

# *Folk Dancing, Masks, and More*

by Jim Gold

Just this week – thanks to vaccines and following new CDC guidelines – our outdoor folk dance class took its opening step in support of normalcy and fun when, for the first time in a year, we took off our masks!

Fun and joy! Dancers buzzed with excitement; even the asphalt bubbled. To see lips and teeth, an actual full face, was a wonder: to recognize each other, witness real smiles practicing Syrtos, real frowns when missing a *kolo* step, concern when a *kopanitsa* instruction was misunderstood, or real happiness when moving to the right (or left). Watching, dancing, and experiencing our close-to-normal folk dancing was joy incarnate for me, and (if I interpreted the facial expressions around me correctly) for all of us. Re-entry after over a year of viral siege often feels strange, weird, difficult. But it is truly worth it!

Since we are all following the science, who better to cite than the world-famous Hungarian hypno-dance therapist, Dr. Zoltan Fok-Dansz: "Folk dance promotes fun cell growth especially during maskless dancing, creating high Fun Quotient (FQ), releasing endorphins of joy, lowering cholesterol, and bringing happiness and longevity."

To help remember and return to our old traditions, the doctor also recommends smiling, deep breathing, and reading the latest CDC (Čoček and Drmeš Conference) liberation guidelines.

I heartily recommend maskless dancing to all outdoor folk-dance groups. I'd call it the new normal, which is, of course, nothing more than the old normal, once merely called normal.

Jim Gold,  
Social Distance Director

Footnote: According to esoteric folk dance research, masked dancing is still being practiced in Damascus, Maskedonia, Mascow, Maskico, and even New Maskico.

