

Hello everyone,

Last month I wrote of new growth, whether in plants, human relationships, dance communities. Sometimes young plants flourish, sometimes they still need a lot of care before they grow or fade away. Sometimes a new human connection grows into a deep personal love relationship, sometimes it leads to friendship, sometimes it fades away. Dance communities, clubs, and festivals have cycles too, with beginnings, times of growth, times of shrinking, times of change. In our own lives, we may change the form of dancing we participate in regularly, although the former favorites remain deep in our muscle memory, to be brought out and savored from time to time.

Another way to look at the growth cycle is that after growth comes maintenance. Ursula K. Le Guin in her book No Time to Spare said it well: "Living things need to grow, first to their optimum size, and then to keep replacing what wears out, annually (as with many plants) or continually (as with mammalian skin). A baby grows to adult size, after which growth goes to maintaining stability, homeostasis, balance. Growth much beyond that leads to obesity. For a baby to grow endlessly bigger would be first monstrous, then fatal."

For growing plants, the maintenance includes thinning, weeding, watering, feeding, harvesting. For clubs, festivals, and organizations, this maintenance takes the form of the hardworking people who publicize events, set up the halls for dancing, design and run the programming, teach dances or hire teachers, care about the well being of the group and nurture its members and the whole. Sometimes those running an organization move away, become unable to keep up their previous function, or their priorities shift. Therefore an important part of the maintenance cycle can be bringing in new people with new energy and ideas.

How lucky we are in the Pacific Northwest to have such hardworking and dedicated people keeping our dances and festivals alive. It is almost time for NFDI's annual election. Consider joining us as a member of the board or a committee. We're a nice group and the board only meets four times a year. Interested in learning more? Contact David Harris at 206 782-4113 or speak with any board member.

Happy dancing, everyone!