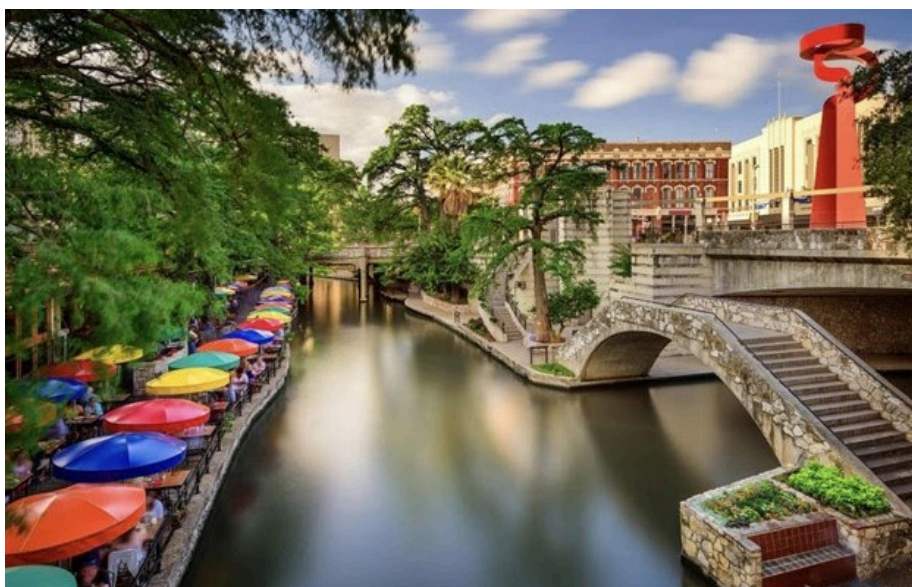
1 message

TIFD newsletter editor <editor-tifd.org@shared1.ccsend.com>

Tue, Mar 12, 2024 at 4:04 AM

Reply-To: editor@tifd.org

To: dennypoxy@gmail.com

SAFDF is March 22-24!For details, see below or visit <https://safdf.org/registration/>

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Upcoming TIFD Board meeting

The next regular TIFD Board meeting will take place at 7 p.m. Tuesday, April 23, 2024, online via Zoom. Email board@tiff.org with any agenda items or to attend.

Your TIFD Board is:

Kathleen Yoder, President
Emily Doubt, Vice President
Misi Tsurikov, Secretary
Shirley Johnson, Treasurer
Lisa Dielman, Asst. Treasurer
Shelley Allison, Trustee
Joan Furstenberg, Trustee
Lauren Johnson, Trustee
Dee McCandless, Trustee



The Board is looking for a new webmaster to succeed Jay Elbaor, who has served TIFD admirably in this capacity for a number of years. Contact board@tifd.org or editor@tifd.org if interested.



A look ahead

San Antonio Folk Dance Festival, Mar 22-24

Registration is still open for the 66th annual SAFDF. For details and to register for the festival and on-campus dorm rooms, visit <https://safdf.org/registration/>

Here is this year's line-up of dance teachers and musicians:

- **Andy Taylor-Blenis, teaching international dances and leading her famous dance stretches**
- **Miroslav "Bata" Marčetić, teaching Serbian dances**
- **Željko Jergan, teaching Croatian dances**
- **Dance parties with live music and performances by Shirley Johnson and Slavadillo**



Austin musicians Shirley Johnson, L, and Slavadillo -- L-R, Kathleen McDonagh, Anne Alexander, Mike Revesz, Don Weeda

There is much more afoot! Appreciation to SAFDF co-organizer Kathy Molga for describing in her own words below what to expect from the 2024 edition of this venerable Festival, which is a part of Heritage Festivals of San Antonio.

By Kathy Molga

In Texas there are really only two main extended weekend festivals that give us who cherish International Folk Dancing the opportunity to come together with our

friends, hold hands and dance until we think our feet will fall off! These two events are: Texas Camp in the Fall and SAFDF in the Spring.

