

WINNING WAYS

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A Collection of Success Reports



CALLERLAB

The International Association
of Square Dance Callers

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INTRODUCTION

The CALLERLAB Board of Governors and the New Initiatives Committee have implemented a plan whereby the New Initiatives Committee collects “Winning Ways” success reports from the square dance activity. These reports come from clubs, associations, dancers, callers, and others. The New Initiatives Committee would like to hear your recruiting success reports, no matter how great or small. The purpose is twofold:

- 1) To share successful ideas that other callers, clubs, and federations can adopt and/or adapt to assist in their recruiting.
- 2) To recognize clubs, associations, and federations which have been successful and are growing. This is NOT a contest. Everyone is a winner. As more dancers are recruited, we will all have more people to call to and dance with.

We have found that a positive attitude is very helpful in our efforts to recruit new dancers. Some time ago a major metropolitan newspaper, reporting on a “fair demo,” said the dancers “tried to make it look like fun” and in an interview one dancer talked about how much time it took to learn and all the steps they had to learn, but now it was fun. If you are uncertain how to approach people and answer questions, Mike Seastrom has some positive ideas in the September 2002 issue of *American Square Dance Magazine* in the CALLERLAB Viewpoints article.

Now, tell us about your recruiting ideas which have worked for you. How many new dancers have you gained? Do you use multi-cycle programs? What has contributed to their success? Does your club offer free nights, free lesson giveaways, recognition to club members for their recruiting efforts? Do they use flyers, business cards? Do they use newspaper or radio advertising? There are many clubs, callers, and federations that are having great success. Do you have any other information you believe to would be helpful to others? Include your name and/or club with an address, phone number, and an e-mail address for additional follow-up.

In past years, a “Promo Pac” with success reports and recruiting ideas has been available. The Marketing Committee is looking at ways to continue this project and expand on ways of making it available.

You may mail these reports to the CALLERLAB Home Office, 200 SW 30th St., Suite 104, Topeka, KS, 66611 or e-mail CALLERLAB@aol.com. Your "WINNING WAYS" success reports will be distributed and printed in *DIRECTION* and other media including the Internet.

**News From
Northern California
By 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 six weeks, and we invite all three of the local clubs. These have turned into a regular affair. It has become traditional that everyone (even some of the ladies) dresses down a little (more jeans) and warmer (because 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 five or six squares). This is a very old-fashioned thing: no entry fee; no minimum dance level; no club membership required; just bring a snack 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.

News From
THE VALLEY TRAILERS SQUARE DANCE CLUB
By John Nash
Northridge, California
May 14, 2002

During the early 1990s, the Valley Trailers Square Dance Club of Northridge, California had lost much of its membership from earlier years. The club had also fallen on bad times financially. The then Board of Directors decided that something new should be tried in order to secure the club's future.

It was decided to try the Multi-Cycle new dancer program to see if this would bring in more revenue and class members. The President approached caller, Vern Weese, who was familiar with the program, to teach the class and in September of 1994, the Multi-Cycle program was started using a 12 + 12 system through the Plus program. For the first couple of years, very little improvement was seen in membership, although starting classes four times each year did increase the overall number of new dancers. In December of 1995, Vern left the area and Mike Seastrom took over as the class instructor. At about that same time, the Multi-Cycle program started becoming profitable. However, the level of the dancers graduating Plus after only 24 weeks was not acceptable.

In May of 1996, the program was changed to a 17 + 17 program. Three classes are started each year, always on the second Tuesday of January, May, and September. Graduations are held on the first Tuesday of those months. The first 17 weeks the students attend Phase I from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. and learn the calls in the Basic program and about half of the Mainstream program. At the end of the 17 weeks, those students (if they are ready) move to the 8:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. time slot and enter Phase II, which consists of the remainder of the Mainstream calls and all of the Plus program. On the same evening that the above transition is made, a new Phase I class starts at 7:00 p.m. This means that there are two classes simultaneously during the year—one in Phase I and the other in Phase II. When the program started in 1994, the club had just fewer than 150 members. The current membership is just under 300 members. Financially, the club is now very sound.

The success of this program can be primarily attributed to the club members. They come 51 weeks a year to "angel" the new dancers. The classes sometimes must be cut back a week or two when Tuesday falls on a major holiday, such as Christmas or New Year's Day. On that 52nd Tuesday, the class may just go dark or may have a fun dance night, no instruction. Each of the three graduation nights during the year are also a fun night with alternating tips at the Phase I level and plus level. That night also has special events such as contra and country western dances, in addition to the graduation exercise.

The benefits of the Multi-Cycle program are many. Probably the most important is the fact that a new program for each phase is started three times each year. If you have a new dancer who cannot keep up with the class, they can be asked to drop out then start over with the new class; not "next September" but in just a few weeks. If a new dancer has not fully grasped the Phase I calls after 17 weeks, they are asked to repeat Phase I. Likewise, if a dancer upon completing Phase II is not ready to attend plus dances, they are asked to repeat Phase II. It is surprising how many dancers voluntarily choose to repeat the phases.

Although many types of recruitment have been tried throughout the years, word of mouth is still the most effective. By starting three classes each year, you have three new groups of dancers to recruit for your next class. You are now tapping a new source of potential dancers. We have also obtained some students through the radio advertising program conducted by *Open Squares Magazine*, (1-800-fun4all).

There is also a financial benefit. You have two classes attending and paying simultaneously 12 months each year. In the case of the Valley Trailers, we also have a “Workshop” category of dancers. These are recent graduates or dancers from other local clubs who want more floor time. They pay the same as students and will not be removed from a square to make room for a student unless absolutely necessary. The club’s “angels” dance free and are removed for students.

Since the inception of the Multi-Cycle program in September of 1994, the Valley Trailers have started 24 new classes and graduated 23 classes, one still in progress as of May 2002. A total of 832 new dancers have attended at least 1 class (a high of 77 and a low of 13) and have actually graduated 315 new dancers (a high of 34 and a low of 5).

To bring the students into club dances as early as possible, the club dances on the third Saturday of each month and has alternating tips; Mainstream and Plus. When a student goes into Phase II, they are invited to attend the club dances and dance every other tip. Mike Seastrom contacts the guest callers each month to let them know which calls in the Mainstream program he has taught the Phase II dancers. This agenda has been particularly beneficial, as it allows the new dancers to feel as if they are now part of the “square dance world” and encourages them to continue after graduation. For more information, please e-mail: info@valley-trailers.org

**News from
THE 49'ers SQUARE DANCE CLUB
South Milwaukee, WI
January 1, 2003**

Hard work and perseverance has paid off for the 49'ers Square Dance Club of South Milwaukee, Wisconsin. There are 24 new dancers in their 2002-03 class. Their promotional efforts started in 1999 after not having any new dancers in 1997 or 1998.

Their promotional efforts were as follows:

- 1) Events calendar of the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* (Circulation 250,000+). The information was submitted every week so it would run for 5 weeks.
- 2) Events calendar in 23 local newspapers owned by the *Journal Sentinel*. The calendar covers the 7 southern suburbs of Milwaukee. This was submitted every week so it would run for 5 weeks.
- 3) On-line calendars: Listed on Milwaukee.com and Wisconsin.com for five weeks.
- 4) The information submitted was: Beginner Square Dance Lessons; 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. every Thursday starting September 12; Grobschmidt Center, 2424 15th Ave., South Milwaukee. Couples and singles of all ages welcome. First lesson free, \$3.00 for each following. Sponsored by the 49ers Square Dance Club. For information, please call (414) xxx-xxxx or (414) xxx-xxxx.
- 5) Flyers (with an envelope of free passes) were posted in all the City Halls, public libraries, several Senior Centers and community Centers of surrounding communities. Flyers were also posted in businesses with public bulletin boards.
- 6) Demonstration at the Racine County Fair. Flyers were passed out.
- 7) McDonalds Place Mats. There are nine McDonalds Restaurants in the area that are locally owned. They have a free service listing local activities. Information was listed on the August and September place mats. Information had to be submitted at least six weeks in advance.
- 8) Flyers were distributed door to door on two streets.
- 9) New graduates and current members were encouraged to invite friends and co-workers. Approximately 175 flyers and 200 free passes were distributed.

The 49ers Square Dance Club starts their new dancer program the second week of September and runs through early April, with time off during holidays. Mainstream in the destination program. The club has 85 members.

In January 2003, the club had not surveyed the new dancers to learn where they found out about their new dancer session. In previous years, no one activity was prominent.

Congratulations to Rick and Cheryl Wilke, club presidents, and Janet Halfmann and Bernie VanDusen, new dancer class co-chairs, for their efforts.

Thanks to Bernie Coulthurst, editor of the *Club Leadership Journal*, for the initial contact for this Winning Ways Success Story!

**News From
THE SAGE SWINGERS
Brunswick, ME
January 2, 2003**

In the various square dance magazines and websites you can read how square dance clubs and national organizations have plans for advertising square dancing, for “improving” our public image, for altering the dance program, and for growing memberships. For the SAGE Swingers, the process began with a change in philosophy.

What are the club’s goals for its dancers? The club thinks this can determine how you go about gaining and keeping new members. The club’s goals today are different from what they might have been five and ten years ago. For example, at SAGE Swingers some of our goals are:

- 1) To help the club grow by getting more new members.
- 2) To make sure people are having a good time learning to dance.
- 3) Ensure that new members return.

Here are some of the “old” goals the club no longer strives for.

- 1) The club does not feel people need to graduate from a Mainstream program by a certain date.
- 2) Classes do not have to start in September only.
- 3) Learning to dance is not a race to see how quickly you can get to Plus or A-1.
- 4) The Club tends to downplay classic square dance clothes and make sure people know that it’s optional.

These ideas express themselves many ways in how the club recruits and how new dancers are treated. The club does start a class in September, but a class also starts in January.

With the help of club caller, Bill Fulton and his wife, Norma, SAGE Swingers try to make dancing as low key and fun as possible. They have recognized that in order to keep new dancers interested, there must be many opportunities for them to dance; and that means more Mainstream dances. SAGE Swingers has been scheduling more and more Mainstream dances and we search for Mainstream dances on the schedule for our club to support. If you want to get and keep new dancers, Mainstream is the place to be.

The SAGE Swingers tried all the methods described in a handout they prepared to recruit for the club. No single one of the methods brought in mobs of people but, taken together, they have helped them build classes of two and three squares and graduate 39 dancers over two years. The fall class of 2002 has witnessed a continuation of the club’s success with 28 additional dancers participating in the first two free workshops and 18 remaining through October. The additional regular support of club members has helped us dance with 5 to 8 squares at every workshop this year.

The handout mentioned above describes the methods The SAGE Swingers use for the operation of their club. These methods have worked for them. These handouts are available from the CALLERLAB Foundation (via electronic mail as a PDF file or via regular mail as a paper copy) to anyone who requests them. Please contact the Foundation by phone at: (785) 783-3665 or

e-mail at: CALLERLAB@aol.com for more information. A small donation of \$5.00 would be appreciated to help defer postage and handling costs.

News From
THE FLUSHING ROADRUNNERS
Flushing, MI
February 27, 2003

The Roadrunners of Flushing, Michigan have partnered with Lifesteps to help recruit new dancers. Lifesteps is an organization providing health related classes and activities for GM employees and retirees that worked in the Flint, Michigan area. It is a negotiated benefit between GM and the local unions. Lifesteps pays for their members that attend the lessons. Wayne Pelmear, the caller/teacher for the Roadrunners, sites two advantages for working with Lifesteps. The first is the people who see the information are looking for health and exercise classes. The second is that the people do not look at them as being free but something they earned by working at GM. Lifesteps lists the new dancer schedule in their quarterly calendar and flyers are put in the union halls. They also get new dancers from demos and advertising, but the majority comes from word of mouth.

A couple of years ago the Roadrunners started using a multi-cycle program and started teaching 3 sets of classes a year. All 3 classes are taught the same night for one hour each. The classes run from 10 to 15 weeks and are divided between Basic, Mainstream and Plus. The dancers are encouraged not to move on to the next level until they feel confident where they are. Pelmear states they want everyone to enjoy dancing and not think it is too hard.

Wayne states another thing about the way he runs his classes and dances is that the most important thing for anyone who walks through the door is for them to laugh, have fun, and enjoy themselves. He teaches the CALLERLAB definitions but does not discourage the extras some dancers put in. Pelmear states; "I think that some of us have become more concerned that the dancers do it the proper (our) way than that the dancers have FUN. I think that this may be the main problem with square dancing today, people are not having enough FUN."

**News From
THE GNAT BOXERS
Wooster, OH
February 27, 2003**

The Gnat Boxers of Wooster, Ohio have 22 members in their new dancer group for the 2002–2003 dance year. They have 4 singles, 2 men and 2 women, and 9 couples that range in age from their late 30s to early 40s. The destination level is Plus with all the calls taught in one continuous season starting in September to mid April.

This past year they had a story in the local paper with a picture of two couples with contact names listed. The club also has a float they use in area parades which gets good audience reaction. The club also does demo's for local activities and passes out flyers, with word of mouth still the best advertisement.

“Angel” participation is good at their new dancer sessions. Several attend the new dancer group regularly where they are most comfortable, but very seldom attend club dances. All dancers pay \$3.00 per session for their new dancer group with credits given to” angels” who attend the regular club dances.

