



AMAN 50th ANNIVERSARY

Reunion

NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN 2013

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LAST CHANCE to REGISTER**—Special SATURDAY ONLY REGISTRATION Limited Offer—**

Okay latecomers, bandwagoners and fencesitters this is your LAST CHANCE to register for the AMAN50 Reunion celebration! We want to see you there! Go to www.aman50.com now to register. Registration closes October 4th (that's this coming Friday!) and we will not be able to accommodate any walk-ins.

“Saturday Only” Registration Update:

- We'd like to once again send out a huge “THANK YOU” to all who signed up for the full event! We are grateful for your participation, and because of it we have met our minimal financial obligation to the hotel. Phew!
- We still have a few spaces left for “Saturday Only” and they will be available “First Come, First Served” until the ballroom is full... and we almost are! Oh happy day! So don't wait, visit www.aman50.com and **REGISTER TODAY!**

The Details:**“Saturday Only” registration is \$130/person and includes:**

- Saturday morning workshops
- The 50th Anniversary Award Banquet Dinner
- Saturday night social activities, party and Kafana

Please Note: That “Saturday Only” event registration check-in hours are Saturday, Oct. 12th at **8:30-11am** for the morning workshops - or - **4:00-5:00pm** if you arrive later. Also note that there are NO scheduled events between 12:30pm and 5pm on Saturday... so if you arrive during those hours you will need to check-in at the later time.

“Full Event” registration:

We are of course still accepting “FULL EVENT Registrations” as well, see web page for details.

* * *

Friendly Reminders:

Room-Share and **Ride-Share** are available, but you **need to sign up** in order to take advantage of it.

- To share a room at the hotel, please contact Hospitality Coordinator Paul (“Chip”) Sheldon via email at pmssheldon@gmail.com
- To offer space in your car or join an AMAN50 carpool, please visit this link: <http://www.groupcarpool.com/t/zaribx>

Important: We have many people wanting rides. So.. if you are willing to OFFER A RIDE TO SOMEONE, please go on the above link and let us know ASAP! Thanks!

It's all so exciting! Many cool things are coming together now, especially the music for the parties and Kafana sets (can you say “Killer Tamburitza, Macedonian, Turkish, Greek & Egyptian bands,” “NAMA,” “Nevenka Revisited” and a “Pitu Guli & Friends” reunion set!).

No doubt about it, we are going to R-O-C-K Palm Springs!

Just 2 weeks and counting folks, can't wait to see everyone!



Event Schedule

Thursday October 10th

3:30-5:30pm Early Registration (*Santa Rosa Foyer*)

7:30pm Registration, Schmoozing & LAUNCH of the "AMAN Memorabilia Mania" Exhibit (*Santa Rosa Room*)

8:30pm Welcome KAFANA Social Mixer (*San Jacinto Room*)

Friday October 11th

8:00am Master Class Stretch, Strength and Alignment with Linda DeNike (*Ballroom*)

9:00am African Tribute to Phil Harland—Dance and Drumming Sohu Jam (*Ballroom*)

11:00am Ladarke Tribute Session—Singing (*Ballroom*) and Band (*Sierra Room*)

12:30pm No-Host Outdoor Grill and Salad Bar with Tamburitza Serenade (*Patio Grill*)

2:00pm AMAN Through the Decades #1 Panel Discussion (*Mojave Center*)

Swing Tribute Session (*Ballroom*)

3:30pm AMAN Through the Decades #2 Panel Discussion (*Mojave Center*)

Podravina Wedding Suite Review (*Ballroom*)

6:00pm "Fiesta de las palmeras" Happy Hour—No Host Bar (*Foyer & Terrace*)

*** Silent Auction Opens** (*Catalina Room*)

7:00pm "Fiesta de las palmeras" Buffet Dinner (*Foyer & Terrace*)

7:45pm AMAN Songbook Singalong (*Dining Area*)

8:30pm Evening Dance Party with Live Music and Surprises (*Ballroom*)

10:30pm Late Night KAFANA (*San Jacinto Room*)

Saturday October 12th

9:00am Master Class Pilates with Robyn Friend (*Sierra Room*)

Master Class Zumba Gold (low-impact) with Nina Edelstein (*Ballroom*)

10:00am Appalachian Big Circle Dance (*Ballroom*) and Music Jam (*Sierra Room*)

11:00am Zangbozi and Egyptian Tribute Sessions (*Ballroom*)

AMAN and the Early Balkan Music Scene Panel Discussion (*Mojave Center*)

12:30pm Lunch (Afternoon Free-Time)

5:00pm 50th Anniversary Commemorative Photos and Silent Auction (*Catalina Room*)

5:30pm 50th Anniversary Reception—No Host Bar (*Foyer and Catalina Room*)

6:30pm AMAN Gala 50th Anniversary Banquet and Awards Dinner (*Ballroom*)

8:30pm Ladarke Sing/Play Along (*Foyer*)

*** after Ladarke; * Silent Auction Closes!** (*Catalina Room*)

9:00pm Evening Dance Party with Live Music (*Ballroom*)

10:00pm Late Night KAFANA (*San Jacinto Room*)

Sunday October 13th

TBA Survivors Lunch

Opa! —Thought Bubbles from the Greek Chorus, aka Letters to the Editor

More Letters, Two Audition Stories and Recollections of an AMAN Spouse

AMAN BEGINNINGS

by David DeBus

I met David and Judith Helfman at the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee's training to go to Mississippi for a "Freedom Summer" focused on registering black voters and forming "Freedom Schools" to educate Mississippian African-Americans politically. It was a year-long training, and the main guy was Bob Moses. My friends Howard Harrelson and Mary Weinbrenner were with us also, but at 16, I did not have a car, so David and Judith picked Howard and me up, and drove us from Santa Monica to Pasadena for the training. The summer before I was going to go to Mississippi, the new President of SNCC, Stokely Carmichael, told white people to leave SNCC—with the slogan "black power" and a raised fist— and changed the direction of SNCC.