Here is a description of all that you can look forward to when registering for the 66th Annual SAFDF 2024 festival.

This year we have extended the time-frame for staying in the dorms at OLLU ([Our Lady of the Lake University](#)). Now you have the most inexpensive way to stay overnight while visiting our beautiful city. Dorm rooms are now available from Thursday, March 21, through the weekend for check-out on Monday morning, giving you time to see the highlights of downtown San Antonio. Driving down on Thursday, you can join us at our welcome dinner with the teachers at one of the famous downtown or Market Square restaurants. On Friday you will have the entire day for sightseeing and enjoying the beautiful Riverwalk only 4 miles away from OLLU. So what exactly do you do with all that extra time? Go to <https://www.visitsanantonio.com/events/>

Starting Friday at 7pm we will hold our Opening Dance party introducing each of our three master teachers. We will feature the live music of Shirley Johnson and dance to our recorded favorites with an open request list. Oh, did I mention, we have one of the largest sprung wooden dance floors in the South? Our traditional dance space — the Multicultural Activities and Recreation Center (MARC) is on the campus of beautiful [OLLU](#). I enjoy dancing at OLLU, because the floor there is so forgiving, and it's really easy on the knees.

Starting early morning on Saturday, Andy Taylor-Blenis will lead us in warm-ups. This has been such a hit the past few years, because Andy teaches us slow stretches that are easy on the body and designed for the dancer. They allow us to dance more easily and help us avoid injury.

Saturday workshops are jam-packed with fun dances taught by Zeljko Jergan (Croatian), Miroslav "Bata" Marcetic (Serbian), and Andy Taylor teaching couple dances. It's an entire day devoted to excellent teaching and spectacular music. You will learn accessible village dances that will soon become favorites when you introduce them to your dance groups.

During the day, at the front Concierge table, you will find sheets for carpools and signups for restaurants. We reserve large spaces taking up almost the entire restaurant. We already have chosen some San Antonio favorites. So be sure to sign up on those sheets. Dancers enjoy getting together for these delicious meals, and it's a time to catch up with friends and enjoy the camaraderie.

Saturday evening will feature the live music of Slavadillo from Austin. In addition to the teachers reviewing some dances taught on Saturday, we will enjoy live performances.

After Sunday's teaching workshops and reviews, SAFDF officially ends at 5 pm, but the fun doesn't stop there. As in past years, we have reserved the patio at a Bulgarian Restaurant called Europa. There we eat food from the Balkans and enjoy dancing on the patio until closing time around 11 pm. This is where reserving a dorm room for Sunday night really comes in handy!

So now that you know about our non-stop dancing, music and party fun, why not reserve your place on the dance floor? Go to <https://safdf.org> and register today!

Want to know more about the unmatched Master Teacher/Choreographers featured at SAFDF?

Željko Jergan <http://www.zeljkojergan.com/index.html>

Miroslav "bata" Marčetić <http://marcetic.com/2018/04/15/miroslav-bata-marcetic-biography/>

Andy Taylor-Blenis <https://www.andytaylordance.com/>

... and a look back

2023 Texas Camp Survey results are in!

By Misi Tsurikov

Thank you to everyone who completed a survey about Texas Camp 2023! The co-chairs and TIFD board appreciate the feedback. It'll help us make future Texas Camps even better for all of you.

This year we collected 46 responses, corresponding to a response rate of 54%.
Of the respondents:

- 70% completed the survey on paper.
- 30% completed the survey online.

You can see a short summary as well as the full results of the structured questions by clicking the following link:

<https://tifd.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Survey-public-results-2023.pdf>

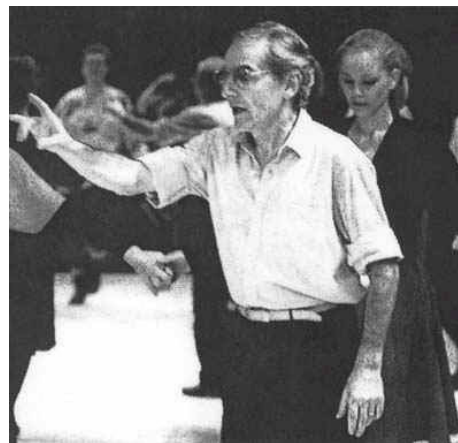
(We do not publish free-response comments to preserve anonymity — only the TIFD board and co-chairs see those.)