A former club officer stated one of the club's weaknesses is the support and encouragement of the new dancers to attend other new dancer dances sponsored by nearby clubs and the area Federation.

**News From
DALLAS/FT. WORTH, TX
By Jim and Ann Short
Growth Committee Chairman
March 13, 2003**

In May 2002, Jim and Ann asked to chair a “Growth Committee” for the North Texas Square and Round Dance Association. The primary direction was to try to figure out a way to turn around the declining membership in the Association. They talked with callers and dancers from all over. They asked what had worked in other parts of the Country. They also asked what hadn’t worked. They asked for ideas that might work. They “stole” ideas from everyone they could find. Their conclusion was that there were two basic problems: recruiting and lesson format.

Most recruiting had been done by advertising using flyers and placing advertisements or notices in periodicals. Often a club would put on a square dance demonstration in a mall or at a fair. Occasionally someone would ask a friend to take lessons. Whatever they had been doing hasn’t worked very well. In the past 20 years the number of square dancers has decreased by about two-thirds.

One of the clubs in their area tried recruiting dancers one-on-one, face to face. It worked and it worked. The conclusion was that square dancers, like eagles, don’t flock; you have to find them one at a time. With this in mind they began to ask clubs if they could meet with them and talk about recruiting new dancers. They did not talk about students—they talked about new dancers. They think the new people need to perceive themselves as dancers from the very beginning.

The plan called for the club to start about seven months before lessons are scheduled to be held. They start by appointing a lesson coordinator and setting up a database of prospective new dancers. Two months before the lessons start, the club sends a letter to everyone in the database, introducing the club, describing the non-square dancing activities of the club and suggesting to the prospects that getting to know the club would be fun.

Two months before lessons start, the club sends an invitation to a “party night.” A party night takes on the personality of the club and can be a chili supper or salad supper or whatever. It is at this time that the prospects meet club members. The purpose of the party night is to “sell” the club, not square dancing. A month before the party night, the recruiter who made the first contact calls to confirm the prospect’s attendance at the party. Two weeks before the party the club sends another follow-up invitation. Three days before the party the recruiter calls and offers a ride to the party.

At the party, the prospects are seated with a club member who is selected because they are upbeat and positive about the club and square dancing. Ideally, there are three prospective couples and one club member couple at each table—just the right number for a square. This provides for the newcomers to begin to make new friends. After eating and conversation, the caller gets an experienced square up to demonstrate square dancing. Then he gets the new dancers up and teaches them the beginning moves. In 15 minutes they are having fun and square dancing. Sign them up for lessons before they leave.

They found that another of the problems with the way they had been recruiting was getting people to commit to taking lessons for 18 to 20 weeks. To overcome this objection we decided to offer lessons on 3 consecutive Saturdays.

The sessions began at 9:30 in the morning and ended at 3:30 in the afternoon. Lunch and refreshments were provided all day long. They had a different caller each Saturday and they used the CALLERLAB dance program teaching list. They determined that the callers could teach 55 to 60 Mainstream calls in the 3 Saturdays. They also found that, contrary to every thing they had been told, it does work, and the new dancers can go for 6 hours. A great majority of new dancers in the Saturday lessons went to new dancer dances after the second Saturday. To reinforce the lessons, clubs and callers were asked to hold workshops before their dances.

Clubs were asked to hold New Dancer Dances with calls limited to the first 40 CALLERLAB Mainstream calls with a workshop before the dance and no more than 1 round between tips. The first club to hold a New Dancer Dance in October 2002 had 8 squares and 12 new dancers. In February 2003, a New Dancer Dance had 27 squares and 44 new dancers. The New Dancer Dances focused completely on the new dancers dancing every tip; they are the guests of honor. They should be brought to these dances by the club by their recruiter. If new dancers are sent to New Dancer Dances by themselves, it is a bit like sending your girlfriend to the prom alone; she will probably go home with someone besides you. What does this mean? It means cater to your new dancers, take them to dances because if you don't they are not being stolen, you are giving them to someone who is paying attention to them.

We give the New Dancers a "New Dancer" dangle so they can be identified and invited into squares by experienced dancers. When a New Dancer dangle is spotted, the dancers are asked to introduce themselves and ask if they are having a good time. The experienced dancers are also asked to tell the new dancers they are glad to have them at the dance and ask them to join their square. This helps reinforce the fun and feeling of acceptance for the new dancers. All of these things have helped the clubs to become more energized by the great attendance of new dancers; it is a win-win situation. These new dancers are our future in square dancing.

**News From
Hilton, NY
YOUTH GROUP DANCING
By Mike Callahan
March 13, 2003**

Mike has been working with a teen group for the past year or so. It started out as a "family dance group" but has evolved into a "young, middle-aged teen group". They are lucky to get about two squares. The organizing couple has been frustrated by the fact that the church hall where we dance at is not available regularly and our group sometimes is not allowed to use the hall at the last minute. Mike suggested that they contact the local Co-operative Extension Office (4-H) to see if they would be interested in sponsoring the teens as a part of 4-H. Not only was the Co-operative Extension Office hugely interested, they have offered to give the group a hall every Friday night at no charge! It will also be publicized in the 4-H catalogue as a part of their many programs for youth. But this is not the end of the story.

In March 2003, one of the local callers had an ongoing square dance beginners' class. In this class are 4 or 5 "home schooled" youth. Our teen group invited them to come over and bring a friend. They brought 10 other youth last night. Six of them were from a family of 13 kids who are all home schooled!

This situation resulted in two "winning ways" reports:

1. The Co-operative Extension Program in our area is crying for new ideas and ways to attract youth to their programs. Perhaps those of us who are trying to work with youth square dance programs should look into this.

The "home school" youth market is huge with thousands of kids in this area alone. These are the kids that would be interested in square dancing, as they don't have to deal with peer pressure in their public schools. As far as I know, this market is "untapped" as far as youth square dancing is concerned, and these are the type of kids who might enjoy this sort of thing.

News From
THE AL E MO SQUARES
Brooklyn, NY
By Vincent Nunziato, Club President
March 23, 2003

The AL e MO Squares, 150 members strong, will celebrate their 25th Anniversary in May 2003. They are holding an Anniversary Dance and club members have personally contacted several local politicians to be their guests.

They run a 10 + 10 program with 27 new dancers this year. They alternate tips during the evening with those in the first group serving as “angels” for the newest dancers. They graduate their new dancers at Mainstream. Their new dancer sessions run from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., September through April, with a Plus workshop from 9:00 – 10:00 p.m. There is no set time for the Plus graduation. AL e MOs have good member participation with the new dancer sessions normally exceeding 8 squares. They charge \$4.00 per session and the “angels” pay. A good hospitality table is an attractive addition on workshop nights.

Their recruiting efforts include an open house barn dance twice a year, paid advertising, distribution of flyers in people oriented areas, demos at local and civic organizations, and word of mouth.

Approximately 15% of the new dancers are couples. Some of the single women are urged to learn the leader’s part, so they can participate more actively. The club makes an effort to see that all the other singles have the opportunity to dance.

The club has a “Sunshine Committee” that notes anniversaries, birthdays and other special occasions. They also contact those who have been absent and encourage their return. They publish a monthly newsletter that goes to all members and area square dance organizations. To aid in dancer retention, their new dancers are encouraged to participate in their regular club dances. The club also hosts an occasional bus trip, club luncheon, and club visitation with their new dancers to other area clubs. The club also sponsors weekend dance activities with their club caller.

While attending the Canadian Square Dance Convention, a club song was written using “I’ve Been Working On The Railroad”. This was a rewarding experience and has brought the club closer together.

News From
THE KITTYHAWK SQUARES
Kettering, OH
By Marvin Stibich
March 23, 2003

The Kittyhawk Squares is a social club that square dances and not a square dance club that socializes. We have an excellent home dance location—The Lathrem Senior Center of the Kettering Recreational Center. They help recruit and publicize our events in their bi-monthly newsletter.

Our home dances are the 1st, 3rd and 5th Friday of each month. Our club caller, Jason Raleigh, does eight to ten of the dances and our emeritus club caller, Sam Dunn, does about six. The remaining dates are filled by excellent area callers spiced by a couple of National callers. We have line dancing between tips. These are taught by Jeff and Diane Hissong, professional instructors. Caller cost is a secondary consideration.

We are informal. We want people to attend. We don't worry much about dress. We do club visitations six to eight times a month. Square dance attire is optional, we just want people there.

We sponsor several special dances a year, including a charity event that raised \$3700.00 last year. We publish a bi-monthly 8+ page newsletter that is distributed free to all members and it is posted on our website. Our website is http://members.tripod.com/kittyhawk_squares/.

Our club officers and trustees are elected for 1-2 years. This avoids leadership entrenchment and formation of cliques. We have 20 or more people involved in a home dance. Those that work a dance get in free as do the elected officers and trustees.

Our new dancer classes are 30 weeks long and are taught by our club caller. "Angels" dance free at our new dancer classes. We are very active – about 30 home dances, 80 raids and 30 new dancer sessions. We give a free home dance pass to each member every time they attend 5 raids. This encourages member participation.

**News From
THE SQUARE BENDERS
Milwaukee, WI
By Ruth Witt
April 24, 2003**

The Square Benders are currently one of the larger clubs in the Milwaukee, WI area with 22 couples and 13 singles. Their 2002-2003 new dancer group has 5 couples and 5 singles. This group of new dancers came from several sources. The club runs an ad in the local paper, beginning in June, with a number to contact for more information. The names of those who respond are recorded for later follow up. One couple invited members from their Bible study group and another invited people from their camping club. They lost some this past year due to health reasons, work schedule conflicts, and snow birds. Each year, approximately 35 invitation letters are mailed.

The prospective dancers are invited to a free evening of dance activities in August featuring line dances, circle dances and basic squares. The idea is to get them dancing and having fun immediately. At the activity, they are encouraged to join the club's new dancer session which begins in the near future.

The camaraderie of lessons that develops between the "angels" and the new dancers is very important. They usually have at least 15 "angels" helping each week. Every 6 weeks is a review and treat night. Beginning in February, the new dancers are invited to attend one club dance a month free and dance the first 3 tips using only the calls they know. They are then invited to stay for the rest of the dance to visit and enjoy refreshments.

Each month a new dancer newsletter is printed. It covers topics such as: U.S. square dance history; dance apparel and its history; etiquette and styling; the structure of square dancing in the state; and an introduction to other clubs in the area.

In December all new dancers in the area are invited to a "New Dancer Dance" which includes a chili supper. The Square Benders' new dancers are encouraged to attend other dances for new dancers that are sponsored by other callers. All new dancers are encouraged to return in the fall as "angels" and bring their friends.

The Square Benders is a Mainstream club welcoming both couples and singles. Some of the experienced women dancers learn the beau's part while they "angel". Last summer the club had casual attire with about half still choosing to wear regular square dance clothing. The club feels it is important to be warm, friendly and welcoming.

Eric Tangman is the club caller/ teacher.

News From
“THE MULTI-CYCLE SUCCESS STORY”
By Chris Pinkham
Hillsboro, NH
May 5, 2003

There is some good news for square dance clubs that want to grow. A solid solution is available to help any club willing to be smart and progressive. But the club must have people who are willing to make some fundamental changes in programming and attitudes. The Multi Cycle System offers two or more starts for new dancers each year. Clubs using this system reach more people more often. New dancers are tireless, enthusiastic recruiters and they tap into new networks of friends and associates not just once, but two or more times per year.

I want to tell about a success story using the Multi Cycle System with the addition of some enhancements. I must warn that this is not a quick fix. A solid effort is required initially. Changes in business procedures and a progressive attitude are a must. Club and caller must both give up the old way of thinking and be prepared for a new and interesting experience. It took two or three years for the plan to reach “critical mass” and become self-feeding in my club.

Recruitment is always necessary, but a group that recruits more than once a year has a distinct advantage. People who cannot start in September or who must drop out in mid-season can now join or come back in January or May or whenever the club decides to make new starts. Thus we can bring them into square dancing or get them started again before the enthusiasm fades and they find another activity.

Four years ago, I presented the Multi Cycle plan to three clubs that I was working for. Two of them hired another caller. One, the Riverside Squares of Danvers, Massachusetts, had bright, forward thinking people who gave me a raise and decided to put the plan to use. Riverside was then a healthy club with successful dances and road trips, but was beginning to feel the pinch at class and workshop night. They saw the writing on the wall. Something had to change because the old system was not working.

(As a side note, NECCA (New England Callers Council) used its annual clinic to host Multi Cycle proponents Mike and Gail Seastrom presented this concept to all who were interested. Only one other group, the Sage Swingers of Maine, took the bait and are now prospering.

Strong recruitment efforts and some new advertising efforts yielded a reasonably good group even the first year. For the next few months we prepared ourselves for our first January start and our new evening schedule. The first major change was to start calling new recruits “new dancers” to reduce the separation between club and class. Teaching was just a walk thru and lessons became sessions. Learning was disguised as fun. From the first night, we are all square dancers. Badges are given out immediately and inclusion became one of our greatest allies. Additionally, new dancer sessions were held open longer to give more people chances to join us.

