

STEVE MARANTO **caller and musician.**

I was introduced to English Country Dance in December of 1996 at the Sebastopol dance (north of San Francisco) when it was in the old barn. John Erbaugh, a true Friend and a great and passionate lover and supporter of English Country Dance for many decades, had spent the better part of a year softening me up to the idea and took me to the dance when I visited for Christmas. That was my first and only exposure, (there being no English Country Dance in San Diego at that time), until John convinced me to come to the Mendocino English Week 6 months later.

During that week in Mendocino I had something of a religious experience which included a near meltdown of my oxygen starved musical persona with all of its classical defenses and unfulfilled desires. The wonderful musicians, the re-acquaintance with tunes I had been introduced to 20 years earlier in music school, the warm reception to my suddenly keen interest and sense of overwhelm, and of course the serene redwoods, made for a week of exciting upheaval from which I have never quite recovered.

After that I had to wait another four years for a regular diet of ECD when 12 of us got together in the fall of 2000, with Ellen Riley as the first San Diego ECD teacher. This occurred after much furtive whispering at contra dances, where Ellen and I first discovered each other's love for ECD.

From nearly the beginning I learned to call, but it was yet another two years before I began to realize that what I had learned in music school could actually be put to use. (Imagine!) Slowly, painfully, I began to improvise a little as I watched others and took what instruction I could. I am grateful for the generosity and musical company of people such as Jacqueline Schwab, Shira Kamen, Daniel Beerbohm and Barbara Greenberg and Rebecca King when I have had the privilege to cross paths with them.

Now I have just enough knowledge to be a little dangerous around truly good musicians who are willing to put up with me. Not only that, but the pay is impossible to resist!