ED. NOTES:

Thanks to Misi for the clear presentation of responses, complete with color-coded pie charts and graphs!

Please notify editor@tifd.org if you have any trouble making the link work. Thank you.

In memoriam: Theodor Vasilescu



Theodor Vasilescu as pictured on his website. He taught at Texas Camp in 1999, and was responsible for dance gems including Joc de Leagane and Joc Bătrânesc de la Niculițel.

The international folk dance world lost another of its iconic master teachers on February 8, 2024, with the passing of Theodor Vasilescu in Romania.

His son Florin reported the sad news to longtime friend Susan Hatlevig of Corvallis, Ore., and on Facebook. Susan posted the news to the East European Folk Center listserve with the note, "This breaks my heart into a million pieces, but he lived a long, good life. I will forever be grateful for the times he and Lia stayed with me and all of those fantastic dances. Susie in Corvallis"

Theodor was preceded in death several years ago by his wife and dance teaching partner Lia Vasilescu. Theodor was 91 or 92 when he died, according to knowledgeable sources.

Theodor taught at Texas Camp in 1999, at Stockton Folk Dance Camp and many other folk dance events. He lived to see that many of his beloved dances live on, such as *Joc de Leagane* and *Joc Bătrânesc de la Niculițel*. (See video links below.)

Barely a week before his death the TIFD Board received a request for the Texas Camp video of *Hora de Curte* from Kaela Fine, a folk dancer and teacher with the Palomanians in Menlo Park, CA. Theodor had just emailed her giving her permission to access the video, which we supplied her. She went on to teach the dance to her group. "I am very grateful that I received email messages recently from Theodor," Kaela said. "What a lovely man and wonderful teacher and dancer. He will be sorely missed by many. . . (Teaching his dance) will mean even more to me and others now." **[ED. NOTE:** Kaela shared with us the email exchange she was fortunate enough to have with

Theodor toward the end of his life; you may find it at the end of this article. It includes the current location of his folklore archive.]

From our 1999 Texas Camp syllabus:

Theodor Vasilescu continually generates excitement and interest in Romanian dance in audiences worldwide. His extensive background in Romanian folklore and dance ranges from pioneering research in remote regions of his native Romania (as head of the choreographic Section of the National Center for Preservation and Promotion of Folklore from 1964-1995) to chief choreographer for several Romanian folk ensembles, including the Rhapsodia Romana (the Romanian state folk ensemble) and the Cununa Carpatilor (in which his wife Lia danced for 20 years). Theodor's major works during his tenure as the Rhapsodia's chief choreographer had as a result the valorization and staging not only of various folk dances from different regions and counties of Romania but also of many of the customs and traditions which are still alive in Romania. In 1990 Theodor organized the Academy for Folk Dance Choreographers in Romania, which he continues to direct. In the last four years he has choreographed numerous dance suites for companies in Romania as well as in the Netherlands, Canada, Hong Kong, Scandinavia, Germany, Switzerland, Canada, the US and Sudan. Theodor is also the author of a dance notation system used by professional and amateur choreographers throughout Europe, Japan and Australia. The Vasilescus do regular teaching tours through Europe, Japan and Hong Kong; since 1992 they have also regularly visited Canada and the US to teach at major workshops and dance camps. Theodor's workshops, co-taught with wife Lia, have endeared him to many dance communities with a style that is bubbly and swift-paced, yet attentive to the details which bestow on each dance its unique character.