Hard work and a lot of fun brought us another group of new dancers for our January start. We treated that as a second season. At least half of the new group was made up of friends of the September starters. Our second season also inaugurated our new schedule: 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. Phase I new dancers; 8:00 to 9:00 p.m. Phase II dancers; and 9:00 to 9:45 p.m. Plus dancers.

Phase II dancers picked up right where we had left off the previous week and were encouraged to be there for the Phase I sessions for review and support of the newest dancers. At this point we found ourselves dancing three to five sets on Wednesdays and enthusiasm was beginning to catch on.

Our first two seasons brought about new realizations and other changes. The Wednesday club night became more relaxed and entertaining. I knew, and the club soon realized, that with only one-hour teaching segments, we could not move people through Plus in one year. This allowed me to slow down the entire process. I could teach more slowly, keep the dancing fun, and move away from the previous rush/rush approach. In a Plus club, this was a tough nut for those traditional thinkers used to doing business in the same old way. Several of them suggested that I work in a few Plus calls to get new dancers up to speed. I refused and we moved on.

The first year yielded other changes. One was the “no graduation” concept. Since we no longer referred to Basic and Mainstream, “square dancing” became the program. Our September and January Phase I dancers do not finish Basic during their first season, nor do the September and January Phase II dancers finish Mainstream. Instead, we have turned the whole process into a continuum, learning a little each week and dancing as much as possible.

The Multi Cycle System also offers new dancers the opportunity to repeat a program quickly if they are having problem. As the caller/teacher, I can now recommend to a dancer or a couple that they repeat a phase rather than move on. No dancers are left behind this way. We keep more dancers, I have more control over dancing quality, and the result is stronger, happier dancers. Going on to Plus becomes a caller decision not a dancer decision unless they want to go elsewhere. Troubled dancers can relax knowing that they will not fall behind or out and that they can choose a comfort level based on ability or need. Several times I have used this discretion and I find that it works.

We have learned that many of our newest dancers have only one night per week to dance. Wednesday is their night to dance and they rarely dance on weekends even when we mention and encourage weekend dances. This once-a-week dancing seems to yield more family involvement. The group now includes children, teenagers, parents and grandparents. This has been absolutely wonderful and just plain fun.

In December of our second year, prior to our fourth season, we held a New Year’s party/pot luck and dance. New dancers from September and club members invited friends and family to join us for an Intro-to-Dance Night with tips for non-dancers and dancers alike. Potential January Phase I dancers got an opportunity for some fun. Some joined us a few weeks later and became square dancers.

Seasons three and four (the second year) we were dancing four to seven sets on Wednesday nights. The excitement was great and we were growing and happy. September of 2002 began our fifth season with more new dancers. Eighteen have stayed on for Phase II. January ’03 began season 6 with 20 more dancers for Phase I. We have 6 to 9 sets dancing at the 7 o’clock hour. There is noise, enthusiasm and dancing, and we could outgrow our hall in a couple of seasons.

In three years the Multi Cycle Program has taken hold. Riverside Squares is one of the healthiest clubs in North Eastern Massachusetts. We are achieving real continuous growth. The face of dancing is changing within the club and, despite the fact that our goal is still to

bring dancers to the Plus level, two more results have emerged: 1) Some dancers do not wish move on for a variety of reasons, and 2) The Plus training has been extended and now takes two or three years.

As a caller, this has been a rewarding, emotional and hardworking experience. I have more control over the process and we are no longer rushing dancers through the programs. I'm more relaxed because I am not trying to hurry dancers along to attend a convention or festival or even to become members of a Plus club. I'm working harder but having more fun. Enthusiasm is rampant. The Multi Cycle Plan is like a time machine turning back the clock to when we were all square dancers, not Plus, Advanced or Challenge dancers. We still present a familiar form of dance, but I am not preparing dancers to be siphoned off into upper level programs. The bottom line is that we are slowing things down without dumbing down the dance. We are making our activity more available, more often to more people. With a forecast of growth, not decline on the horizon, I'm one happy camper with a hall full of dancers.

**News From
THE TOWN HOWLERS SQUARE DANCE CLUB
Portsmouth, Rhode Island
May 15, 2003**

The Town Howlers have gained a lot of publicity for their club and square dancing through the use of their local cable TV company and the efforts of club member, Rick Williams.

All cable TV companies are required to provide FREE PUBLIC ACCESS to community members for training, studio, equipment and air time as a requirement of keeping their license to broadcast. However, a cable TV company may require training before they lend out portable equipment.

In Rhode Island, once you broadcast locally for three months, you can request broadcast time on an Interconnect channel that all the cable companies in the State are required to broadcast simultaneously: A: public, B: religious, C: government. The Town Howlers now broadcast their show "I WANNA' DANCE" statewide on Interconnect A and also on the local cable channels for nearby towns.

Club dances are recorded and then edited down to a half-hour fast-paced production. The show begins with an introduction from hosts Lynda and Rick Williams and moves into alternating square and round dance tips with elements of comedy and closure. Local benefactors are helping underwrite the shows with charitable contributions. They see it as a way for additional advertising with their name, location, and contact number listed in the closing credits. Be sure to check your local cable company regulations on this.

The Town Howlers dance the second and forth Fridays from 8:00 – 10:30 p.m. in Portsmouth, RI. They have 100 members and have recently started a new lesson group on Sunday evenings with 12 new dancers that were a result of the show. Not only has the show helped promote square dancing area wide, it has also increased their visitor attendance with dancers hoping to get on the TV show. According to Rick, this shows that dancers, cuers, and callers are not as shy as some may believe.

For additional information visit the Town Howlers website at www.townhowlers.com or Rick Williams at williams@wwpdesign.com.

**News From
THE RICHMOND DANCERS
By Barbara Kanter, Class Coordinator
Staten Island, New York
May 15, 2003**

The Richmond Dancers opened the club classes to singles in 2003. We got a number of single women but no men. They paired off, flipped coins and one became, "Leading Lady." The "Leading Ladies" danced with party store leis around their necks to easily identify them. At graduation they received a bar to put under their club badge. It says,, "Leading Lady" They have already attended a few dances in the NNJSDA area and the badges bring a welcoming smile.

**News From
THE AKRON AREA SQUARE
and
ROUND DANCE FEDERATION
Akron, Ohio
June 8, 2003**

In March 2003, the Akron Area Square and Round Dance Federation sponsored a Saturday afternoon Leadership Seminar for all member clubs and clubs from the neighboring Federations. All area callers and cuers were extended an invitation. There were 96 in attendance.

Larry Cole, Vice Chairman of CALLERLAB, was the keynote speaker. In his talk, Larry challenged everyone to have a dream for our clubs and ourselves and develop ideas to fulfill those dreams. He stressed we must have positive attitudes and search for ways to help our clubs grow. We must look to the future and make the necessary changes. Dance fees, caller/cuer fees, dress code, and program content are a few of the things he suggested need to be revised. Everyone needs to look at the big picture, think out side the box, and then take the necessary steps to make things better. Quoting Winston Churchill he said, "We must never give up."

Following his talk, the group was divided into small discussion groups. Each group was given the same two questions; 1) What can we do more of, better or different to recruit new dancers? 2) What can we do more of, better or different to retain our new and current dancers?

A summary of answers from question one is: Advertise: Laundromats, shopping center windows, church bulletins, Ys, car windows, beauty shops, libraries, cash register tapes; put flyers in grocery bags, websites; newspapers, community service announcements on radio and cable TV; fairs, school class reunions; demos at fairs, church picnics, service clubs, family reunions, and PTAs; Other: parades; adult education classes; offer free babysitting; use business cards; community fair booths.

Summary from question 2: Contact past members; send reminder notes of upcoming events; newsletter; take new dancers to dances; non-dance social events; greeters before and after dances; introduce new dancers to all members; theme dances; avoid cliques.

Other comments were: Use the Multi-cycle Program; be flexible on raids and retrievals as to number required; give out more than one banner to raiders; recruit "empty nesters" and newly weds; hold 50/50 near the end of the dance; be sure flyers have a location address and phone contact.

The Fred Cornells, the Gene Hendersons and the Tom Rudebocks were the Coordinating Committee. Judy LeGlise is the Federation president.

**News From
THE BELLES & BEAUS
By Betty Knight, Club President
Pomeroy, OH
July 6, 2003**

The Belles and Beaus of Pomeroy, Ohio had a new dancer group of seven couples and three singles in 2002. Their success in recruiting was attributed to two activities. Several weeks prior to the start of their new dancer session, a written invitation was sent to former dancers inviting them to a "Come Back to Square Dancing Party". They obtained the membership lists from three area clubs that had folded plus past membership lists of their own. They also placed ads in three local newspapers. The papers listed their club activities and new dancer group in their social calendar. The papers also carried a news story a couple of weeks prior to the start of their new dancer session.

The club destination program is the CALLERLAB Plus program with the new dancers starting in September. The sessions last for 1 ½ hours with a 1 hour club workshop following the class session. The club has a good turnout of members to serve as "angels" who then stay for the workshop. Member spouses dance with the singles and they also have a single lady who can dance the lead part when needed.

New dancers dance the first three weeks free and they pay \$3.00 per person each week thereafter. The club feels they are friendly toward the new dancers and mix with and greet them each week, which is a big factor in the regular attendance. They feel this will aid in their retention after graduation.

News From
THE LARKSPUR TAM TWIRLERS
Larkspur, CA
By Eric Henerlau
July 19, 2003

The Larkspur Tam Twirlers, which dances during the week, periodically sponsors a Saturday night special when other clubs, are invited. These dances are typically Plus level. Occasionally, the dance may be a red light/green light dance where half the tips are new dancer level.

Realizing a marketing opportunity in having the non-dancing public see a large Saturday dance, the club recently advertised their dance to the general public. Non-dancers were invited to attend *at no charge*. A special introductory session was held 30 minutes prior to the dance, during which the caller taught some basics with the club dancers filling the floor. After the half-hour was completed, the public was invited to stay and watch the square dancing. Between tips, mixers and easy lines were played with everyone invited to join in. Twenty non-dancers attended and thoroughly enjoyed themselves with several joining a new dancer session that started three weeks later.

The Lakespur Tam Twirlers use a Multi-cycle New Dancer Format. The destination level is Plus.

**News From
COGAN STATION, PA
“Square Dancing In Schools”
September 4, 2003**

For the past six years, Hank Lutchter from Cogan Station, PA has been teaching Modern Western Square Dancing six weeks each year at the Jersey Shore School District #6 Jr High School.

Hank was initially approached by one of the teachers, the son of a local square dancer. During his first visit to the school, they showed him a notebook of instructions to teach Modern Western Square Dancing and a music tape, but they did not know where to begin. The schools in Pennsylvania are required to teach traditional dance every two years.

This past year he taught 638 young people. He had a gym class every day from 8:10 a.m. to 3:10 p.m. with half of the students each day. Knowing that age group likes competition, he told them that the best square would be his demo square to teach the next call. At the end of the 6 weeks, they will have learned approximately 75% of the Mainstream list. The teachers are an active part of the class assisting where needed. During the last class of the year, all students are graded with the teachers taking 5 points off their final score for each mistake. Hank is paid for his time and his lunch is furnished.

Hank has offered a new dancer session any night of the week to the students and parents, but thus far he has been unsuccessful in getting any of the students or parents involved in the local square dance program.

For additional information, Hank may be contacted by phone at 570-435-2048 or by e-mail at hanjan@chilitech.net

**News From
THE Broken Wheel Squares
Kirtland, OH
October 2003**

The 35th anniversary year of the Broken Wheel Squares came at just the right time. The club was in the doldrums. It had inexperienced leadership, an aging membership, and was losing its spark. To many we were just going through the motions. We had good dances, but any excitement was coming from the caller not the membership. We were losing money on about a third of our dances and were surviving by the thinnest of margins.

A 35th anniversary celebration was proposed at one of the general membership meetings but seemed to fall on deaf ears. During the next few days, many club members came forth and volunteered to help and a committee was formed. It was decided to continue with the regular theme nights (pie night, team night, etc.) but also add a separate theme or event to each dance over the next year that had to do with the club's 35th anniversary. A few of the activities included nostalgia night, a night to recognize past presidents, a display of scrap books, and a trophy, badge, dangle night. Different highlights in the club's history were presented at dances throughout the year. These activities brought new energy to the club. There was better membership attendance and more visitors came because each dance was special and no one really knew what was going to happen.

As a follow-up to the anniversary year, a "Stir the Bucket" committee was formed. We recognized that the pace from the anniversary year could not be maintained. Going forward there will be fewer theme nights but efforts will be made to make each dance a little different using activities separate from the traditional ones each club uses. None of the dances will ever be considered "regular" club dances. We want fun and excitement, so that there is a reason people want to attend Broken Wheel Squares' dances.

Strategies for success employed by Broken Wheel Squares.

Don't Ask for Volunteers. When you need something done, speak to people directly. Ask someone personally to do a job. If you want a moment of silence at a meeting, just ask for a volunteer.

Communicate. Use every means of communication that is available; use e-mail messages; write newsletter articles; talk on the microphone at dances; call people on the telephone. make sure that conversations with individuals include the things you want people to know about. By the time someone hears and reads the message a few times, it becomes their information as well as yours. Don't rely on a message being remembered if it is only seen one time. Let everyone know what is going on whenever you can.