Then David and Judith easily persuaded me to join AMAN, and meet what in 1964-5 was a beginning group. Being brought up in a family of avid folk dancers, with a mother who also became somewhat of an authority on ethnic costuming in Yugoslavia and Hungary, coming to rehearse and also perform concerts with the AMAN Folk Ensemble was like breathing for me. Although I was with the singers more than the instrumental musicians or the dancers, we did some of the dancing as well.

I recall hearing a story about Tony Shay. It seems that he was on the radio in Tehran, and that his Farsi accent was so good that few recognized that he was not Persian.

I recall many of the concerts and rehearsals, and the sense of openness to the planet's cultures and folkways. It also seemed to me that although I was younger than everyone else, this was neither held against me nor was I exempted from sometimes intense rehearsal focus.

Thank you very much for sending me the lively AMAN Anniversary Newsletter.

How I MET LEONA WOOD

by Samira Tamer

It was September 1962, I was just starting my studies at UCLA and I was invited to a party by Mustafa Akkad, whom I had met at another event the previous year. The Arab students at UCLA were a lively, party-loving crowd and because I could dance, I was usually invited to these events. As usual, I was dancing at this party, high heels and all, and after I had ended my dance, this lady with black hair in a bun and a long skirt came over to me with her husband Phil and introduced themselves. She asked who taught me to dance and I told her I'd been doing it since I could walk. She proceeded to tell me that she had a dance group put together and would I be able to join the group for concerts from time to time. I was non-committal, and told her that I would have to see what my schedule would allow, and I would get back to her. Our relationship flourished over the coming year and I found myself



under Leona's tutelage from time to time, being put into a trumped up Dabke costume and asked to go on stage and do the Dabke with Mustafa Akkad. Most of these concerts were at the Student Union ballroom at UCLA. For several years, Leona asked if I would join her group, which was now called the AMAN FOLK >>>

>>> ENSEMBLE. I kept putting her off not only because of school, but a busy social life. It seemed that Leona had to give me a stamp of approval for my boyfriends, and sometimes it was a stamp of disapproval.

It wasn't until the summer of 1968 that I finally went to the International Student Center and took part in my first rehearsal. A young good looking guy was teaching the girls Turkish dances and I inquired who he was. I found out he was from Turkey and was a dancer there. He also played music, so an all-

round talented person. After several rehearsals, I got to know Ergun fairly well and decided he might like a home cooked Middle Eastern meal. (The night before I had made stuffed eggplant for a small dinner party and still had leftovers). So after a Sunday rehearsal, Ergun came over for dinner. I didn't tell him they were leftovers, and he seemed to thoroughly enjoy the meal! That was November of 1968; in January, Ergun proposed, I accepted and we were married in June. Leona always took credit for our union!

My AUDITION WITH LEONA by Robyn Friend

As I sat at my grandmother's treadle sewing machine, I listened to the radio broadcasting live about the shoot-out and ultimate destruction at the Symbionese Liberation Army headquarters in Los Angeles. I needed a knee length skirt in a hurry, for my audition at 9pm. I did not know what to expect at the audition. Though I had had other professional dance auditions, none had been prefaced by an extraordinary conversation such as the one I experienced with Leona Wood a few days before.

World traditional dance has always been my fascination. My earliest dance experience was at age three, watching the street dancing at the annual Nisei Week festival in Little Tokyo in downtown Los Angeles. My mom saw me trying to imitate the dancers with their beautiful hands and fans, and asked if I wanted dance lessons. And I got them; not Japanese dance, but a sort of ballet-modern-expressive dance accessible to toddlers.

Growing up half-Bulgarian in 20th-century Los Angeles meant attending *vecherinkas* and dancing Bulgarian *horos* to accordion,

guitar, and drum set. Later, I discovered Balkan folk dancing as an alternative to regular gym class in high school, and belly dance via the Renaissance Faire. Once at UCLA, though I changed my major from dance to Persian language, I continued to take classes in world dance and world music.

The transition to a major in Persian language brought me into contact with Iranian students. Once a year the Iranian Students Association would have a big Persian New Year's (*Now Ruz*) party. Back then, there were many fewer Iranians in Los Angeles, so the main *Now Ruz* event was a collaboration between students at both UCLA and USC. Of course, part of the program involved singing and dancing, which is how I became involved in it.

And is also how I first met Tony Shay. The ISA members would ask Tony for help with dances for this event, and Tony would work with them on Sunday afternoons, during AMAN rehearsals in the UCLA Women's Gym.



This wasn't my first experience with AMAN, though. I had heard of the company's first triumphant 1971 appearance at the Music Center through my mother, who worked in the bowels of the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion for the Los Angeles Civic Light Opera. When the company appeared later that year at the Ahmanson Theater, I went to one of the shows. I remember vividly the lovely Canopy Dance and those guys dancing on their toes, and men in bouffy trousers kicking their feet around knives stuck in the stage. Great stuff; little did I realize I would marry one of those men in just a few years.

