



27 Dec 86 Hoolyeh Fish Party
Kathy Kerr Patty Ross



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December 6, 1990

Karla McMechan
Hoolyeh Folk Dancers
Parks and Recreation Department
760 SW Madison Avenue
P.O. Box 1083
Corvallis, OR 97339-1083

Dear Karla (and Dave and Mary, and others),

Thanks so much for the invitation to attend and participate in the Hoolyeh Folk Dancers 25th Anniversary party. I only wish that I could go, but won't be able to be there.

However, I wish to extend my congratulations on a job well done, and an incredibly successful and growing community dance program that has served people of all ages for so many years. I have never seen a more successful program, and I feel that it should be a model and an inspiration for similar endeavors.

Congratulations again, and keep up the good work!

Best wishes for the next 25 years,

Kathy
Kathleen Kerr

KK:11g

P.S. I would enjoy receiving a souvenir program, if possible.

Minneapolis, Minnesota
8 December 1990

Dear Betty:

Thanks for the Hoolyeh Anniv. announcement. I'd love to be there! Please give my fond regards to all ...

One of the original Hoolyeh dancers, Ken Yates, was here for several years and was a very popular teacher of those Corvallis dances. The Olsons [Judy Gordon Olson and Doug Olson and children] are here. I think Judy has started her own group on the St. Croix River (about 30 miles east of the Twin Cities.) Kathy Kerr is about 4 hours south of here in Iowa.

And most people know Hildred--and wish her well! Some people are just bigger than life, and Hildred is one ---

I owe my own dance initiation to Glen Weber and Hildred. (It took me 3 Saturday nites to learn Les Noto). Glen was an unusually fine teacher and knows how to teach a correct step and still have fun doing it. Kathryn Newcomb was another important person in my dance history. Her treats, her floral flourishes and bouquets, her flag project and her parties were all so memorable and fun! I liked Hildred's preference for ending the dance program with Erev Ba.

Folkdancing in Corvallis was very important to me ... Dancing brought with it a joy of expression and the companionship I'll never forget. So---Keep dancing! [Don moved to Minnesota in about 1985--ed.]

I'm still doing international dancing here, and beginning to focus on Scandinavian as a specialty. We have a number of good fiddlers here--maybe as many as 20--which adds richness to the form. The Ursa polska, Boda polska, Ratvik polska, Slangpolska, Valdres springar, Telespringar and many more challenge us. Once a year the Scandinavian groups (Finnish, Swedish, Danish, Norwegian) get together and have a ball, replete with mouth-watering foods, costumes, fiddlers and exhibition dancing.

Please extend my warmest memories to all the dancers who attend the party. To all of you let me say, "Thanks for enriching my life with this living treasure. It exceeds all others in value."

My love to you,

Don Knutsen

Karla McMechan: I grew up dancing in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The coach at our grade and high school loved to dance. If the boys didn't dance, they didn't play in the games. So, we all danced. But then, dancing was a big part of community events, too. In 1983 my daughter, Rosa, and I discovered the Hoolyeh children's program. Jay Thatcher, who had taken over the directorship from Hildred in September, 1982, and Dina Kushnir of Israel, and sometimes Patsy Shreve, taught folk dancing Saturday mornings at the Senior Center. At first, I sat and knit, but every time they played Ma Navu I had to get up and dance. Soon persuaded them to let me dance along with the children. That summer we joined the Family Folkdances on Thursday evenings and we've been dancing ever since. Jay gave me a scholarship to the OSU Folk Dance Camp in 1984 and encouraged me to teach and help with publicity. After Dina left, I taught the children's program in 1985-86. I'm not a trained dancer, but Jay said I had the right attitude. I love moving to music!

Los Angeles, California

December 4, 1990

Dear Karla

30 November 1990

Thank you for the letter and the flyer. I will definitely be at the 25th anniversary of the Hoolyehs. I joined the Hoolyehs in February of 1973 when I was twelve years old. Throughout junior high and high school I danced in the Garfield school gym every Thursday evening. In 1975 or 76 I began performing with the Hoolyehs. We were all girls. Other than myself there were Janet Binker, Susan (DeLaubenfels) Perry, Leah Harper, Margaret Hull, Margaret Dornfeld, Katie Potts, Katie Newcomb, Ronnie Rachelle, Carrie Moyer, Sharon McKenzie. We were the last group of high school age Hoolyehs. After high school, I danced with Kathy Kerr at O.S.U. and worked for Hoolyehs as Mrs Rice's assistant for three years from 1978-1981. My years with the Hoolyehs were not only meaningful to me in and of themselves, they put me on the path to many other meaningful experiences. In 1981, I traveled to Scandinavia with the O.S.U. folk ensemble (directed by Kathy Kerr) and spent three weeks traveling and dancing with them before continuing on my own across Europe to Israel. On that tour, I made the contacts that took Ken Kirkpatrick and I back to Finland in 1985 where we entered and won 4th place in the 14th annual Västnylands Schottis competition. In my years with the Hoolyehs I ~~also~~ grew to love the music as much as the dance and in 1982 I joined the Portland group Slavic Voices. We sang a cappella Eastern European folk music. With that group, in 1986, I traveled to the Soviet Union to participate in an ethnographic music festival. We were the only non-Soviets present. On a higher level, the years of exposure to other cultures both directly and indirectly influenced me to enter my profession as an E.S.L. teacher. I feel deeply grateful for the opportunities I found through the Hoolyehs and for Mrs. Rice's support of my dancing during those years. I look forward to celebrating the years of dancing with all of you

Rachel Baldwin