Be Positive. Don't let club members see you being anything but positive, all the time. Even when you wish you had more involvement from the membership, keep mentioning all the good things that are going on. Let everyone think that all the good things they hear are the norm, not the exception. Eventually, perhaps, things will be the way you actually desire them to be.

Work Hard. Work as hard as everyone else, if not harder. Lead by example. Be involved with

everything that is going on. Delegate the work out to others, but show that you are will to help as much as possible.

Do the Right Thing. Make sure to thank the members when they do something. Let them know that their efforts have been noticed and are appreciated.

Bring Pride to the Club. We want to be the club that people think about when they want to go or see square dancing. We want to be the club that others ask for when they have a community festival. We want to be the club that organizers call when they need an activity like ours on their program. We want the public to expect to see us when they are at certain events, and we want to show how much fun we are having and encourage them to have fun as well and join us.

For more information about Broken Wheel Squares contact Mike and Rose Speers at: RVROSE@Earthlink.net or 28845 Serenity Lane, Wickliffe, OH 44092.

**News From
THE BRECKSVILLE SQUARES
Ohio
By Dennis H. Deluga
January 2004**

What Makes a Club Successful? Good Question.

A while ago our club was asked by the State Corporation to participate in a group discussion on what makes a club successful. Our president, Cheryl Storgaard, then asked me if I'd like to give the presentation. See, good delegation skills.

Since I'm a relatively new member, I first sought out some club history from our officers. The club was established in January of 1986 with 16 charter members. Well, to make a long story very short, it has grown some and we currently have approximately 140 members, with 2 dances scheduled per month and a thriving new student program. A big "Thanks" to the charter members! My wife and I really enjoy square dancing and it wouldn't have been possible if they didn't do it. This growth was achieved at a time when ALL clubs, of every kind are experiencing hardships.

The next thing I did was suggest we survey our membership to see why they think our club is successful. Why do they choose to belong to Brecksville Squares? This was done at our next general meeting by a short general survey form. We felt there was enough of the membership present to give us good demographics. I also sought out some active members, not present to get their valued opinion.

Then, I compiled and categorized the survey results. The results are ranked by order of importance the membership placed on each category, with some indication of survey frequency. Major categories are followed by the activities our club participates in.

LEADERSHIP: 80+ %

- Officers - Strong leaders that lead, teach, and delegate.
- Committees - Chaired by non-officers to help spread the load (many hands make light work).
- Special Task Assignments - On special occasions tasks are assigned to membership to take advantage of their vast and diverse experiences and help the club.
- Excellent Teachers - In all areas, especially in the new student areas (we all can learn something from our fellow members.)

COMMUNICATION: 50 %

- Yearly Membership Packets – Member information so individual members can contact each other directly, plus other pertinent information.
- Calling Chain - Notify membership of some special occurrence that needs to be done quickly (each caller has no more than 6 members to call in their part of the chain.)
- E-mail Chain – Same purpose as above (if desired, members can be on both the e-mail and call chain if requested.)

- Tip Topics/Linked Squares - Club subscribes to both publications to keep our club in front of two federation memberships.
- Yearly Printed Club Reports- Each member who attends the club business meeting has access to a printed club report that accounts for the club finances; also the secretary's report that summarizes club involvement for the past six months.
- Club Newsletter - Produced several times a year (it highlights coming events and membership news.)
- Club Website Page - Where pertinent information about our club is posted.
- Printed Flyers -Upcoming events (dances, raids etc.).
- Sunshine Committee - Let member know that even if they are down their friends are thinking of them. (the membership packet has their phone number and address).

OUTREACH: 40 %

- Demonstrations - Participate in demos (county fair, city home days, IX Center) any place they will let us in.
- Fundraiser/Charity events – Several regularly scheduled events and some spur of the moment (recently a fund raiser for Frank Gatrell) on a moment's notice, was very successful with our memberships help.
- Raids and Retrievals – The club has scheduled raids and retrievals and also members take it upon themselves to have an impromptu raids (nice going guys and gals.)
- Acceptance of Individuals and Clubs – We pride ourselves on making everyone welcome and we have benefited from that attitude.
- Hospitality and Greeters – Our Hospitality and Greeters undoubtedly are some of the best in the federation and our visitors and members appreciate it.
- Membership Participation – Members see what the club does for them and will volunteer their help (members when asked rarely will turn us down.)

INCLUSION: 30%

- Friendliness – Members expressed over and over that they felt very good when here. Everyone is part our square dance family, if you want to be.
- New Idea Expression – Our members stated that they felt their comments and ideas were valued by the club and were not afraid to tell the good and the bad news.
- Assignment – New members and student are given assignment to greeting and hospitality to include them and let them know that the club wants and needs their participation.
- Appreciation – Over and over members expressed that they felt their efforts to help the club were expressed by membership and leadership. When was the last time you gave a thank you to those who do for you?

CRITICAL MASS: 25%

- Number of Members – There is no doubt that a larger number of members allow the club to do more. This is a self-fulfilling prophecy.
- Number of Students– We recruit heavily every chance we get. There is follow-up on contact. This has proven itself with a plethora of new members.
- Variety and Excellence of Callers and Cuers – The membership has expressed its desire to have a variety of callers and cuers and the result is a large dance attendance.
- Number of Angels – We get a good number of angels each year to assist the new students. This helps the student to form friendships and bonds. Sometimes we have had five and six squares at a student lesson. Invest in your children (oops; I mean students).

They are your lifeblood.

SPECIAL EVENTS: 10 – 15 %

- New Years Dance
- Teddy Bear Dance
- Yearly Club Picnic/Meeting – A business and social event outside of the squared circle.
- Yearly Club Dinner / Meeting – A pleasant night out with a little bit of business thrown in.

CONCLUSION:

Sorry to say, there is no magic bullet to make a club successful. If there was, we would bottle it sell it and our clubs would have no financial worries. Our clubs are located in diverse areas; we have city clubs, suburb clubs and rural clubs. What is important to one area may not matter in another. Have you tried to ask your membership what they are looking for? We have tried to express what our member ship thought was important to them. I hope it will help your club and give you food for thought. Maybe you will see these ideas and come up with some of your own or use some of ours; help yourself. In any event, inaction is NOT a good decision. Try out ideas and see what works for your club. If they don't work, try others. In my opinion you can't blame a person for trying, but you can blame someone if they don't try something. Doing it the same way it's been done for years may not be the best way. Try something new or a new way, what could it hurt?

News From
THE FOUR CORNERS DANCERS
(Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, Arizona)
“Class in Three Days”
February 2004

The Four Corners Dancers is a small square dance club. Until this year we had been holding 20 week instruction sessions, (Basic-Mainstream). We tried starting in September which was good. Everyone was gung-ho but then along came the 2 months of hunting seasons. And hunting, being a big recreation in our area, we would have several couples not attend lessons because they were hunting, or they would attend just intermittently. Through this we would usually loose some of the new dancers altogether. Then along would come the Holidays and again conflict, so we would loose a few more. By the time we finished the 20 week cycle of lessons we were lucky if we had retained 2 or 3 new dancers. Retention has always been a problem for us. A large percent of those finishing lessons were no longer dancing at the end of a year. Then we tried starting in January, with about the same results. People just got tired before the 20 week commitment was up.

So in the fall of 2003 the club decided to try a different approach. We had heard about the accelerated lesson program at the 52nd National Square Dance Convention[®] and continued to hear good things about it. We decided to try it in September. We advertised in the local newspapers, but we did not have any new dancers show up so we only did the one day. We felt some of our weaker dancers from the two previous classes really benefited from that one day so it was not a loss.

When we made the decision to try again in January 2004, the club members had made personal contact with people and had several couples lined up to take the lessons. We set the session for Saturday, Sunday, and the following Saturday going for about 6 hours per day. The Club furnished lunch and we took a 30 minute break. At the end of the six hours, the new dancers were pretty saturated and we felt it would not be beneficial to continue. We had a different caller for each day. Previously, the caller who did our lessons charged a flat fee for up to one square and then an additional amount for each person over one square. This time the callers charged a flat fee per day and it was no more expensive than the 20 lessons cycle was.

We began the January session with 4 couples and one single. One couple dropped out because one of them couldn't deal with the crowd. One couple didn't come back the second day because of a work conflict and of course they were too far behind to continue. But they had lots of fun that one day and have indicated they will be back in the future. Everyone had a good time with the lessons. It wasn't the drag that 20 week lessons can be and no one got uptight if everything wasn't quite perfect. We finished the 3 day session with 2 couples and 1 single. We knew these dancers weren't going to retain everything that was covered in that 3 days. However, we encouraged them to start coming to our club dances and keep dancing.

We have had two club dances since we finished the lessons and both couples have been at both of those and the single has attended one. One of the guys whom had told us at the beginning of lessons that he didn't ever smile much, was laughing before the second club dance was over. He shared that he felt pretty nervous the first night, but that he was much more comfortable the second night. He indicated that they were going to travel to another club in our area this coming week-end and dance with them.

We feel that the three day class was a success for our club and plan to try it again. We are encouraged that the new dancers seem to be having lots of fun, thereby causing us to have more fun. We also feel fairly confident these dancers will still be dancing with us in the years to come. We will have to put forth some effort at each dance to assure they are dancing nearly every tip, which means that we will probably eliminate our every third tip being a plus tip, for a while in order to give them more dance time.

SQUARE DANCE VIDEO
Minnesota Central Est Region, MN
By Mike and Edie Kirsch
February 2004

The desire for a tape to show at square dance demos, showing the fun and excitement of square dancing, has developed into a 15 minute Square Dancing Infomercial in Minnesota's Central East Region. In previous years, one of the local clubs recorded a tape each year in the studio of a local public access cable TV station. It was shot in a studio with two or three squares and no scenery. It did net a few couples each year, but wasn't really that exciting.

Knowing that a professionally done film produced by a recording studio would be cost prohibitive, they approached the regional cable access company about taping some scenes at local square dances. The company was very receptive and offered to produce a 15-minute infomercial about square dancing for a maximum of \$1500.00. The final cost was \$1300.00.

They filmed footage at several local dances and the Minnesota State Convention. They interviewed callers and dancers at every taping asking dancers why they started, how long they had danced and what they get out of square dancing. They ended up with a lot of scenes of dancers in the background with snippets of interviews supporting the physical fitness, mental fitness and friendship aspects of dancing. The dancers ranged in age from 30 to 70. Most of the dancers were in formal square dance attire but one of the dances taped was casual with Dee Dee Dougherty calling. The cable TV station had their female news anchor dress in square dance attire to conduct the interviews at the State Convention. Among those interviewed were Dee Dee Dougherty, Mike Hogan, and Lanny Weakland.

As a result of the infomercial, a group of square dancers have gone to the effort of volunteering at the local public access station training to be producers, cameramen, and sound people. They are now allowed to produce their own programs. They are producing a one-hour tape every two weeks spotlighting a different club in the Central Eastern Region, which has 22 clubs. At this writing they have 4 tapes done. Up to this point, all the programs have been done in the studio. The dancers are training on the mobile production facilities so they can begin to film at club dances. Dancers in each city of the region have been enlisted to take a copy of the tape to their local public access station. When all 22 clubs in the Central Eastern Region have been spotlighted, they are going to invite clubs from other parts of the State to participate.

They have found that if you have enough material "in the can" the stations will play them on a regular basis. Also, once regional cable TV sees that the dancers and clubs are serious about continuing the production of tapes, they will take over the distribution. The Central Eastern Region is providing financial support for the callers and cuers and duplication of the tapes.

This is another example of dancers coming up with an idea, carrying forward and donating their time. A big "Thank You" goes to Al Jenkins from the Westonka Whirlers who spearheaded the infomercial project and to Ken and Dee Scott for organizing the cable TV programs. Although it is still too early to see how many new dancers will be recruited, they are hearing from non-dancers about seeing the TV shows.

NEW DANCERS
Crosstrailers Square Dance Club
Warren, Ohio
By Margie McCummins

We have enjoyed 37 new dancers (students) for lessons this year—37! Our lesson nights have 10 to 11 squares, and yes, they are a bit noisy with all the laughter and fellowship.

When we polled our new dancers to see what brought them to our lessons and squares, all 37 came because of a personal invite; one couple found our club on the Internet. Sixteen new dancers said they had previously seen a demo; four had seen a flyer at a fair; and four read our article in the local newspaper. However, this did not bring them to our lessons—it was the personal invitation that brought them to lessons!

Our new dancers receive a welcome handout explaining a little about our club and its officers, the federation, the necessary commitment to classes, square dance clothing, square dancing life after graduation, and other pertinent information. Most of this information is also given in announcements, but as we all know, we are not all good listeners. We also offer our new dancers copies of our club calendar, membership lists, etc., letting them know they are an important part of our club.

Many of our members who brought new dancers have become mentors, so to speak. They “angel” at all lessons and encourage the new dancers, sharing squares with their new dancers; they pick them up and bring them to lessons often; they encourage them to attend the dances for new dancers and enjoy the dances with them. We have found our "mentored" dancers are more likely to continue lessons, enjoy more dances, be active in club activities, and become accomplished square dancers.