>>>

One of the first world music classes I took at UCLA was Mark Levy's Balkan Music class. I struggled with the *gadulka* for a year before I discovered that my great-grandfather's instrument, which my mother always referred to as *gadulka*, was actually a *lavto*. I had mentioned to Mark that I really wanted to join AMAN, and Mark told me that those ladies were really excellent dancers, so I should be prepared.

Eventually I got up the courage to pay a visit to the Women's Gym on a Sunday afternoon and ask Tony how I could audition for the Oriental Section of AMAN. He said I needed to talk with the director, Leona Wood, gave me Leona's phone number, and said he would also call her himself.

Later that week I called Leona. Yes, she had heard from Tony but she had some questions for me before she would agree to an audition. The conversation went something like this:

Leona: How much dance training have you had?

Me: I studied ballet for about 10 years, and three years of modern before that.

Leona: But have you had any other dance training? It is very important that our dancers have non-classical dance training.

Me: Well, yes, I've had classes in jazz and tap.

Leona: But we really need our dancers to have non-Western dance experience. Have you had any of that?

Me: Some Afro-Cuban, Balkan folk dance, and going to Bulgarian events (I'm half Bulgarian), um, *Bharata Natyam*, and dancing with Iranians.

Leona: Yes, but do you have any musical training? Our girls need to be able to sing, you know.

Me: Well, I studied piano for many years, and I have had singing lessons.

Leona: But I mean, non-western classical music. You see, we must be fluent in a variety of rhythms.

Me: I've been taking Balkan music classes with Mark Levy; is that what you meant?

And on and on it went. Fortunately I had an answer to every apparent roadblock Leona threw



at me, and she finally agreed to let me audition. By now, though, I was sure that I could not possibly be good enough, and looked forward to my hard-won audition with great fear and trepidation.

I finished sewing my skirt, turned off the radio, and went off to the audition. Leona had told me that the dancers would be rehearsing for an upcoming show, so I should plan to come at 9:00. When I arrived, the rehearsal was still going on, so I watched with awe; a group of women (I learned their names later: Michelle Gerard, Mardi Rollow, Lani Formica, Karen Fischer, Jeannie Margolis, Karin Machleder, Dulcie Ruess, and Layla Luria) were rehearsing something slinky and gorgeous. Finally they finished their rehearsal, but instead of packing up and leaving, they all hung around to watch what I was sure would be my humiliation.

I don't remember most of that audition. I do remember that Leona had Jeannie show me various moves to copy, ending with a basic Persian step-together-step. At the end, Jeannie said with some surprise, "She can dance!"

Leona agreed, pronounced me "in," and immediately invited me to her house for tea.

Thus began an association and a friendship that lasted until her death 33 years later. I am forever grateful to her for all her mentoring, and all she taught me about dance, theater, costuming, stitching little pearls on little hats, painting, and more. And I am so glad that I found the guts to go to that audition!

>>>

>>> RECOLLECTIONS OF AN AMAN SPOUSE by Herb Machleder

This is one of many actual events, characters, places, and incidents which are completely verifiable. Any resemblance to actual events or locales or persons, etc. is entirely on purpose.



It is in the waning months of 1963 I was a surgical intern at UCLA. This is before the full maturity of child labor laws, and a twenty-four or thirty-six hour stint was not uncommon. In a

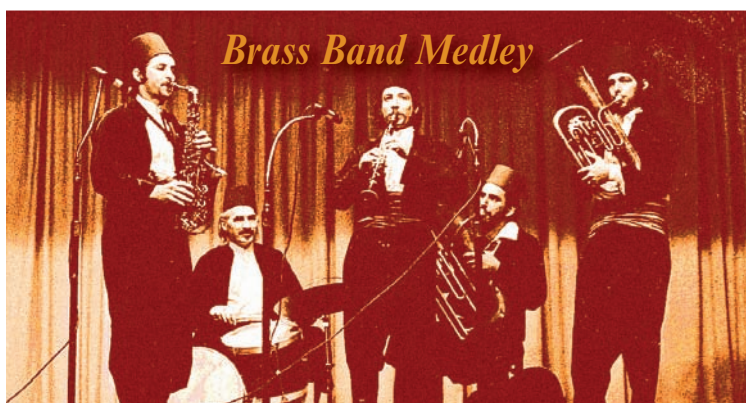
somewhat soporific trance I would creep along the winding route from UCLA Hospital up Beverly Glen Boulevard in our 1949 Pontiac with aftermarket "Hydromatic Drive." The "apartment," in a squat little house was shared with the owner. Our section was one room and a tiny bathroom with the only sink. The little waist-high refrigerator in the living/bedroom had a two-burner stove on the top, and the whole shebang went for \$72/month.

Often, as I entered the door (the only door), sitting cross-legged on the floor were a half dozen or so women clad only in bra and panties. They hardly gave me a glance as I threaded my way to the bed against the wall, separated from the rest of the room by a shower curtain-like apparatus that Karin had rigged up. The women were all busily sewing, occasionally jumping up in some variegated colorful, meticulously authentic schmatta (I grew up in the South Bronx) to the



admiring or critical comments of the rest of the sweat-shop team. All manner of garments were strewn about, funny looking baggy pants, shirts or blouses (who knows) that one would never see in an English language catalogue. Hats looking a little like coffee cans, painstakingly stitched and formed.

