

L A V E N D E R C O U N T R Y A N D F O L K D A N C E R S

The Community for Gender Role Free Dancing

Lavender Country and Folk Dancers



The community for
gender role free dancing

WEBSITE CUSTOMIZATION

Updated Tuesday, August 24, 2010 at 7:59 PM

Site Organization

Our site's primary mission is to increase attendance at dances. The secondary mission is to promote gender role free community and couples dancing in all forms, the same as LCFD.

To accomplish these missions, the site is organized as follows.

The **home page** displays a list of all clubs and their events. Here the visitor will find their most immediate questions answered: What is LCFD, what is gender role free dancing, where can I dance and when can I dance? We set search engine meta keywords on this page.

The **club pages** are areas for each club to list its events and news, third party events and news of interest to its members, provide standard pricing, provide directions to its dance venues, and post information about special events. The club has a "**club home page**" and possibly additional pages. At your request we will set the search engine meta keywords you give us.

The **dance camp** pages invite people to camp and to register, listing information about coming and past camps, as well as related camps (SFBCQD's camp for instance). The menu bar across the whole site shows not only the general "**camp home page**" but also a direct link to the next camp.

The **News and Articles** page is a blog-style collection of permanent and temporary pages. Each sub-page is a single news or permanent article, and the "**news home page**" showing a summary of the most recent postings. The home page has also a sidebar index of past articles. Temporary postings ("news items") will be deleted as they become irrelevant. There is an RSS feed link here for visitors to subscribe to see new postings.

The **About LCFD** pages are devoted to the business of LCFD: our mission, officers and board, by-laws and contact information. This is also blog-style, but without an RSS feed.

Finally, to fulfill the second mission, the **Linkfest** pages show links to other sites of interest.

Finally, each club is free to host additional pages on its own independently operated sites. LCFD uses A2 Hosting, but clubs are free to use any service they like, including rigid services like Facebook. In those cases the club will still use Google Calendar and still have a club home page on LCFD.org, but it will have a link pointing to their external site.

Web Management

We'd love to more fully enrich the interactivity of the site and distribute the workload of keeping it up to date, but until we have a webmaster who is willing to devote the time to doing a credible job of it, we are falling back on simpler tools: a desktop site editor called **Sandvox** and **Google Calendar**. As the most rapidly changing part of the site is the events, this is best done using Google because it is a collaborative calendar maintained by a reliable third party.

Overall the webmaster will be responsible for making page changes. Direct FTP access was tried at one time but led to the site being hacked due to lax desktop security. Please respect the availability of the webmaster and plan site changes in advance and not being more frequent than the webmaster can cope with; the webmaster will let you know what is a comfortable workload.

Sandvox and Web Hosting

Sandvox offers a lot of power as a desktop site editor, without getting into the full flexibility of the high-end tools like Dreamweaver. You can check out Sandvox's capabilities at <http://sandvox.com/>. Perhaps its nicest features are the easy restyling we can employ to periodically freshen our look, and the ability to mix raw HTML with simple word processor-style editing. Sandvox provides easy page templates for photos too, so your webmaster can accept photos singly or in batches for posting.

One wish-list feature I, Bob Peterson, would love to see added immediately is "page comments". Sandvox supports several commenting services that will probably integrate very well. Comments can be enabled on a page by page basis. I'd say expect to see this soon, particularly as a halfway step towards full forums.

If you feel there is a richer feature you'd like added to the site's services, be prepared to propose and implement it. Look at A2 Hosting's features at <http://www.a2hosting.com/services/web-hosting/>. Remember, though, that adding even "available" feature is not always a button click. Sometimes it is simple and sometimes it requires serious time. Also such web hosting add-on services often look like ugly add-ons (so the current webmaster should make an effort to integrate these visually and navigationaly).

Google Calendar

Google Calendar gives us what we need, and at lower maintenance. This is an example of using an external feature that does not look and behave perfectly part of the site, but it does integrate well enough and the benefit is very useful.

1. It integrates very well with smartphones and desktop calendars.
2. It allows anyone with a Google account to subscribe to your calendar and get reminders by mail or SMS (phone text message). People don't need a gmail account either. Google Calendar does NOT require dancers to have Google account: Only the notification feature requires that.
3. It shows past events.
4. It allows multiple calendars to be integrated into a single view, which is use on the home page (and maybe you would like to list your events and some other groups events?).