When new dancers miss lessons, we call to inquire if everything is okay, and let them know we miss them. If they need to miss a few lessons for any reason, we get a group of square dancers together in our homes and bring the dancers up to date on the calls they have missed. We are fortunate to have a summer workshop at our dance location, and we encourage our new dancers to attend this workshop to further their skills. Some of our “angels” enjoy this workshop as well.

We will lose some new dancers, as a few migrate South; life's personal problems change priorities, and various reasons. These new dancers are encouraged to return in the fall for another class, and contact is again made before a new class begins. The bottom line is the personal invitation is very important in recruiting new dancers; the personal touch is very important in maintaining our new dancers as they become accomplished square dancers.

At our dances and lesson nights we have noticed couples sharing thoughts on a movie they have seen, a few ladies sharing recipes, couples sharing prices of SUVs; people sharing. We square dancers share a wonderful fellowship in this fun, healthy activity, but do we share our love of square dancing with others? As much as we love square dancing, one would think we would share our love of square dancing with anyone that was willing to listen and end up with packed lesson nights. How can we keep this wonderful activity to ourselves?

We love this wonderful fellowship we share! Let's share it with everyone!

**News From
WASCA (Washington Area Square Dancers Cooperative Association)
Boomerangs Square Dance Teaching Council
March 2004**

The Boomerangs is a club that is not a club. We are not a dancing club; rather we are a teaching council with multi-tiered classes. We exist for one purpose—to hold square dance classes. Our concept has been a combination of already tried ideas and new ideas. We are always evolving and trying to adjust to changing times. We started with a small group of dancers and one caller who met almost on a weekly basis during the formative months. The members began with a vision and contributed their time, energy and funds to begin the council. Then we recruited additional callers and dedicated “angels” to help make this teaching concept a reality. We exist through the support of our local callers, “angels” and a very dedicated council who are the managers and administrators of our group.

Our program is set up with four new classes beginning per year. We are fortunate to have a hall, (Lincolnia Senior Center) that divides into thirds with automated folding partition walls. This allows us to hold three classes simultaneously. Our sessions are set up in a 12-week series. Every week, for 48 weeks of the year, we hold classes in Basic (Mainstream 1), Mainstream 2 and Plus. To do this we have three callers/instructors on staff for each 12-week session.

Our concept gives people a chance to begin classes four times a year. It also allows students the opportunity to progress at different levels. If a student needs a refresher or needs a stronger foundation in the fundamentals, then they simply move to the class that allows them to work on those fundamentals. Hopefully, this will make them a stronger dancer; and if students become stronger and comfortable with the calls, they are more likely to continue dancing. This also accommodates students that have to miss multiple classes due to health, injuries or travel, etc.

With our present class structure we have four graduations a year for Mainstream and Plus. For the last hour during graduation night we open the walls between the three halls and all the students dance together. We also hold a Halloween costume party and a Christmas party. These special times enable everyone to become better acquainted and become a part of the square dance community. The first Wednesday of the month we hold a 50/50 drawing. The funds collected pay for our parlor at the WASCA Festival in March. The parlor is open to all dancers throughout the festival. On Saturday afternoon after the Class Level Invitational we host a special party celebrating our current students first introduction to the festival. Once a year we hold a reunion dance as a thank you for our “angels”, current and past students, and callers/instructors.

We encourage dancers to assist and “angel” the classes. We also invite club representatives to visit on graduation night and invite our students to their clubs. The clubs that have active “angels” and those that extend the personal invitations are the clubs reaping the benefits of new members into their clubs from our classes

We have tried numerous ways to advertise. We have even take expensive ads in newspapers and magazines. Now we only use the free ads in the newspapers, etc. before beginning a new series. We have a long list of these contacts and are willing to share this information with other clubs. We have a large sign advertising our new class, which we place next to the street at Lincolnia Senior Center prior to the first of a new class, In addition, we will target a densely populated

area and distribute flyers door-to-door. Also, our council members and “angels” are very active in attending demos and parades in promoting square dancing. However, we have found that the way to recruit students is still the personal touch of one-to-one. A dancer invites a friend, brings them to class, stays and “angels”. That student is the one most likely to stay with square dancing.

The management of our club is by what we call the council. At present we are 16 in number. There are still some of the charter members, but many of our current council were once students in our classes. Council members are recruited from active “angels” in the area who have shown a dedication and commitment to classes in the square dance community.

We do not pay dues, but instead everyone contributes and donates when events dictate. We do not have a president. We have a rotating schedule and each council member takes his or her turn chairing a business meeting. The next meeting that person takes the minutes. We do have one council member who acts as treasurer and others who fill positions in advertising, badges, etc. Each council member takes their turn as a class coordinator; these are the administrative and management duties for each class. The class coordinator begins with a basic class and stays with that class through the plus graduation.

The Boomerangs could not exist without the support of the square dance community of dancers and callers. We welcome help, constructive ideas and solutions and your support. Come out on Wednesday night and be a part of the fun and fellowship.

Becky and Hoyt Stewart, 4414 South 34th Street, Arlington, VA 22206; Phone: 703-578-0132; e-mail: beckv.hovt@verizon.net

**News From
Petaluma, California
“TEENS ANSWER THE CALL”
By Janet Parmer
For the *Press Democrat*
August 2004**

Petaluma's youth bop to a new beat and learn it's fun to dance to a different tune!

Aleksandra and Danielle Olivera once dreaded being dragged to square dances. Now the St. Vincent High School students are largely responsible for the dramatic increase in teenagers learning to square dance in Petaluma. They've lured many of their friends to the Tuesday night Adobe Squares club, and most have returned voluntarily to learn more dance steps.

The Adobe Squares beginning square dance class, which meets at the Petaluma Women's club, is anything but traditional, with teens almost outnumbering adults. To keep it pulsating and lively for the youthful crowd, professional square dance caller, Scot Byars, plays songs like 'YMCA' and 'Sweet Home Alabama' along with Motown tunes, Japanese techno, disco and even rap tunes.

Boys wearing baggy jeans and T-shirts allemande, swing, weave and promenade side-by-side with men in pressed slacks and western-style shirts. Teenage girls dress in either poufy skirts, which they call "fluff," or jeans, while most of the women show up in traditional square garb." Veteran square dancers realized they had to recruit new dancers if the club was going to survive, and they're encouraged by the response to the summer class", Adobe Squares member Mel Tody said. Only 37 people are officially members, but 9 of them are teenagers, according to his wife, Margaret. "This is our future. They bring a fire to the club, and they make the older folks seem younger," she said.

During a recent class, 56 dancers formed 7 squares, with about 25 teens and children mixed in with many people old enough to be their grandparents. "Our friends made fun of us and I told them, 'Next time we're bringing you,' said Aleksandra Olivera, who began attending the dances five years ago. "We were forced to come and stay the entire time."

Her Mother, Eva Olivera, said her husband was eager to square dance, and so it became a family outing. They initially attended classes in Sebastopol. The couple serves on the Adobe Squares Board of Directors. Aleksandra Olivera, who is the publicity chairman, was responsible for an ad that ran in local newspapers promoting the classes. The ad copy says, "Many people define fun as something interesting and upbeat. Want to try something new for a change? Square dancing is all of that, and more! Be there or be square!" She suggested using photos from actual square dance events rather than the Adobe Squares logo featuring an illustration of two dancers. One photo shows a group of about 20 teenage dancers. Olivera is pleased with the response to the ad, but only takes partial responsibility for the dramatic increase in teen dancers. She said a lot of the young people have learned about the square dances through word-of-mouth.

Tony Dizmang, 18, drives from Napa to dance with the Adobe Squares each week. He learned to dance when he was 12 by accompanying his parents, and later took classes in Vallejo. "At first a lot of this is awkward, but this club is amazing for the youth," Dimzang said. "It draws people back. I think the appeal is the camaraderie and fun. And this is definitely a good workout."

Byars, the square dance caller, travels from Sacramento for his weekly gig. He's a polished entertainer and livens up the evening by cracking jokes, singing competently along with lyrics, and calling dance commands briefly in Spanish or French. On occasion, he'll change outfits several times during the night. "This is not typical of square dancing," Byars said, referring to the Adobe Squares turn-out. "The average age is probably between 55 and 65 years old." To attract youthful dancers, he knows he must play music that appeals to them. "I use alternative music," he said. "I'll use disco, instrumentals, karaoke, and Dixieland music."

Byars, who has been calling square dances for 33 years, said he is seeing a resurgence in popularity with youth. "It's wonderful to teach young people. Kids learn quicker. The younger they are, the shorter the attention span," he said. "High school or college age kids have an attention span that's perfect."

Eva Olivera, Aleksandra and Danielle's mother, said square dancing enriched her family. "It's a good safe environment and keeps them off the streets. They really like it. Nobody is twisting their arms to be here. There's a sense of community, of family, that goes way beyond dancing," she said.

The Adobe Squares is finishing up its seven-week Beginner's class and will start another class for beginners soon.

You can reach Correspondent Janet Parmer by phone at: 707-782-9130 or by e-mail at: jhparmer@comcast.net.

**News From
New Zealand
“RECENT SUCCESS RECRUITING NEW DANCERS”
By John Addison
September 2004**

The following encouraging information from New Zealand was provided to the CALLERLAB Home Office by Canadian Member, Norm Wilcox. If you have success reports to share, please send them to the Home Office.

A number of clubs in New Zealand have had much better success than usual attracting new dancers this year. None of us are quite sure why, but we think it has a lot to do with the general theme of our advertising, which has been "If you enjoy walking for pleasure and exercise, you'll love square dancing". I also use phrases such as "its like walking to music", and "Two left feet? No problem" in our ads, which many people seem to find reassuring.

After years of getting perhaps 20 responses to our ads (from a local community of around 50,000), and retaining half of them if we were really lucky, this year we had over 60 responses and now have a class of 30+, and with a very much wider age range than usual.

**News From
Washington State
“25th ANNIVERSARY of the SQUARE DANCE
as the OFFICIAL STATE DANCE of WASHINGTON”
By Eddie Harry
October 2004**

As I woke up and looked out the window this morning and started to get ready for the 25th Anniversary of the square dance being the official State Dance of Washington, the weather here in Auburn was dark and cloudy and somewhat wet. As the morning went on it didn't seem to change much. At noon I headed for Olympia hoping the weather would clear. As I reached the north end of Olympia, the clouds seem to dissipate a little and by the time I got to my exit I spotted a patch of blue sky. I made my turn into the Tivoli Fountain area on the Capitol Campus and we had a beautiful blue sky to dance under. As we set up, the sound two bus loads of dancers started to filter into the area and by the time we where set up we had between 250 to 300 dancers from all over the State were ready to start the celebration.

I think we had dancers representing practically every council, and 15 callers and cuers from across the State to entertain our dancers. We even had dancers from Oregon who came to help celebrate this milestone in our square dance history.

The trek to putting this together took two years and three presidents of the Square & Folk Dance Federation of Washington to accomplish this event. I want to thank them all for letting me present this idea to the Federation. “Thanks to Elmer and Betty Toops, Cheryl and Dan Pruitt for keep me on track when things got frustrated trying to find a place to hold it, and Don and Lynda Congrove for handling our intermission break. A special thanks to all of the Council Delegates who went back to their Councils and promoted this special celebration. Without your help we wouldn't have been able to pull this together. I also need to thank Dave and Bonnie Harry for helping with the sound, our State magazine editor, Margaret Miller, for the advertising in “*Foot Notes*”. Additionally, Dick Beham, our State “webmaster” for putting the flyer on the website and also Wheretodance.com for promoting this through your venue: “Thanks”, Kappie and Aileen Kappenman. I also can't forget all the dancers that took the time out of their day to come and celebrate with us.

We were hoping to get some media coverage of our event, as I sent out nine press releases to the three major TV Stations and six newspapers throughout the State. We did have one newspaper come out and take some photos a gather some information just before we ended the dance.

The only thing that would of possibly have made this more successful would have been if the Governor had been present and addressed us for just a couple of minutes. He was mailed an invitation and when he signed the Declaration of Square Dance Week he was offered an invitation. He was also sent an invitation the day of the Anniversary. However, in his defense, he was just getting back from a trip to China. I hope he was promoting square dancing there for us!

In closing, I think this was a success and we should do it again in 2029.

For more information, please e-mail Eddie Harry at: eharry@lrcsunitied.com

**News From
Greenville, PA
“STAR PROMENADERS’ CLASSES”
By Shirley Newbrough, Club Correspondent
(December 2004)**

The following report is from an amazing club which is growing through classes and new dancers.

The club was 23 strong; some members were elderly and infirmed, and some were "snowbirds". The club had estimated they probably had 6 couples who did most of the running of the club, and it was getting ready to fold. However, there were 2 people who were determined to keep it afloat.

First they sent letters for ideas and what they felt would save the club. Then, with advertisements on TV, radio, newspapers, free press, and actual grunt work, they recruited a minister's wife who was home schooling and thought she would try square dancing for their children for gym class. She also got her husband involved and then a few others. They also "grabbed" a couple going into a restaurant that came to the class and brought a few people.