Pulling off my "Whites" I would gradually fall asleep, dreaming of my next rotation on call, to the sounds of weird rhythms of some sort of ankle bells, when the women decided they needed to practice a step and test out the security of the just manufactured appliance. Then the usual banter would gradually fade: "Lani you need a larger piece of Asyut," "Mardi, did Leona say it has to fit tight about the waist?" OK, let's try this one more time, "Samira, remember what Leona said, back straight, tits out." At about that time, as I am told, I began to snore with a slight whistle. By the next day the floor was strewn with shreds of some sort of material with metallic pieces, the only suggestion that maybe this wasn't completely hallucinatory. Nevertheless, no sense sharing this with anyone, tales of the Arabian Nights are never appreciated on surgical rounds, particularly from a lowly intern whose wife carried finger cymbals in her purse.



*PLUS Slavonian a cappella *Tri Jetrve Žito Žele*

Honk Your Horn
FREE Song Downloads
from the AMAN Archives
 Click title to download [Brass Band Medley](#)
 Click title to download [Tri Jetrve Žito Žele](#)
Play it LOUD and Play it PROUD
on the road to Palm Springs!

Let's Swing It!

(The Sequel)

by Lynnanne
Hanson Miller

YES, MANY OF YOU PARTOOK OF A fabulous 1940s USO number for the 1984 Olympics— you lucky AMANers, you... So in 1992, as my then beau, now hubby, Chris Miller came back to join AMAN again, (first stint 1971-75) our love for Swing music and Lindy Hop was noticed. We were honored to have Barry ask us if we'd like to do a little duet and it was "Ace" who played *Honeysuckle Rose* on the piano for us to dance our favorite East Coast Swing moves; it was a fun piece and a little romantic, too. It was well received at a time when the resurgence of Swing dancing was in its prime. Barry recognized this and gave us the opportunity to, again, bring this American Vernacular Jazz form of dance to the stage! Much of the company wanted a piece of the action! So we took all our favorite steps and put together a wild and crazy number for the gang. We wanted to create a suite as authentic as possible in keeping with AMAN's reputable nature of all its material. We thought it'd be great to try to replicate what might have happened at a "Juke Joint" in the late 1930s. After our fantabulous musicians turned into a swing band and played a rousing piece for your listening pleasure, we requested *Opus One*. Chris and I hit the dance floor with a subtle combination of moves. Then another couple followed, then a few more. Soon we were all Lindy Hopping to the swingin'est music on any stage! In the choreographic process, Chris and I knew we would be remiss in not showing "The Big Apple" as well, which included a little Charleston, all showing a bit of the history of how the Lindy Hop came to be. The ending was the best with several couples displaying their prowess and strength demonstrating all kinds of crazy lifts: petite Ronda jumping over >>>



>>> giant Darrell, handsome Bob and lovely Deanne showing a complicated around-the-back-thru-the-legs bit (Dancing With the Stars's got nothing on us!) and "Slats" (Chris) and "Sugar" (Lynnanne) (do you all remember your character names?) doing the famous "waterfall" (hand-stand onto the shoulders, drop head first down his back and back up between the legs!). Now that took lots of practice on very soft surfaces. If we tried to do that now we'd both break every bone in our bodies!! Oh how we long for our days of stronger muscles and lubricated joints. We played this number several times, all of us loving every minute of it! Chris's choreography was brilliant, and the dancers, as always, embraced the style and steps perfectly... absolutely delightful!

But I have to share a delightful rehearsal memory the dancers in attendance will never forget. At a Swing Suite rehearsal, Chris was demonstrating a lift with Susie Shap, a split jump over the head. Now, how do I describe what happened next. Picture this: Chris, standing ready in an open, bent-knee stance, arms extended ready to catch her and throw her over his head. As Susie runs toward him, she jumps up, her straddle leg position perfect! But she's not high enough to get over his head! She lands on his shoulders, legs dangling down his back and, well, her you-know-what landing square in his face! He spun around so as not to drop her or fall over (always taking care of his dance partner). A gasp, then the loudest guffaw rang out in the rehearsal

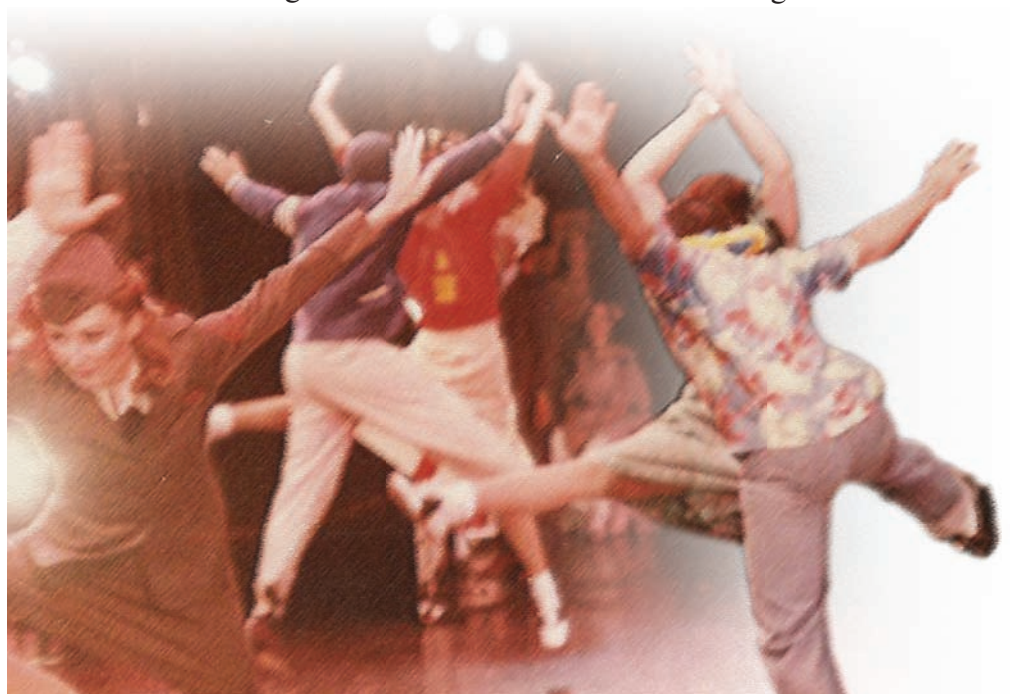
room! They stood for a few seconds catching their balance, then joined in the room full of laughter, still in that position, mind you... Susie hanging on for dear life! Really, it was one of the most memorable moments—and there were lots and lots—being a member of AMAN has offered.

