

Hello everyone,

In contra dancing, sometimes you have a "trail buddy," someone in addition to your partner with whom you interact each time through the dance. A caller recently was teaching a dance like that and added, "if someone new joins the dance, or something goes wrong, you may end up with a new trail buddy. If that happens, enjoy the variety in your life."

"Enjoy the variety in your life." That both rang a bell and struck a chord with me. The bell is that when I heard her say that, I recognized it as the seed for this month's column. The chord is how much this sentiment resonates with me. If we are open to it we have many opportunities to enjoy variety in our lives. It could simply be noticing in a pleasant way how different other people are from us. They are not flawed versions of ourselves. They represent variety. We are different in what we enjoy, what we find important, what we tolerate, what we like to eat, our temperature preferences.

We can introduce variety into our own lives by eating new foods, trying new recipes, taking a different route to a known location, doing a new kind of dance, dancing with someone new, making a new friend, changing our daily routine, or any number of other ways.

Sometimes the variety in our lives isn't there by choice. Construction and traffic often force variety into our lives by making us detour and figure out new routes from here to there. Change and the loss of the known provide variety too, if we look at it that way. The challenge here may be learning to enjoy it!

Sometimes variety is dictated by bylaws. NFDI's bylaws state that the president shall not serve more than three consecutive years. It has been my pleasure to be NFDI's president these past three years and to share my thoughts with you every month. Let's enjoy the variety of a new NFDI president! I'll write guest columns, fear not.

Variety can be driven by elections. With the results of our latest election, our board composition has changed. Judy Robare will be leaving the board. We thank her for her long-term service to NFDI especially as a board member. Judy has been a great resource to NFDI over the years at board level, club level, and organization-wide levels. She has previously been honored with a NFDI gold card membership for her contributions to folk dancing in general and to the folk dance clubs served by NFDI. Among other things, she created numerous covers for the Northwest Folkdancer and ran the NFDI-sponsored Seattle Folkdance Festival for 15 years. She was a champion advertisement seller for the previous festival's program guide. Thank you, Judy, for your many years of service to NFDI! See you at a dance soon.

Over time, the things we appreciate shift. Hmm, variety in appreciation... One thing I have come to value in writing this column is collaboration. My unsung collaborator has been my son Raffi. After I have my article well-drafted, he'll read it, ask me key questions, make suggestions about the order of sentences or paragraphs, sometimes add a related idea. The columns are stronger and better with another knowledgeable pair of eyes looking at them. Thank you, Raffi!

With the new year, I will focus a bit on recognizing, appreciating and enjoying the variety in my life. I invite you to consider doing that too.

May the year 2020 hold a variety of delights in dance and beyond.