The club started classes in September 2003 and there were so many answering the advertisements they kept enrollment open until October 28. They recruited a total of 27 students. In January 2004, the club started another class of 18 and ended with 15. By this time, the October new dancers came in and acted as “angels” and reinforced what they were learning. This was headed up by our program chairman who is also a caller. Now the club is going into 2005 and seems to be getting stronger. The club now has 18 new students and is planning another winter class (by several requests). Hopefully the advertisements, and a few publicity offers will result in another large class; and if they are as eager to join the club as the previous classes, the club will be more than 50 members strong. The club is finally having 5-8 squares at our dances and different clubs are visiting to see what is happening at the Star Promenaders of Greenville, PA.

The club has a dozen children from ages 9 thru 15 who are helping to teach the new children by being “angels”. They are also helping “angel” for our adults. Everyone is enjoying dancing with all ages. The club now has several 4 year olds they call their “mascots” and they want to dance so we do the Virginia Reel and a few other easy dances so that they can join in. The adults are also enjoying the dances. This idea came from our program chairman. WE ARE HAVING FUN!

Through this exciting time, the new dancers have been the "number one priority” and they still are the club’s priority. They are still dancing with" the club. The graduates are assuming club duties with enthusiasm. They have learned square dance etiquette, dress codes, and have been encouraged to participate in "retrievals and raids", visiting other clubs, and volunteering to do demos.

Thanks go to the club callers (two in training) who have been a great help to all those who have come to dance, and to all the guest callers who helped teach the new dancers. I mention no names because it became a team effort. I might miss someone and we have had such great participation it would be hard to name them all.

**News From
Spring Park, Minnesota
HISTORY of “*FRIENDSHIP SET to MUSIC*”
January 2005**

Questions & Answers

What is cable TV?

It's a public access facility for members of the public to air shows they make.

Does the cable studio provide a staff for a new TV show on public access?

No.

What is aired on cable TV?

Tapes brought into the studio by the public served by that station or shows made in that facility by folks who have taken the necessary training to become ‘certified producers’ in that studio.

Who produces “*Friendship Set to Music*”?

Square dancers who are members of Westonka Whirlers

Who operates cameras “*Friendship Set to Music*”?

Square dancers who are members of Westonka Whirlers

Who sets up the lights, sets, and cameras?

Square dancers who are members of Westonka Whirlers

Who operates the studio control room?

Square dancers who are members of Westonka Whirlers

Who distributes the tapes?

Square dancers who are members of Westonka Whirlers and square dancers from many other clubs

How many cable stations air the show?

43

How many communities are covered?

149

What is the potential viewer audience?

Over one million people

Who has paid the costs for the show so far?

The CE Region and local square-dance clubs

How can square dancers help with costs?

By buying a copy of a show. The more tapes sold at \$6 each, the cheaper the cost to duplicate the show.

Can the regions be involved?

Yes

How can the regions be involved?

By having clubs in their region spotlighted

By buying tapes and distributing them to cable stations in their region

By contributing to the costs of the shows

How can the State Federation be involved?

By encouraging their regions to participate in this all-out effort to inform the public about square and round dancing

By encouraging all square dancers to support the show with lots of energy, enthusiasm, ideas, and participation

History of “Friendship Set to Music”

In October and November, 2003, Ken and Dee Scott took classes at the Lake Minnetonka Communications Commission TV studio in Spring Park, Minnesota and became ‘certified community television producers’. This certification entitled them to use the LMCC studio free of cost for any TV production they wished to undertake. Being square dancers, they thought a TV show would be the perfect way to communicate the many extraordinary qualities of square dancing to the public.

Ken and Dee then held a meeting with interested square dancers from the Westonka Whirlers. Because nine Whirlers were interested in becoming ‘certified’ and working on a square dance show, they arranged for a special day-long class at the LMCC for them. That afternoon, that class produced a news show that Dee scripted entitled, “*News from Square Dance Land*” that announced the new TV show: “*Friendship Set to Music*.” That news show aired over a dozen times on LMCC Channel 21.

Station manager Jim Lundberg encouraged and advised the group as “*Friendship Set to Music*” was drafted. The TV show needed a director and producer. That individual would be responsible for the final content of the show and would be the contact person to other cable stations. Dee Scott, who conceived and initiated the show and is a certified producer at the LMCC, holds that role. The show is currently airing on 43 cable stations that serve 149 cities or towns.

The show needed to be scripted and put on cue cards so the floor director can control the show once “tape is rolling.” Ken Scott is the floor director.

Four camera operators were needed—five ‘certified’ square dancers rotate in those positions: Bill Ayers, Dick Davideit, Floyd Rust, Ed Garlock, and Ron Davidson. The TV control room needed a character generator. Certified square dancer Bruce Clark, a computer guru, generates graphics during all the shows. Also needed in the control room were an audio person and a ‘switcher’ who is the director for the show. Square dancer Wayne Provart learned the position of audio engineer and Dee Scott operates the switcher during the tapings.

To fill the many other positions off camera, many other square dancers volunteered. Production assistants are Velma Wolff, Pat Davideit, Dorothy Rust and Nancy Ayers. Studio hostesses are Diana Clark and Martha Davidson. The market facilitator is Ruth Garlock; the CNT supervisor is June Hestad, and the visual director is John Vining. Thus, this show is created entirely by square and round dancers who have stepped forward to devote many, many hours to create this TV show that educates the public about square and round dancing. At least two shows are taped each month. From 80 to 100 square and round dancers participate each Saturday. Cuers Ken and Barb LaBau, Mike and Edie Kirsch, and Robin Fryman dance on the shows. Caller, Mike Driscoll, called with Dick Rueter on Show 4 as well as danced on Shows 3, 4, and 11. Tom Allen called with Dick on shows 9, 10, and 12. Abe Maier did the patriotic numbers on shows 5 and 6. For show 11, “Timbre Junction” provided live music for Dick and the dancers.

To distribute tapes of this show, Dee contacted all the cable stations in the metro area. Many of these public access facilities require that a person living in their coverage area request that the show be aired and sign the hold-harmless forms. Dee then located square dancers from those localities to deliver the tapes and sign the forms. This logistical jungle provides Ken and Dee a week of miles and mailings after every taping session.

Caller, Dick Rueter, agreed to call for the square dance segments on the show, without pay if necessary. Cuer, Ray Belanger, agreed to cue for the round-dance segments on the show, without pay if necessary. Both want to promote square and round dancing and put that above their financial concerns. Because the show is scripted before every taping, the caller and cuer must submit their song titles at least a week before the scheduled Saturday. Obviously, fairness says they are professionals and should receive a fair wage (which has not happened) for the hours they dedicate to this show. At the first committee meeting, Bob Wolff and Arduus Vining were elected to the positions of hosts for the show.

Funding was needed to finance the shows. First, the Westonka Whirlers donated \$100. Then the CE Region donated \$600. Because the master tape needs to be duplicated at least 43 times and then mailed to each station with a SASE enclosed, duplication and mailing costs are a significant cost each month. Other clubs have since donated to the show to keep it alive: Bloomington Swirlers, Hotfoot Stompers, Dakota Grand, Crystal Crosstrailers, Spares and Pairs. The CE Region has donated a total of \$3,100 to this venture. The production costs are insignificant when one considers the cost per viewer. If just 30,000 viewers (out of the million potential viewers) see a show, the current cost is one cent per viewer!

Most importantly, for a mere penny, *“Friendship Set to Music”* shares the best-kept secret in this nation: that square dancing and round dancing today offers “fun, fitness, and friendship” to people of all ages. (We’re keeping the secret that it also offers another “f”—great food!)

Two phone numbers are offered during the show to viewers: one is 952-472-0006 (a viewer-response line dedicated to *“Friendship Set to Music”* and 763-557-5113 (the State Federation phone number). Calls come in daily. Viewers requesting lessons generated three “Fun-for-the-Whole-Family” introductory dances in May. Viewers not in the metro-viewing area are referred to a caller or club president in their area so they can get further details about lessons in that city or locality. Many viewers call to say “We love the show; keep it coming.” Others have called and requested a dance for beginners. One party wanted to dedicate their new pole barn before they filled it with hay, one wanted to host a 40th birthday party for the spouse, one wanted a dance to be part of their graduation party, etc. Dozens of viewers have called to learn which clubs are near

them so they can return to square dancing or have called to learn where they can join square dancing.

Twelve shows were taped between January 17 and May 8. Another dozen are planned between July 10 and December. Because this TV show is aired on cable, viewers often find it only when flipping channels. Thus it is important that the show air at least weekly. Some channels play it several times a week, some daily. Giving one tape to a station will not net many, if any, calls. Most stations appreciate receiving a "series" show where they know that each month they will get two new shows to air. Many stations then give the show a "series spot", which means that the show will air regularly in that time slot, making it much easier for viewers to know when to watch. "Prime-time slots" (between 7:00 and 10:00 p.m.) yield the most "viewer-response" calls.

This show is much like the life of a beautiful rose. God dropped a seed on fertile ground. Square and round dancers planted it, watered it, watched it germinate, watered it, and gave it some fertilizer. By tending it carefully, today they have a beautiful rose that is being enjoyed in Minnesota, North Dakota and Wisconsin.

What is the goal? That lots of square and round dancers will lend their energy, enthusiasm and ideas so this rose (the show) can produce thousands of new square and round dancers. Hopefully, *"Friendship Set to Music"* will make the world a more beautiful place for everyone who sees it or participates in it.

Questions about the show should be directed to producer/director, Dee Scott at: 952-472-2987. Tapes are also available from her for \$6 each.

Yellow rocks to all!

**News From
California**
**“TEACHING SQUARE DANCING in the CLASSROOM -
A WORKSHOP for TEACHERS”**
By Roger Smith and Josie Baumgartner
February 2005

We started in April 2004 by going to the Santa Clara County Department of Education at their Board meeting to present the idea of teaching square dancing in the classrooms to get the workshop accredited.

We contacted to the SCVSDA and SCVCA (Dancers and Callers) and the Committee to promote square dancing to see if they were interested in sponsoring such a program in April and May 2004. SCVSDA voted and approved funding for 20 teaching manuals and CDs from Bob Ruff and Jack Murtha, ordered thru Wagon Wheel records. Please see our website (www.wagonwheelrecords.net) for more info on teacher music for children. CVCA voted and approved funding for lunches for the teachers. The Committee to Promote Square Dancing promised funding towards the event. Roger Smith did the presentation. We asked Carol Hill if she would like to come tell of her experiences of teaching square dancing in schools for the past 13 years. Fortunately, she was very excited about the event and her paid input was very much appreciated. Then we looked for a school in a central location to hold the workshop and had to pay a user fee. Thank you to the Santa Clara County Department of Education, who designed the brochure with our input. We paid for the printing. Josie mailed the brochures to 420 Santa Clara County schools in care of the principal in September.

The 2 workshops were from 9:15 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Roger went through the instruction book for the first 1 1/2 hour and gave them a crash course on square dancing the first 20 calls. Carol Hill did the next 1 1/2 hours; then we had lunch. After lunch, teachers had a chance to teach a call, like they would to the kids. We gave the teacher the free CD, workbooks and lots more info on square dancing in a packet as well as a computer-made name tag with a plastic cover and a certificate of completion of Course#XG-ADM404B. We had refreshments; coffee, tea, juices, muffins, snack bars, etc. for the teachers on arrival and served a Togo's sandwich for lunch with fruit and veggies. Sixty-one teachers signed up and 49 came to the 2 workshops. Some that had signed up early had to go to a mandatory school workshop instead. (No-shows are on a list for the future.)

The survey sheet showed that a most of the teachers will implement square dancing in the classroom program. Some wondered why that was not offered before. We also gave the teachers info on the classes that started in January. A few already are attending classes to get more experience. We will monitor the teachers that implement the square dance program and offer them ongoing free support if they feel they need it. None were interested in starting a youth club; they just want to teach in their schools. Total cost per teacher (49) for this workshop was \$ 52.67. Thank you for the very generous donations made by SCVSDA, SCVCA and The Committee to Promote Square Dancing. Roger Smith and Josie Baumgartner donated their time and paid the balance. Many thanks go to Carol H., Carole N., and Davina R. for their inspirations and great help. We feel this is a great investment for the future of square dancing and a great social barrier breaker for the many different nations that are now attending schools.

Why not try in your area! E-mail: Rogersmith14@comcast.net or phone # 650-968-0626.

**News From
Santa Clara Valley, California
“SQUARE DANCE LIVE”
Square Dance Video
By Charlie
February 2005**

We received the following information from Mary Knoppe about a square dance video program made available to viewers on Public Access television in the Santa Clara Valley area of Northern California.

Our first taping was on April 19, 2004. We have taped a total of 26 shows since our starting date. We tape at the Comcast studio in San Jose, Ca. On each show taping date, two 28 minute programs are taped. Shows are taped live (no post production editing).

The Comcast facility is used principally for the cable company's Community Channel (Public Access). Currently the show is aired on the San Jose/Campbell Comcast Community channel that covers Palo Alto, Menlo Park, Atherton, East Palo Alto, Atherton, and Stanford University, and Los Gatos/Monte Sereno community cable channel. The approximate number of cable hookups for the 3 channels is 250,000.