Now the costumes for this were easy! I mean how fun going shopping at all the wonderful vintage clothing stores in L.A.! The right looking vintage or reproduction shoes to fit the individual dancers was the biggest challenge. And forget those thin, easily-torn, back-seam hose and garter belt. I mean authentic is authentic, but that doesn't lend to quick changes at all. Besides, it was fun drawing lines with eyeliner down the back of each other's legs much less getting our hair looking just right—it's a girl-thang!

And how about those amazing musicians! Is there anything they couldn't play? I'm sure we all realize the blessing it was to

have the opportunity to perform to live music every show. When I was backstage at a show, I always took the opportunity to stare for a minute at those tables of incredible instruments from around the world! Wow! Really, wow!

Today, Chris and I don't get out much; our days of aerials are over, but we Swing dance now and then, we've done some Argentine Tango, a style Chris has been an expert at for years. We mostly do vintage dances—Ragtime, one-step, waltz, etc. He takes tap class, and little bits at a time I pursue learning what I can about Polynesian dance. We work lots and take care of our home. I teach kids of all ages cultural and vintage dance and love every minute of it. Chris continues to create his incredible jewelry and other works of art as he has been doing for over 40 years. And the highlight of each and every day is raising the love of our lives—our incredible daughter. She's smart, fun, sweet, cute and loves to dance. Who'da thought?



If It's Good Enough for the PLO

by Laine Harris

This story and my association with it starts up in the wilds of Alaska. There I was minding my own business teaching flying in a forgotten part of the world, Haines, AK, when I heard about the possibility of an AMAN tour of North Africa. My first thoughts were the fun of touring with AMAN. There was a fleeting thought of the “pain in the ass” rehearsals had been. I decided that at least I might like a trip down to Southern California. The thought of auditioning and maybe making it on the tour and having a regular income in a warm climate “hardly” crossed my mind.

After blowing into town I went through the motions and when it was all over I was fourth out of four with them holding the auditions open another day to see if anyone else might like to try. After polling the populace I seemed to be the only fool left, and they had to have four men. I could tell I'd be a hit right away. There was a quick trip to Alaska to set as much in order as I could in a week. Then back to L.A., with the traffic and smog of September, to rehearse three weeks for the show. As things progressed I got more of an idea about what I was in for.

One of the things I found out was that the tour was under the wing of the U.S. State Department. A branch called the United States Information Agency. Another thing was that it was not so much a tour of North Africa as of the Near East. What the hell, it would still be warm and at least the checks should be good if they are coming from the government, right?

As it turns out AMAN, for USIA,

was in the culture exportation business. This meant, to AMAN, that we don't do a regular AMAN show of Armenian, Bulgarian, Tunisian, Yugoslav stuff, but we are going to do an all-American show! This turns out to be: Texas (country-western), Scottish, Chinese (all-American?), Shaker religious ceremony, and fiesta Norteña from Mexico, first half; second half, Kwakiutl (Northwest Indian dances), 40's swing (song and dances), Sea Shanties and Horn Pipe Dances, an Irish orchestra break, Kentucky running sets, American squares, Appalachian clogging, followed by a Pan-Arabic debki. Of these I'd done different choreographies of clogging and Texas. Basically the rest I knew from nothing, but what the hell. I had three weeks, right? Somewhere along here it became very obvious that there is no fat on this tour! Everyone had to do everything with only 16 performers on board and nowhere to hide.

Basically, we were four male dancers with one of the musicians dancing on swing and five female dancers, and five musicians. One official person from the AMAN office in the form of Evelyn Hoffman, one techie, Fred Allen, and a State Department escort officer Steve Belcher, with, so far, unknown powers and duties and you had the AMAN army of invasion. It was also somewhere along here that I realized the names of the places we were going turned up in the newspapers a lot; names like Syria, Jordan, Oman, etc. Well, like I said the check should be good and regular. I should be warm, too.

Yemen, very likely, is the most >>>



>>> fascinating place we visited. One of the first things you would notice is the lack of trousers (except on the military or police). Everyone wears a kaftan or skirt/futha sort of arrangement, high heeled slippers, vest and coat of the same material as the futha to create a nice suit image. The next thing you notice is that in front of every skirt/ vest there is a Jambia, a long, curved, heavily ornamented knife! Every male over about 12 years old has one of these Jambias!

You may ask yourself what the Yemeni is Qat? Well, we did and found it to be, perhaps, the most all-pervasive influence in Yemeni life. It turns out this stuff is a plant whose leaves when chewed are a mild amphetamine. The local practice is to sit down in the afternoon to chew, get a bit high, talk of manly things such as politics and business, then drink scotch or something to come down. The women have their own chews, discussing womanly things and life goes on.

