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### Contra dancing coming to UM

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**NEWS RELEASE**

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Oct. 29, 2009

**Contact:** Vicki Watson, event organizer and UM environmental studies professor, 406-243-5153, [vicki.watson@umontana.edu](mailto:vicki.watson@umontana.edu).

**CONTRA DANCING COMING TO UM**

**MISSOULA –**

The University of Montana student chapter of the Missoula Folklore Society will host its annual Town & Gown Dance from 8 to 11 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 7, in the University Center Ballroom. The event is free and open to the public, but donations will be accepted to help cover expenses.

The dance will include a variety of traditional American folk dances, but will focus on contra, a form of old English country dancing that traveled through France (where it came to be called contra) and then to the American colonies, where New Englanders modified it to fit into the long thin floor spaces of barns. Two long lines of folks dance a series of simple figures, continually moving along the line until each person has danced with everyone there.

“The dance is good exercise and easy to learn,” student chapter member Laura Lundquist said.

A beginners’ workshop will be held at 7:30 p.m. before the main dance begins, but all dances are taught and called throughout the evening. Out of the Wood, a band that specializes in old-time fiddle tunes, jigs and reels, will provide live music. Dress is casual and eclectic.

The Missoula Folklore Society sponsors two contra dances each month on the first and third Saturdays. The events usually are at the Union Hall, located at 208 E. Main St. in Missoula.

But every November, the UM student chapter holds its Town & Gown Dance to introduce the campus and local community to contra.

For more information, call faculty advisor Vicki Watson at 406-243-5153, e-mail [vicki.watson@umontana.edu](mailto:vicki.watson@umontana.edu) or visit <http://www.montanafolk.org>.

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