Mike Luna, square dance caller, is the series Founder and Executive Director. I am the program's Producer. Together, Mary Knoppe and I co-host the programs. The general format is to conduct two to three minute interviews on each show covering square dancing information. Periodically guest callers will call on the shows.

Currently Comcast charges \$220 per taping (two shows). Comcast supplies the studio crew. Additional funds are required for tape supplies and duplicating costs, and distribution costs.

For more information contact: Charles at: Class@aol.com

**News From
Geauga County, Ohio
“ACCELERATED CLASS”
The Hubs Square Dance Club
March 2005**

This report is from the Hubs Square dance Club in Geauga County, Ohio and their caller, Ray Miller. It concerns the Hubs and their accelerated square dance class for the season 2004-05. The club started the class in October 2004 and continued through the last Monday in February 2005 with graduation on Monday March 6, 2005. Each class was three hours long and scheduled from 7 -10:00 p.m. With the help of some very dedicated angles, we were able to cover a large amount of material using the CALLERLAB teaching list each night and still have time for a great deal of review.

Each class, after the first few, started with two singing calls to relax the new dancers and to review the basic figures used in most singing calls as they became familiar with them. New calls were introduced, not in the suggested teaching order but in an order that the instructor (Ray Miller) deemed appropriate for the group.

In Early March 2005 the Group finished the Plus Program after only 48 hours of class time. This will enable the new dancers to attend regular club dances for the remaining three months of this dance season and to enjoy a high level of success on the floor.

The purpose of this accelerated program was to enable our new dancers to join with club members at their regular club dances this year instead of being forced to wait until next dance season to join with the club. These new dancers have been dancing at various club level dances for the last month and have experienced a high level of success. A brief discussion with the caller for the night insured that they would not be exposed to calls that they have not had yet. Callers were most receptive to this suggestion and were most cooperative.

The benefit of this program is that the new dancers will not be forced to wait for next fall to take full advantage of this wonderful activity. One of the biggest problems in this area is the lack of a Mainstream dance program at local clubs. This makes it very difficult for new dancers to achieve any degree of success in the fall. In this area there are no summer Plus workshops and as a result clubs are forced to try to rush new dancers through the Plus list and then turn them loose to fail. The result has been a failure to retain new dancers.

Ray Miller is hopeful this three hour program will help to alleviate the drop out rate. It is hoped that getting the new dancers into club activities earlier will encourage them to stay in the activity when the dancing resumes next year. Ray does not claim this adaptation will work with every club. This club has devoted angels who showed up every night and were themselves accomplished dancers. This had a lot to do with our success. The one great advantage with this plan as opposed to the traditional plan, was the amount of time it

provided for review before moving on to the next call. It might be worth a try in your area.
What do we have to lose?

**News From
Rockledge, FL
“SIDEKICK HELPERS For NEW DANCERS”
By Ray Miller
June 2007**

The following idea was submitted by Ailene Picheco, president of the Canaveral Square club in Rockledge, Fl. The idea is to help new dancers through their learning time (class) and then transition into club dancing.

Many experienced callers have observed that new dancer couples at a club dance tend to square up together. By adding experienced dancers to their square, the success rate goes up.

The basic thought behind this idea is that the club would assign an experienced couple to be “Sidekicks” to new dancers for the duration of the class whenever the new dancers attend a club dance or visit other clubs with the home club dancers.

When the new couple joins a square to dance, their “Sidekick” couple would join them in that square. If two new couples got in a square, there would be automatically be two additional couples for a full square. Many times single square dancers have a square “angel” with them. If not, the club could assign an experienced dancer to them as their “Sidekick.” When a single dancer and their “Sidekick” get in a square with another new dancer couple (and their “Sidekick” couple) there would be three couples and only one more couple would be needed for a full square.

**News From
California**
**“TEACHING SQUARE DANCING in the CLASSROOM
WORKSHOP for TEACHERS”**
By Roger Smith and Josie Baumgartner
(Updated December 2007)

This report was received and published in February 2005. We received the update below in December 2007. We thank Roger Smith and Josie Baumgartner for this update.

We still have a few teachers dancing. We also volunteered to teach square dancing in 42 schools and introduced over 4,000 children to square dancing the past 3 years.

Teachers now use mostly *Wagon Wheels: Square Dance Now*, Volume 1 with 10 pre-recorded songs and a good instruction manual.

In our area, the schools are very diversified with as many as 90% of the children coming from as many as 20 foreign different countries. Most of the teacher have been very excited about the program, as it helps children with listening skill, work as teams in an a friendly and fun way, use it as PE program, etc. Unfortunately, most of these immigrant families are not interested in square dancing at this time of their life. Therefore our idea of bringing families into square dancing through teaching in schools has not been very successful, but we hope we planted seeds for the future of square dancing.

We continue to volunteer our time in schools and support the teachers whenever asked.

Why not try in your area!

(Josie was also a U.S.A. immigrant in 1951)

Email: Rogersmith14@comcast.net or phone # 650-968-0626

**News From
Davenport/Bettendorf, IA
“FAST TRACK to MAINSTREAM”
By Doug and Don Sprosty, “The Calling Twins”
February 2008**

The purpose of this article is to relate our very positive experience in early 2007 with teaching the CALLERLAB Mainstream program using the “Fast Track” (or accelerated) approach. We are writing this as we prepare our lesson plan to begin teaching in this format again in early 2008.

By no means is this a new idea, but it was the first time we had used it and we are almost certain it is the first time it had been done in the state of Iowa. The class was taught on four consecutive Saturdays.

Starting on the second Saturday of February through the first Saturday of March we taught the complete Mainstream program to a class of very enthusiastic students. We had 12 students that began the class and 10 that graduated. The make-up of the class included high school students, college students, “40 somethings”, and what we would classify as active/energetic seniors. A good portion of the students had no previous square dance experience. Others took the class as a refresher course after having been out of dancing for a couple of years. Others took the class as a way to reinforce what they were learning in the traditional/conventional square dance class they were simultaneously enrolled in. One of the female students was an experienced dancer who wanted to learn to dance the “man’s” position.

The students were required to pre-register and pre-pay for the class so that plans could be made as far as arranging “partners” for singles. The pre-registration was also necessary for planning the food preparations mentioned later in this article.

Enough “angels” were present to dance three or four squares each tip. The instruction was really no different than in a conventional/traditional class. The length of tips and breaks between tips were the same as any other class except for the fact that the dancing lasted six hours rather than the “normal” two hours. Many of the “angels” commented on the fact that they had more stamina than they thought they would. Some of them were concerned about this since it was a longer dance time than they were accustomed to. As a reward for the “angel’s” efforts, a drawing was held on the last day of class. A restaurant gift certificate was presented to the lucky winner. The angels danced free of charge as well.

The day began with a continental breakfast at 8:30 a.m. Dancing began at 9:00 a.m. and continued until 12:00 noon. Lunch was served and then the dancing continued from 12:30 p.m. until 3:30 p.m. One important point is that lunch was provided so that the students did not have to leave the dance hall. This also provided time to socialize with the “angels”. Natalie Sprosty (round dance cuer and wife of Don) was the lunch coordinator and cook. The

first day cold cuts, cheese, etc. were served to make sandwiches. The other lunches included a taco bar, baked potato bar and soups. The class was operated as a “caller run” venture but could easily be done by a club. This would make the food preparations easier as these duties could be divided among the club members.

Is the Fast Track approach for everyone? Obviously, the answer is “NO!” However, for the right group we found it to be an extremely viable alternative to the traditional/conventional 25 to 30 week class. Age and physical health are extremely important factors. Also, the timing of when to sponsor the class is important. We marketed the class as a way to beat the winter blahs and to get involved in an exercise program as a New Year’s resolution. Offering the class in the spring, summer or fall may not be as effective due to competition from outdoor activities such as sports, camping, etc.

Is the Fast Track approach for every instructor? Our opinion here is also “NO!” In order to effectively teach under this format, the instructor must be energized and must believe in the method in order to “sell” it to the students.

We welcome any questions and comments. Please call (563) 370-0209 or e-mail TwinCaller@juno.com. At this writing, we have seven students pre-registered for our 2008 class with the possibility of two to three more that have shown a genuine interest in giving it a try.

**News From
Washington DC Area
“ALPS (Accelerated Learning Program For Squares)”
By Virgil Forbes
March 2008**

The ALPS program that I have been using for the last several years is not original to me. It is an adaptation of a number of different concepts such as “Blast”, “Blitz” and “Crash Course” that have been talked about at CALLERLAB and other caller gatherings in recent years.

The concept: Quick equip new dancers with enough square dance vocabulary and dance skill so that they can quickly join regular club dances.

The process: A concentrated weekend (Friday/Saturday) that teaches the major elements of the Basic program, followed by club dances that include a workshop tip to add to their choreographic vocabulary. It doesn't really get them to mainstream (or plus) all that much faster. It just gets them there in the format of regular Friday night dancing, where they learn a little bit each night. In order to have time enough for this, we've added an extra 45 minutes to our normal 2 hour dance evening, giving us 8 tips rather than 6.

Supporting ideas: This process allows our new dancers to think of themselves as club members sooner, improving overall retention. Our new members bring new excitement to our dances. Our special dances like the Halloween costume dance the last two years have been special fun, with innovative costumes, especially due to the new members.

Most importantly, ALPS allows us to bring into square dancing new dancers who have been unable or unwilling to commit to the traditional weeknight classes. We dance in a community where commutes to work are routinely over an hour each way, and where most families have two careers to cater to. These families simply can't get home from work after 6:00 p.m., have dinner, get to a class at 7:30, dance for 2 hours, go home, sleep, and get up at 5:00 a.m. the next morning to commute to work. I think this may be the most important impact of ALPS, and its strongest selling point. We are giving our newer dancers recreation on the nights that they have available for recreation—Friday or Saturday.

The choreographic program that I am using this year is attached. In teaching three different ALPS classes I have varied this program quite a bit. If dancers aren't getting a given move, I drop it and move on to something else, then come back to the problem move the following week. The exact choreographic sequence is far less important than the process of keeping the learning on-going and fun.

Requirements: The club as a group and the vast majority of its members must agree to actively support the program, at least for two successive years. It means that they are not going to get much plus dancing in—at most two or three tips out of eight called. It also means that they must all work to support the weekend program.

Advertising is a key. The first night of the class is the only night to start; if you don't have them there for the first session, you can't add them in later. Unlike traditionally formatted classes, you simply cannot keep the class open an extra week or two to pick up a few more students.

At my club we have been blessed by a hard working publicity chairman. She has arranged, in two consecutive years, to get journalists from the local weekly papers (four different papers, two publishers) to attend a dance, take pictures, and talk to the dancers, with the articles to run in the two weeks immediately prior to our ALPS weekend. In every article we try to emphasize the 'modern' nature of the dance, acknowledging our traditional roots, but talking about how modern square dance contains enough variety to engage the interest of dancers for years to come. All the dancers in the pictures have to be smiling. We use a mixture of dress, from neat but casual attire to understated traditional attire. Since many of our dancing ladies favor prairie skirts as their most common attires, this is not a major change. We try to ensure that at least a few pictures taken include some of the younger members of the club.

We have used lawn and road side signs, similar to those used by politicians and real estate agents. They measure approximately 20" x 30", bright yellow (black lettering), and say "Learn Modern Square Dance" and two phone numbers to call for information. Depending on quantities ordered the cost is in the \$8-10 range per sign. There may be local ordinances that place restrictions on how they can be placed. We primarily placed them at intersections where roads from subdivisions and communities come to major commuting routes. This year we're going to try to get approval to place them at subway and commuter rail stations, and in the commuter "Park & Ride" lots.

As far as flyers go, one design does not fit all. We have tailored our flyers to each audience. At fitness centers and recreation centers we advertise the healthy and gentle exercise of square dancing. For church groups we emphasize the wholesome aspects of no smoking, no drinking, no blue jokes. For general public distribution (like grocery stores and community bulletin boards, and for the homeschooling community) we emphasize the multi-generational family dancing.

To be successful, each club member must help. We ask each club member to place flyers in at least two public locations. We also ask them to place one either at their work location, church, or other place where they are known. On these flyers we leave the 'For information' block blank and ask that they write in their own name and phone as the source for further information.

The weekend:

Friday evening: Try to get all of the club members there. Ask them to wear a variety of square dance apparel, but leaning toward the less spectacular. Use two registration tables to collect names, phone numbers, and money, and prepare name badges. Hope you'll have enough new dancers to keep both busy. Don't start dancing immediately. Have the coffee pot and punch bowl set up. Encourage the club members to introduce themselves to the new dancers and mix for a bit before we start dancing.

I start the first tip just like I would do on a normal first night, but I have to keep in mind the fact that we are aiming for learning as well as entertainment. I use just enough repetition of each move to smooth out the majority of the new dancers, and then I move on. I do singing calls every tip, based on the choreography taught during that tip. The first two tips I don't

change partners in the singing calls; thereafter I do. The list of choreography listed below for the first session is about double what I would try for on a traditional first night. I have been pleasantly surprised at the ability of most of the new dancers handle this much material.

Saturday morning: Have the coffee pot on, as well as the water jug and a cooler of juice and soft drinks. I've found it useful to do advance scheduling for the "angels", trying to get about one-third of the club at each of the three daytime sessions. In line with our 'we need every member to support the program' concept, try to get each club member to attend one session, although some members will end up attending more than one.