At 8:00 a.m. October 8, Fred and I were driven to the theater to set up for the show later that night. Except for being pretty well hidden, the theater was pretty nice. It was dirty but we figured that could be cleaned up. They had already run out the sheep we had heard about and the burro was tied up outside braying away. It wasn't too long after we got there and met the theater heads that the truck arrived with our trunks. I got my first shot at a third world load in. Zowie! Somehow wheels and handles seem so obvious to me. I wonder what they thought those things were put on there



for? They also didn't seem to have a clue as to what the big red arrows on the side pointing up were for. While Fred dealt with the wonders of the third world theater, I was happy to be left alone with the sound system and getting things organized. I then oversaw the cleaning of the place after which I was told the place had already been cleaned. I redefined the term for them. As the day went on we found a few unique problems we tried to deal with.

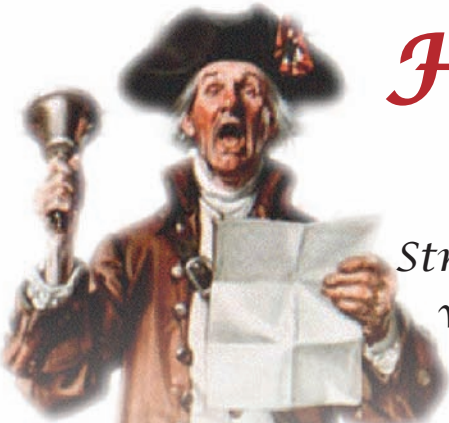
When we came into the theater there were a lot of posters up with Yasser Arafat's likeness on them and an incredibly loud backdrop in blacks, yellows, oranges, etc. A very third world propaganda piece was hanging there. We pulled the posters down but when we got ready to change the backdrop (all painted over the Yemeni flag) we were stopped and told we'd have to perform in front of it!! As the day progressed the decision was referred up and up until it reached the mucky muck's mucky muck in the form of the Minister of Information who oversees all theater activity. His answer, "It stays! If it was good enough for the PLO last week, it's good enough for you this week!" What the hell, it's only a backdrop. No need to make any more of international incident out of it than we had already.

Finally it was all set and show time was around the corner. We were going through our pre-show routine, make-up, warm-up, first costume etc., when we get a call from the Minister of Information. He asked what time the show was. We told him it was ready to go now.

We were made to understand it would start after he got there so we waited, and waited, and waited. Ultimately, everything went very well with no surprises except the extremes took their toll. Being at 7500 ft., hot, and humid can even make singing and dancing quite hard. The whole thing was very well received and seemed to be enjoyed by one and all.

I helped Fred with the strike along with Steve Belcher, after which we high-tailed it to the ambassador's digs for a reception, champagne, and a tour of his pad. As the saying goes, it's nice to be the king, and in Yemen it ain't bad being the ambassador.





Hear ye, Hear ye!

Straggling **AMAN** musicians
who have not taken up
arms...in years!

**IT IS TIME TO GET OFF THE FENCE,
POLISH UP YOUR OLD FAVORITE AXE
AND JOIN IN THE FRAY.**

We would love to have you join with the roving bands of your musician comrades that are scheduled to play at the reunion. Our union, or reunion of friendship, needs your musical skills in winning over the crowds in attendance, no matter how rusty or dusty you may perceive your present condition.

You are hereby notified of need of your individual participation and right to do so!

This will be a wonderful celebration of the many years of music and dance that we have all been involved in through AMAN in different capacities, from the early years to the last years of AMAN's time span. We celebrate our friendships, our connection, our passion of these beautiful styles of music and our love of music and dance.

John Zeretzke, Ian Price and Trudy Israel have worked together to coordinate and plan programming for the two stages at the reunion—the Ballroom stage and Kafana stage. They have been planning with the alumni musicians in such a way as to try to

make this an enjoyable and memorable experience for everyone attending, dancers and listeners alike.

There will be musical sets and ensembles playing Bulgarian, Macedonian, Tamburitza, Greek, Armenian, Arabic, Turkish, Çalgija, Hungarian, Romanian, Appalachian and Americana musical styles. **NAMA** and **Pitu Guli** will be making reunion appearances.

Musicians interested in playing can contact John Zeretzke to get involved and he can put you in touch with the leaders of each set.

We also have an AMAN DROPBOX for files of mp3s and sheet music PDF files that the variety of ensembles will be performing. John will send you a link, if you so desire. He can be reached at: zworldmusic@yahoo.com or call 805-798-2480.

If you have any wishes or concerns, we are happy to try to help out in any way we can.

Aloha!

*John Zeretzke,
Trudy Israel & Ian Price*

Attention **AMAN** Shoppers Silent Auction Tops 50!

We have **OVER 50** amazing items for our silent auction—costume pieces, memorabilia, entertainment packages and tickets. Get ready to shop!!!

We are still accepting Silent Auction Items. All donations are **tax deductible**, and the auction proceeds will benefit Mendocino Folklore Camp's youth scholarship program. We are literally paying-it-forward to the next generation of folk dance and music enthusiast.

Please label items with donor's name, a title or description, estimated value, and a suggested opening bid. We'd love to know in advance what item(s) you might bring. Please contact Patti and Bev via email at: auctiondonations@aman50

Thank you for your creativity and generosity!

OMG... WHAT DO I WEAR to the **AMAN 50** Reunion?

For Daytime—

Comfortable shoes, activewear, dancewear. We are anticipating action-packed days.