Citing the 1981 book International Folk Dancing U.S.A. by Betty Casey, Susan posted:

Theodor initially danced under the tutelage of Gheorghe Popescu-Județ. He then belonged to a separate group called the Romanian Youth Ensemble; from 1948-1960 he gathered dances, folklore and music. Since 1964 he led the choreography department of the "National Center for Research, Conservation and Enhancement of Traditional Culture", where he edited more than 70 volumes of collections of traditional dances, collected almost in all the main areas of the ethnographic zones of Romania.

The Vasilescus' website may be found at http://theodorvasilescu.ro/EN/index_en.html It includes his "Graphical Dance Notation System" © 1969 .



Demonstration of Joc de Leagane as Originally Taught by Theodor Vasilescu, and the Story Behind It

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Stpy7PF44to>

Appreciation to Mary Marshall, who edited and uploaded this video of Theodor and Lia with permission, and to Susan Hatlevig, who provided it. In the second part of the video, Theodor explains the background and meaning of the dance. Susan posted:

This dance was acquired by Theodor Vasilescu from a woman's performance group in Dragomereshti. I first learned this from him in August 1993 during videotaping at Stockton Folkdance Camp. He taught this dance to Nico Hilferink and Tineke van Geel at a master class in the Netherlands. Theodor and Lia released several videos and Joc de Leagane is on the video '19 Romanian Dances.' Theodor gave permission to copy and distribute the dance, these videos, and the music.

Here is a video of another perennial dance favorite that many TIFD dancers have kept in our repertoires:

[Joc Bătrânesc de la Niculițel presented by Theodor Vasilescu](#)

or click

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cdivyZ9GhA8M>



Finally, here is the email thread with Theodor that Kaela has shared with our readers:

În vin., 22 dec. 2023 la 05:49, Kaela Fine a scris:

Hello Theodor,

I have learned some of your dances over many years. I sometimes teach a group of folk dancers called the Palomanians in Menlo Park, California.

I would like to teach your dance Hora de Curte but I haven't done it in many years. I would really appreciate it if you would send me any notes and/or videos you have of this wonderful dance. I have the music.

Stanford Folk Dancers used to do this dance quite a lot.

I hope you are doing well and enjoying the holiday season. Wishing you a healthy and happy new year.

Sincerely,

Kaela Fine of Palo Alto, California

On Thu, Jan 4, 2024 at 7:19 AM Theodor & Lia <liatheodor@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear Kaela Fine

I'm a bit too old to be able to maintain all the relationships that a folklore archive requires.

So I donated it to a young choreographer. I think she can find it in program 3 or 4. Good luck.

E-mail: larisa_maria2003@yahoo.com larisa_maria2003@yahoo.com

From: Kaela Fine

Date: Thu, Jan 4, 2024 at 8:48 AM

Subject: Re: Hora de Curte dance

To: Theodor & Lia <liatheodor@gmail.com>

Dear Theodor,

Thank you very much for your reply to my email. I just wrote to Larisa. I want to let you know that I have adored your dances for many years and many of my fellow folk dancers feel the same way as me.

Best regards,

Kaela Fine

În vin., 2 feb. 2024 la 05:15, Kaela Fine a scris:

Hello Theodor,

I would like to get your permission for Texas Camp to send me a video of your dance Hora de Curte that you taught there in 1999. Thank you for your help.

Best regards,

Kaela Fine

Folk Dancer with the Palomanians in Menlo Park, California

On Fri, Feb 2, 2024 at 5:16 AM Theodor & Lia <liatheodor@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear Kaela,

Of course, you have my permission!

Wish you good luck and all the best!

Kind regards,

Theodor

From: Kaela Fine

Date: Fri, Feb 2, 2024 at 8:37 AM

Subject: Re: Hora de Curte video

To: Theodor & Lia <liatheodor@gmail.com>

Dear Theodor,

Thank you so much for your permission and such a speedy reply. All the best to you too.

With appreciation,

Kaela

. . . and with appreciation to Theodor and Lia for all that they shared with students, colleagues and folk dancers everywhere throughout their long lives.