Setting up your club pages

Use Google Calendar

You will need a Google account. That gives you access to many Google services, but the only one you need to use is Calendar. You should keep your club events on a club-only calendar, and if you want to list third party events use a separate calendar (or that third party's own Google Calendar).

1. Create Google account
 - 1.1. <https://www.google.com/accounts/Login>
2. Create your club calendar
 - 2.1. At the top of the Google page, select the "more" menu and pick "Calendar".
 - 2.2. From here you should see instructions to Add your first calendar.
 - 2.3. Name your calendar using your full and proper club name, so it will turn up when people search.
 - 2.4. Make your calendar public, and do not select "Share only my free/busy information".
 - 2.5. Please share the calendar with your webmaster. Your webmaster only needs "See all event details" permission. Your webmaster will tell you what e-mail address to use for the invitation.
 - 2.6. After creating your calendar, go to its Calendar Settings. Select "Do not show invitations."
3. List your events
 - 3.1. It's easy enough to create an event from scratch or by duplicating an existing event. To create a new one, click the date you want it on, enter the information, and then "Edit event details" to add more information.
 - 3.2. What information should you add?
 - 3.2.1. Since all clubs will appear on the LCFD home page calendar, and the only way they are distinguished is by color, start your event title with your club's "short name" and the word "dance" or the dance style (contra, English, modern squares, and so on). The title will show up in calendar grids, so short is good. You can make it longer with less vital information, such as the caller and band. Here is a table of *suggested* short names for your club, just to give you an idea.

SHORT NAME	CLUB
JP	Boston Contra
BE	Boston English
BU	Boston Uncommons
LI	Long Island All Together
NYC	New York
SF	SF Bay Contra

SHORT NAME	CLUB
WM	Western Mass
QS	Quicksilver

- 3.2.2. Hint: enter the title with your dance time span first. Example: **7:30pm to 11pm JP contra: Linda Leslie, The Moving Violations**. The cool thing is the time range will be stripped off but set as the actual event time.
- 3.2.3. Location should be the exact street address, so Google Maps can find it precisely.
- 3.2.4. Use the event details/description as you like, or not at all. The more you enter, the more likely it'll be found via a Google search. You can enter a lot here, but a treatise is perhaps a bad idea. If you have a lot to say, put it into a special page and have the webmaster post it for you. Then you can put the link into the description.
- 3.2.5. If your events repeat regularly, you can use the Repeats feature to set up a whole season with generic information. Later you can go back and customize each date with specific information if that matters.


Your event shows in the agenda view like this:

Saturday, September 11
 7:30am JP: Contra dance

The next level of event details is shown when the visitor clicks the title:

Saturday, September 11
7:30am JP: Contra dance
 When Sat, September 11, 7:30am – 11:00am
 Where First Church In Jamaica Plain, 6 Eliot Street, Jamaica Plain, MA ([map](#))
 Description Band: TBA Caller: TBA
[more details»](#) [copy to my calendar](#)

Finally, when they select “more details” they see:

 [Add to my Google Calendar](#) | [Learn about Google Calendar](#)

JP: Contra dance
 Band: TBA
 Caller: TBA

When Sat Sep 11 7:30am – 11am Eastern Time
 Where First Church In Jamaica Plain, 6 Eliot Street, Jamaica Plain, MA ([map](#))

