

**News From  
Northern California  
(Walt Cooley)  
(April 26, 2002)**

One of our members runs a local bed and breakfast which happens to be an old farm (Victorian farmhouse and a big old barn). At his suggestion, we've started having dances on our regular club night over at his barn about once every 6 weeks, and we invite all three of the local clubs. These have turned into a regular affair. It has become traditional that everyone dresses down a little (more jeans, even some of the ladies), and warmer (the barn is unheated), and folks bring more food. Also, in a newly forming tradition, we always have a Virginia Reel and occasionally a contra in addition to our squares. We get lots of visitors and usually have no trouble filling the barn (pretty easy, since it can only hold around 5-6 squares). This is a very old-fashioned thing-- no entry fee, no minimum dance level, no club membership required, just bring something to share and come to visit and dance.

In April 2002 a group of visiting exchange students from France were planning a beach party but the weather turned too cold, so one of our members invited a few of them to come to our club dance and see square dancing. Word spread among the exchange students, and before we knew what had happened we ended up with over 100 visitors, mostly French, and our club night turned into an unplanned new dancer party. We did squares and line dances, hampered by language and needing to do lots of demonstration-- but very successful. Everyone had such a great time we ran late (nobody wanted to leave).