For Friday Night—

"Fiesta de las Palmeras" (*Feast of the Palms*) is the dinner theme; so bright colors, Mexican prints, tropical shirts & dresses... Fun Dance Party Attire. Expect to be on your feet!

THE WEATHER: Palm Springs is blessing us with warm sunny days (sunscreen & swimsuits) and cool desert nights (light wraps or jackets) over our event weekend.

- Thu Oct 10: Sunny and warm 93° -Lo 61°
- Fri Oct 11: Sunshine and warm 92° -Lo 62°

- Sat Oct 12: Warm with sunshine 91° -Lo 63°
- Sun Oct 13: Mostly sunny 88° -Lo 63°

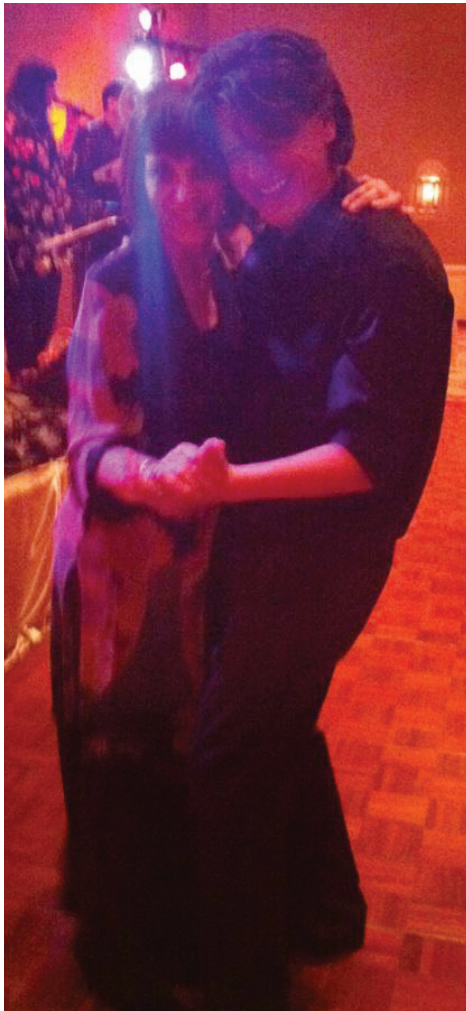
For Saturday Night—

The Banquet is Ethnic Finery & Dressy Cocktail Attire, *Jackets/Ties would be nice but Not Required*. *However...if you can part with them for a few hours, leave the jeans in your suitcase.

SPAWNMANIA —*There's No Stopping the Spawn*

Benjamin Edelberg

(Spawn of AMAN's Bonita "Bonnie" and Sherwin "Bob" Edelberg)



Interviewed by intrepid reporter Susie North

Susie: So Ben, your mom told me you had an interesting "second generation" experience with AMAN friends in Croatia!

Ben: Yeah, Nenad Tunkovic, whose parents Mira and Ljubo had been in LADO, contacted me to do a video-effects animation piece for a Croatian Television documentary about the creation of a super-highway in Croatia.

Susie: Out of the blue?

Ben: Yeah, kind of. I had worked on the *Matrix* films. So through the connection between our parents, he knew I had experience in visual effects. I wrote a script, they went for it, and I went out to Zagreb and ended up directing a segment of the documentary for Radio Hrvatska, HRT.

Susie: Wow!

Ben: There was a lot of coverage—a big press conference,

and a photo shoot for a Croatian Star Magazine at the Hotel Dubrovnik in Zagreb. They asked me questions about my connection to Croatia. I explained that I was raised by people who lived on the Starship Enterprise—a hippie, international community that believed in one international (intergalactic) world. I told them that I had grown up very aware and appreciative of Yugoslavia and Croatia—and that I was glad to be participating and continuing that ethos.

Susie: What was the reaction?

Ben: I was a "celebrity for a day" in Zagreb. People walked up and talked to me in cafes because they recognized me from the media. When I got on the plane to leave Zagreb, a flight attendant asked me, "Are you finishing up your work here, Mr. Edelberg?" It was a crazy-fun experience! >>>

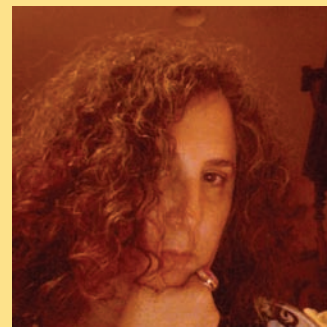
SPAWN PARENTS' ADDENDUM FROM BONITA EDELBERG:

So, maybe it was a little like being on a Starship (is that why I was called "stara"?). Even if the places we went were not places where no one had gone before, AMAN was/is a gift that keeps on giving in many ways. Just to recount one: On our first trip to then Yugoslavia, we were given city tours of Zagreb by Ljubo who was a city planner, Miša Šokčić, who loved the history and architecture of the city and Ivo Andrianich who was a Professor of Economics, I think, and manager of the Zagreb Airport. What a way to see the city for the first time! The wives were, of course, all on tour with LADO.

Not to leave out our other spawn, Shoshana seemed to inherit her grandfather's musical ability and did a stint in the Tamburitza orchestra of AVAZ after her debut as a flower girl in AMAN's Podravina Wedding.

Music is still of great importance in her life and she actually sings very well. She gets that from me, right? Who is that I hear laughing?

Because of Tony and being in AMAN, we have been treated like



visiting royalty on all our trips to Zagreb and our personal lives have been enriched beyond all expectations in so many other ways. Glad to have this opportunity to say a public THANK YOU.

Looking forward to celebrating the 50th anniversary of the birth of this amazing company with all of you!