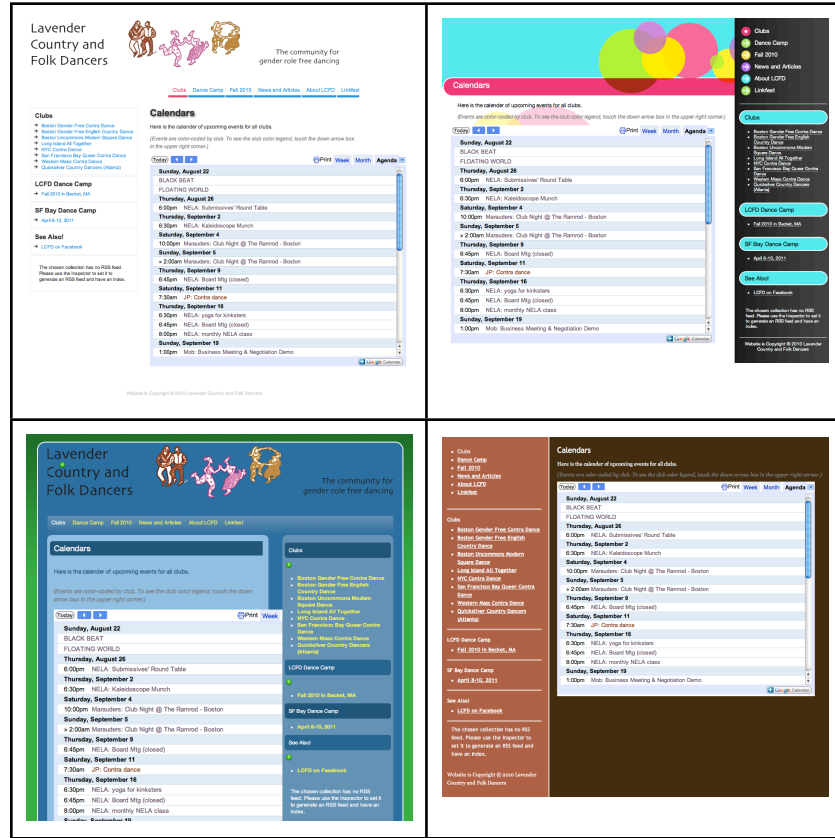
Note! What you see is not the same as what visitors see. Visitors do not, for example, see who created the event. You do not see, for example, the summary of the Description. You can test this out only by copying the public Calendar Address (click the "HTML" button on the Settings page). Then restart your browser and paste in the URL you copied. You may want to bookmark that for rapid access in the future.

Calendar Address: Learn more Change sharing settings	XML ICAL HTML (Calendar ID: f0auv2mc9p8lj60qimp6n467go@group.calendar.google.com) This is the address for your calendar. No one can use this link unless you have made your calendar public.
Private Address: Learn more	XML ICAL HTML Reset Private URLs This is the private address for this calendar. Don't share this address with others unless you want them to see all the events on this calendar.

Customizing Your Club Pages

Sandbox Themes

Sandbox allows the webmaster to change the site theme with very little work. Here are four sample themes:



As you can see, some themes don't work, such as the blue theme in the lower left. The calendar is too wide for it. Themes apply to the whole LCFD site, and cannot be changed for some pages.

We have no policy now for changing themes. Current thinking is to change them at least annually, but possibly more often.

What You Can Customize

Each club can have some variation in their page. The whole site must have the same theme, but each club can change certain parts of the page. Let's look at the club home page's anatomy:



Banner/Header

*Site Navigation
Club Name/Page Title*

Clubs

- Boston Gender Free Contra Dance
- Boston Gender Free English Country Dance
- Boston Uncommon Modern Square Dance
- Long Island All Together
- NYC Contra Dance
- San Francisco Bay Queer Contra Dance
- Western Mass Contra Dance
- Quicksilver Country Dancers (Atlanta)

LCFD Dance Camp

- Fall 2010 in Becket, MA

SF Bay Dance Camp

- April 8-10, 2011

See Also!

- LCFD on Facebook

The chosen collection has no RSS feed.
Please use the Inspector to set it to
generate an RSS feed and have an index.

*Sidebar:
Top &
Bottom*

Boston Gender Free Contra Dance

[Calendar](#) • [Help Us](#) • [Directions](#) • [About](#)

Boston Gender Free Contra Dance for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer Folks and Friends!

- Live music
- All dances taught
- Beginners encouraged—come early!
- No partner necessary
- Any sexual orientation and gender expression is welcome

Calendar

Today [1](#) [▶](#) **Sunday, August 22** [Print](#) [Week](#) [Month](#) [Agenda](#)

Saturday, September 11

7:30am JP: Contra dance

Showing events until 10/31. [Look for more](#)

Events shown in time zone: Eastern Time

Dances normally run 7:30 to 11:00pm. The fee is usually \$10; students \$6. But we also take less if that's what you can afford. We do pass a bucket for our live music fund, and you can ask the person at the door about sponsoring future dances.