-- Shelley Allison

TIFD local news

Austin IFD

On Friday, March 15, during the teaching hour, AIFD will host a mini workshop with Anu Niampally of Austin Dance India. Anu will introduce some traditional dances from India.

Houston IFD

There will be a St. Patrick's Day party at the dance Friday, March 15. Get your green on and see what fun the leprechauns have cooked up for us this year. Please bring a snack to share and join us on the dance floor!

Nominations for the HIFD board opened March 1 and will close on March 29. The election will be held April 12. The membership drive is also underway; to continue receiving the HIFD newsletter after April, fill out a form at a Friday or Monday dance or online at www.folkdancers.org If you were a paid member by the time nominations opened, you can run for the board, and nominate or second someone.

"Occasional Balkan" will resume, for the first time since the pandemic, on Thursday, March 21, at Sue Griffin's home. Default folk dance time: 7:30 pm. Come help us remember or learn something you used to know!! Cekurjankino? Ashun Daje More? Balta de la Bieu? Gankino? Suggestions welcome.



NFO CONFERENCE
APRIL 4 – 9, 2024
BRUCEVILLE, TX

Want to share the eclipse with
folk dance friends?

**Carpool drivers to Greene
Family Camp needed for 2024
NFO Conference and Hora Eclipse/Kochavim**

Help needed! As we have reported, this year's National Folk Organization (NFO) annual conference will be April 4-9, 2024, at Greene Family Camp in Bruceville, TX -- in the line of totality for the April 8 solar eclipse. Hora Eclipse/Kochavim is also scheduled at Greene during this time for the same reason. Although the two programs are separate, some events may be joint.

Both groups' organizers are reaching out to the folk dance community at large, and especially our non-dancer family and friends, to help everyone flying into Texas get to GFC and back. This could be a great way to extend a true Texas welcome and soak up some fun and sun -- and 4+ minutes of daytime darkness -- with old or new friends. Expenses will be covered, and further perks may be worked out: Do you want to attend an event or two? Make a little pocket money? Reprinted here is an email message from the NFO Registrar. It was addressed to registrants but now goes out to all Texas folk dancers:

Dear friends - you are receiving this because you are registered for the NFO conference and your address is in Texas. We are hoping some of you may be able to suggest a friend, family member, or neighbor who would be willing to drive a few round trips from Greene Family Camp to either Austin or Dallas airports (and earn a little money). We have vans, but not enough people to drive them.

We are thrilled that so many folk dancers from all over the country are coming to Texas to take part in the Conference and Camps! Can you help us welcome all these folks to Texas?

Would you, or someone you know, be able to help transport our attendees from either Austin or Dallas airports to Greene Family Camp in Bruceville? This can be with your own vehicle, or we can add you as a driver to some minivans we have reserved. We will cover gas, compensation if needed, and/or a chance to attend part of the events if scheduling allows. Our need is greatest on April 4-5 (from airports to GFC), and April 8-9 (from GFC to the airports). The eclipse is April 8, as I'm sure you know, and this is making rental cars in our timeframe scarce and pricey. We would appreciate your help!

Please contact nforegistrar@gmail.com
or nfovicepresident@gmail.com
or rikudchik@gmail.com

Thanks!
Catherine Rudin
NFO Registrar

The full NFO Conference schedule (subject to change) is available for viewing here: <https://nfo-usa.com/nfo-conference-schedule/> TIFD dancers will recognize several presenter names, including Franklin Houston (International Folk Dance Workshop), joined by Dena Houston (Texas Dances); Loretta Kelley (Hardanger Fiddle Facts); Jaap Leegwater (Bulgarian wedding and other dances) with music by Filip Filipov; and Joan Hantman (on teaching Israeli dance). There will also be eclipse and astronomy presentations. BYO binoculars!

The deadline for ordering 2024 NFO eclipse T-shirts is this Friday, March 15. See how they look and find more information at the NFO website, <https://nfo-usa.com/annual-conference-2024/>

Give someone a lift, and come on up!



Texas International Folk Dancers | [416 Wonderstruck, Liberty Hill, TX 78642](#)

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