>>> Two notes from the actual spawn of our intrepid reporter:

Sarah Meadow Walsh

(Spawn of AMAN's Susie North and Robin Meadow)



It is not an exaggeration to say that without AMAN, I would not exist. And having been brought into the world by AMAN-ites, the rhythms and music of Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and the mountainous regions of the United States are as familiar to me as breathing, and as comforting as snuggling up in a homemade quilt with hot cocoa on a rainy day. Bulgarian, Croatian, Russian and Greek folk songs were my lullabies, courtesy of the Nevenka rehearsals in my living room, and 11/16 time seemed to make more sense to me than 4/4. Watching the women “fly” so effortlessly during the Small Group Appalachian Suite made me believe in magic.

I remember being so proud, when a group of AMAN dancers and singers came to perform at my elementary school, that *I knew them*. It was not without a bit of insider smugness that I went up to chat with them after the show. Because as foreign

and strange as some of these songs and dances appeared to my classmates, to me they were exciting and rich and special, and I felt a kind of ownership, almost like I was opening up and sharing a part of my life with my peers.

With such a musical upbringing, it's not surprising that singing and dancing became integral to my life. As it turns out, I ended up focusing more on my singing, but the dance training has served me well in musical theater. And even though I couldn't fulfill my dream of being the first “Nevenka brat” to join the group, I did get to sing with Divi Zheni in Boston under the direction of the inimitable Tatiana Sarbinska, and share a very special trip to Bulgaria with my mom when our two groups, Divi Zheni and Nevenka traveled there for the Koprivshitsa festival in 2010. All in all, I know that I have AMAN to thank for introducing me to the fact that music and performing can bring people together, creating instant communities and even lifelong friends.



David Meadow

(Spawn of AMAN's Susie North and Robin Meadow)

AMAN and its various spin-off groups, together, probably provided about half of the wildly diverse soundtrack of my childhood. I listened to the music, I went to the concerts, and I was even in the thick of the informal dances at gatherings that longtime members and veterans would put together. I loved being plucked from my seat on the grass of a university quad or a rickety old bench in a community hall and thrown headlong into a Balkan village, the scalding Moroccan desert, or, occasionally, the Appalachian mountains.

I had a priceless moment a few years ago when the venerable LADO ensemble toured through New York. Because my parents had sung/played/danced so much of the eastern European repertoire during my formative years, I heartily joined in on one of the nonsense-syllable choruses, to the



delight of my hundred 50-and-older Croatian neighbors in the balcony.

Perhaps my profoundest direct experience with AMAN was in second grade, when they did an educational residency at my school, and taught my whole class a repetitive but very dignified Romanian winter dance, as well as the raucous all-time Mexican classic, *Los Machetes*.

Not only did my interest in Mariachi music start right around that time, but it was generally a real turning point in my development as a musician, as I began to collect and probe the rich, dense soil of different idioms and genres from around the world. Thank you, AMAN!

LADARKE Refresher

If you have not memorized the event schedule yet for the reunion, here's your *Ladarke* wake-up call.

You absolutely want to be ready for Saturday night's Ladarke Sing-Along. To that end, we are having review workshops on Friday (for singers & musicians) and have posted downloadable words and sheet music for you on www.aman50.com

LADARKE

(Emil Cossetto)

I. Ladarke ido v selo

Mi nosimo zelen venčec,
Daj nam lado lepi lado!
Zelen venčecz šipkovine,
Daj nam lado lepi lado!

Jaboke tri zlatne na njem,
Prvo dajmo v polje naše,
Daj nam lado lepi lado!

Da nam žito gore hodi,
Sako zrno da se z množi,
Pet vaganov žita dalo,
Daj nam lado lepi lado!

Da nam selo bo veselo,
Sakoj hiži nevestica,
Sakom momku devojčica,
Daj nam lado lepi lado!

II. Pred starim majkama

Dobro jutro stare majke
vašem domu vašem rodu
//(Došle so vam Ivančice),
Ivančice devojčice
(dajte) dajte stare majke,
probudite kčerke svoje. //

Da doneso ladne vode
iza gore Ivanove
//(Da češja jo žute kose)
Ivi kose do pojasa
(dajte) dajte stare majke
mi moramo dalje iti. //

Donesite stare majke
kaj ste snočka obečale
//(Kruha sira i pogačo)
I pogačo bazlamačo
(dajte) dajte stare majke
kaj nimate to ne dajte. //

IV. Ivanjska igra pred starim majkama

Jel' vam se hoće Lado kaj nas bude više,
nam se hoće lado, nam se hoće kaj nas bude više.

Jel' vam se hoće Lado mladega junaka,
nam se hoće lado, nam se hoće mladega junaka.

Jel' vam se hoće junak ze lepim imenom,
nam se hoće junak, nam se hoće ze lepim imenom.

Zberite si junaka ze lepim imenom,
zberi moga lado, zberi moga ze lepim imenom.

Gledajte ga kak vam tanca kak vam tanca lepi Ivo.

* * *

Jel' vam se hoće Lado kaj nas bude više,
nam se hoće lado, nam se hoće kaj nas bude više.

Jel' vam se hoće Lado i mladu devojku,
nam se hoće lado, nam se hoće i mladu devojku.

Jel' vam se hoće mlada ze lepim imenom,
nam se hoće mlada, nam se hoće ze lepim imenom.

Zberite si devojku ze lepim imenom,
zberi moju lado, zberi moju ze lepim imenom.

Gledajte jukak vam tanca kak vam tanca lepa Jana.