We recommend first time dancers:

- Come early, say 7:15, and introduce yourself. Someone may show you some moves and terms just to help you be a bit more comfortable. Nevertheless contra dancing is easy for people with two left feet. Dances become progressively more difficult as the evening progresses, so again, come early.
- Please bring clean, comfortable, soft-soled shoes to change into after you arrive. Gritty shoes grind our old floor, and create airborne dust as the finish is worn down early.
- Dress light. This is aerobic exercise. Experienced dancers may wear skirts, shorts and bring changes of tee shirts. Do not wear sweaters except for between-dance warming up.

Help Us

We run our dances with volunteer help: you! The board manages the hard parts but we do need volunteers for easy jobs every dance:

- Hall setup (2 positions)—6:30 to 7:15—plus get into the dance free
- Greeter and Door sitter (1 position)—7:15 to break—plus get into your next dance free
- Announcer (1 position)—just before break

We also need people to stay around at the end to tear down and clean up. If you want to learn how to operate the sound board, contact a board member.

Directions

We dance at the First Church in Jamaica Plain, at the corner of Centre and Eliot Streets (at the monument), Jamaica Plain, Boston, MA. You can print off [text directions](#) or use [Google Maps](#).



Contact

Send e-mail to jr-dance@lcfid.org

This page is managed by Chris Ricicotti.

Club Custom

Main Event Calendar

Club Custom

*Page Manager
Footer*

You cannot change:

- Red filled area content. That includes the Banner/Header, Navigation, Sidebar, and Footer
- Red outlined area positions.
 - The Page Title, which will be your club name on the club's home page.
 - The page content area, the largest red rectangle.
 - The Page Manager footer. You can add to this footer. This footer only needs to be on your club home page.
 - The main event calendar has to be somewhere on your club homepage

You can change:

- Your club name.
- What calendars are shown in your calendar block. You can have more than one block, but that might look overly complicated. Google allows us to show multiple calendars in one block. We can show your calendar as an event listing (Agenda mode) or a month grid.
- Your page manager, and other footer information (your club page copyright, for instance)
- Club custom page content. Important items you should have are:
 - Directions to your dances. These can be done as an embedded Google Map, as well as a separate page for lengthy directions.
 - Contact information.
 - The usual dance cost, time, and venues.
- Meta keywords to help search engines. You might want to use keywords based on your dance style, location, regular band and caller, and of course we can add the usual set of gender role free keywords.

Send the webmaster your page content as an RTF file using Wordpad (not Word!) or TextEdit (if you're on a Mac). If you are good with HTML you *can* submit HTML. Only the content of the <body> will be used. At this time we are not allowing custom CSS or <script>, but may in the future once we get comfortable with Sandvox. Pictures, audio, and video clips can be posted.

You can add more pages for your club and link to them either from a page or from a new sidebar block that will appear in the middle of the sidebar (between the top and bottom parts). Your new pages will have a similar layout and may be a picture gallery, a rich text page, or an HTML page.

We are considering a page commenting feature. It's very important to add community feedback and discussions, and short of a full blown forum system, comments may be useful enough. Stay tuned and do push your webmaster on this subject.

Of special note: The whole page *can* be replaced with totally custom HTML. But that feels un-community-like, departing from the LCFD site theme. It would be good for special pages, however. For these whole-HTML pages we can support custom CSS and scripts.

Making Changes

Unless we find a webmaster who can properly implement and maintain a distributed content management system, you will have to submit all new pages and changes to the webmaster. Allow advance time for this to be done. Sandvox will allow pages to be marked invisible until a special event, when they can then be “switched on” manually. Your webmaster will let you know how frequently he can accept update and with what advance notice. It will pay to ask in advance if the change is important or large.

Please do not mail a lot of media to the webmaster. Post media to a file sharing service, and mail the download instructions. Some services include: Google Documents, Mobile Me, Kodak Gallery, Picasa, Shutterfly, and Flickr. There are also web hosting services, like A2 Hosting, which offer FTP accounts with their web and e-mail package.

Media must be prepared according to LCFD site guidelines, to ensure a successful and consistent experience, as well as less work for the webmaster. We need to devise those guidelines, so for now please ask first.