The largest logistical problem is feeding everyone on Saturday, first at lunch and then supper, especially since you won't be sure how many you're going to feed until Friday evening. Lunch tends to be cold cut platters from Safeway and sandwiches from Subway. Supper is pot luck, with all the club members contributing. Advance coordination on who brings what is necessary. The dancers who "angel" the morning session tend to do the majority of the heavy cooking for the pot luck.

During the Friday night sessions I've found it important to be honest with our new dancers. The physical endurance necessary for this program should not be downplayed. Nine hours of dancing on Saturday is a lot of physical activity. For our primary target population (single adults, young families, and empty nesters) this is not usually a problem, but it can be for older dancers. My phraseology for this is an announcement to the effect of, "We're not suggesting anyone not participate with us in this learning experience, but please be honest with yourselves: square dancing is a physical activity, and we're going to be trying to cover a great deal of material in a relatively short time. You can't learn to square dance by watching, you have to be on the floor doing it. If you find yourself not able to keep up physically it will not only frustrate you, but also the other seven people dancing in your square. If this happens to you, but you still want to learn to dance, I'll return your tuition from this class and try to help you find a traditionally formatted square dance class where you can more fully enjoy learning to dance."

Students who are younger than adults present their own challenges and must be considered on a case by case basis. Our policy has been that children under 16 may only participate as part of a family group (at least one parent or grandparent must participate in the class, either as student or "angel"). When asked ahead of time, I generally ask that children be at least 10, or entering fourth grade. In traditional classes I use 8/second grade as the criterion. Teenagers 16 and older may register independent of a family group, although even there it is helpful to have a recognized family authority figure around. I've found that children younger than 10 usually do not maintain their concentration and learning urge throughout the day, although there are exceptions. We know from experience that teenagers learn square dance skills far more quickly than adults; keeping them interested throughout the day is a considerable challenge.

I consider that the programs I have conducted at Aqua Square to have been a significant success. To put the numbers into context, we are doing this in the Washington DC metro area. From our area's high point, sometime in the late 1970s or early 1980s, more than half of our clubs have folded, and the remaining clubs are much smaller. Less than a third of our remaining clubs have had a beginner's class in the last three years, and a class of eight new

dancers is considered to be a large one. Against this context, here are some of the numbers from the first two years of ALPS classes at Aqua Squares:

2006-2007 Season:

- 31 attended the Friday evening session
- 24 attended all of the Saturday sessions
- 17 graduated as Mainstream dancers in January
- 15 are club members a year later

2007-2008 Season:

- 43 attended the Friday evening session
- 29 attended all of the Saturday sessions
- 23 completed Mainstream in December

I don't want anyone to think that ALPS is a cure for all of our problems; it is not. But in certain circumstances, and with the right combination of caller and club leadership, I believe that ALPS, or other programs like it, can help in beginning the rebuilding of our great activity.

Aqua Squares

ALPS Curriculum 2007-2008 (Tentative)

<p><u>Friday Session 1 (7:30-10: p.m.)</u> Square Identification Hand Holds Circle Up & Back Do Sa Do Prom Single File Swing Promenade Prom Inside Allemande Right & Left Grand Pass Thru Courtesy Turn Lead Right Veer Left Bend the Line Right & Left Thru Promenade ½ Circle ½, ¾ Ladies Chain (2 & 4) Arm Turns Star – Static Square Star Promenade Couples Circulate B/G Circ (TFL) E/C Circ (TFL) Grand Square Ladies Chain ¾ Weave Backtrack</p> <p><u>Saturday Session 2 (10AM-Noon)</u> Star Thru California Twirl Rollaway Ladies in Gents Sashay Square Thru (2-5) Do Paso Allemande Thar Slip the Clutch Dive Thru U Turn Back Eight Chain Thru</p>	<p><u>Saturday Session 3 (1-3:00 p.m.)</u> Flutter Wheel Reverse Flutter Sweep ¼ Veer Right Ocean Wave Swing Thru Boys run B/G Trade (Wv) E/C Trade (Wv) Circle to a Line Touch ¼ Column Circ B/G Run E/C Run Circulate (Wv) Chain Down the Line Pass the Ocean</p> <p><u>Saturday Session 4 (3-5PM)</u> Alamo Style Alamo Swing Thru Alamo Left Sw Th Wheel & Deal (TFL) Wheel & Deal (OFL) Double Pass Thru 1st Left/Next Right Extend Zoom Ferris Wheel</p>	<p><u>Saturday Session 5 (Evening)</u> Stars (Box) Single Circle <u>Friday Sep 21</u> Dance & Review <u>Friday Sep 28</u> Walk Around See Saw Box Gant Wrong Way Grand <u>Friday Oct 5</u> Shoot the Thar Wheel Around Partner Trade Trade By Hinge Centers In Cast Off (OFL) Pass to the Center <u>Friday Oct 12</u> Separate Around 1 Separate Around 2 Into/Down Middle Squeeze into Line</p> <p><u>Friday Oct 19</u> Gents In Ladies Sashay Half Sashay</p> <p><u>Friday Oct 26</u> Halloween Dance Facing Couple Rule Ocean Wave Rule</p> <p><u>Friday Nov 2</u> Spin the Top Grand Swing Thru Slide Thru Turn Thru Walk & Dodge Fold Cast Off (Wv)</p>
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<p><u>Friday Nov 9</u> Turn Thru Cast Off (Wv) Cloverleaf</p> <p><u>Friday Nov 16</u> Bill Harrison Dance</p> <p><u>Friday Nov 23</u> No Dance – Thanksgiving</p> <p><u>Friday Nov 30</u> Dixie Style Cross Run Cross Fold Left Hand Wave Left Swing Thru Split/Box Circulate</p> <p><u>Friday Dec 7</u> Tag the Line Half Tag Scootback Recycle Wrong Way Thar Shoot the Thar Full</p> <p><u>Friday Dec 14</u> Dance Mainstream</p> <p><u>Friday Dec 21</u> Christmas Dance</p> <p><u>Friday Dec 28</u> No Dance</p> <p><u>Friday Jan 4</u> Review/Dance MS</p> <p><u>Friday Jan 11</u> Guest Caller Dance Mainstream</p>	<p><u>Friday Jan 18</u> Guest Caller Dance Mainstream</p> <p><u>Friday Jan 25</u> Anniversary Dance</p> <p><u>February 1 & 8</u> Dances cancelled due to Hall availability</p> <p><u>Friday Feb 15</u> Graduation</p> <p>Begin Plus</p> <p><u>Friday Feb 22</u> Single Circle Grand Swing Thru Acy Deucey Teacup Chain Load the Boat Extend</p> <p><u>Friday Feb 29</u> Spin Chain Thru Peel Off Ping Pong Circulate</p> <p><u>Friday Mar 7</u> Linear Cycle Coordinate Anything & Spread Anything & Roll</p> <p><u>Friday Mar 14</u> Spin Chain Gears Track Two</p> <p><u>Friday Mar 14</u> WASCA Weekend</p> <p><u>Friday Mar 21</u> No Dance – Good Friday</p>	<p><u>Friday Mar 28</u> Review Plus to date Follow Your Neighbor FYNAS Fan the Top</p> <p><u>Friday Apr 4</u> Explode the Wave Explode & Anything Relay the Deucey</p> <p><u>Friday Apr 11</u> Peel the Top Trade the Wave Diamond Circulate Flip the Diamond</p> <p><u>Friday Apr 18</u> Crossfire All 8 Spin the Top Cut the Diamond</p> <p><u>Friday Apr 25</u> Chase Right Dixie Grand ¾ Tag</p> <p><u>Friday May 2</u> Sp Ch Ex G</p> <p><u>Friday May 9</u></p> <p><u>Friday May 16</u></p> <p><u>Friday May 23</u> No Dance – Memorial Day</p> <p><u>Friday May 30</u></p> <p><u>Friday Jun 6</u> Last Regular Dance</p>
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**News From
Washington State
“NEW CLASS – TEN SQUARES”
February 2009**

We received the following information from Robert Hurst with a report from Don Wood regarding a new dancer class in Washington State. The report indicates that good advertising and recruiting can be successful

Don reports the following on February 10, 2009:

Tonight was the first night of square dance class. Prior to this set of lessons, we did some advertising in the local paper; square dancing was posted on all wellness websites for State agencies, and a lot of dancers helped by spreading the word and bringing people. Imagine my surprise when I was ready for the first instruction and looked out and saw over ten squares on the floor. Needless to say I was excited!

What this proves to me is that advertising coupled with all the other methods to get the word out really helps.

I will post more as class progresses, but I wanted to send a small ray of sunshine out to say that maybe if we work hard there is some hope.

**News From
Martinez, CA
“MARTINEZ SWINGERS’ SATURDAY CLASSES”
By Bert Swerer
September 2009**

What—a Saturday morning square dance class? Why not! People take walks, run, ride a bike, walk the dog, or go to a gym for exercise on Saturdays. Why not learn to square dance and get the same benefits and meet some great people at the same time? The Martinez Swingers of Martinez, California has joined with the Martinez Adult Education (MAE) to offer such a class. Each Saturday morning from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. dancers from the Martinez Swingers, acting as “Angels”, join with the class members for the two-hour sessions.

Offering this class through the MAE has some big advantages: the hall is available at no cost, the class is included in the MAE catalog of offered classes (which is mailed to thousands of local residents); and the MAE office handles all sign-ups and registration fees. Other advertising is done with flyers and free calendar listings in local publications and shoppers. There is no financial obligation to the club, just their support as “angels”. The caller/instructor is an employee of the school and is paid by MAE based on a percentage of the registration fee. Other districts may pay the instructor by the hour. Our district requires the caller to have a TB test and be fingerprinted for employment. Most adult education programs are extensions of the local school district that are looking for class ideas and instructors to add to their itinerary of classes.

This all started in May 2006 with the idea of presenting an ABC program in the fall. It was the first class session of five weeks and was followed by another five-week session. At this point we had dancers who wanted to continue, but no place to go. They had danced with the “angels” from the Martinez Swingers for the last ten weeks, made friends and wanted to continue dancing with them, but the club was a Plus level club. Another five weeks were added, bringing the class closer to a Mainstream level. At this point they were invited to join the Martinez Swingers and their caller agreed to continue the lessons without going all the way back to “Circle Left”.

It was time to rethink the program to try to make the transition from class to Plus workshop smoother. The present program now consists of three, five-week sessions; each session is two hours in length. Session I has no prerequisite. Sessions II and III, however, require the student either to have completed the previous session or have previous square dancing experience. There have been several “empty nesters” that were rejoining square dancing and joined Session II as they remembered the early basics.

On the first day of each session an 8-1/2" x 11" bound workbook is handed out to each student or couple. I designed this book to correspond to all the calls that would be taught for that particular five-week session. A definition is given for each call and the calls are grouped by the week they are taught. The intent of the booklet is for reference only. Some liked the idea of knowing what was coming, and others used it to refresh their mind when they got home. The teaching order generally follows the teaching order suggested by CALLERLAB. The very

first class day of Session I has the most instruction to cover many of the basics. From then on, four to six calls are taught each Saturday. Session I is fairly intense with only two singing calls, one at the beginning and one at the end of each class. By the end of Session II, they have been taught all the calls in the CALLERLAB Basic and Mainstream Programs.

There are 30 calls in the CALLERLAB Plus Program. It would be very difficult or impossible to teach all these calls in a five-week session. Session III includes about 25 of the Plus calls, bringing the dancers to a proficiency to merge comfortably into a Plus workshop, where the caller will teach the remaining calls on the list and reinforce the previously learned calls.

Dancers who have attended all three of the sessions are invited to “angel” the next class and are encouraged to bring new dancers. This endeavor has been greatly responsible for the increase in class attendance. To be sure we were heading in the right direction, I passed out a survey at the end of Session III asking the following questions: 1) Was the Saturday time slot convenient? 2) Did you feel the class pace was sufficient? 3) Were the Angels helpful? 4) Was the instruction understandable? 5) Was the class a good value compared to the cost? An area was also provided for general thoughts/comments regarding the class. We were so pleased that the majority of the responses were very, very positive.

The support of the Martinez “angels” has been outstanding. Their friendliness and enthusiasm have been extremely instrumental in the success of these classes and it is the plan to continue with this program as we get ready to start the sixth class session on Saturdays.

If anyone would like more information or to discuss any of the above please feel free to contact me at BSwerer@aol.com or 510-724-7712.

CENTRAL OHIO COUNCIL OF DANCE CLUBS

At the meeting of the Central Ohio Council of Dance Clubs (COCDC) on May 4, 2009, it was announced to the Council representatives that we were forming a group to try to promote square dancing, recruit more new dancers for our classes in the fall, and ultimately to increase membership in our clubs. Mary Galentine agreed to chair this committee. We gave the club representatives information of when and where the first meeting was going to be held. We also sent out this information by e-mail to dancers from all of the clubs and announced it at each of the club dances we attended for the remainder of the spring. Dancers representing eight different Central Ohio clubs attended the first Committee meeting in May.

We were successful in getting club members involved, even though towards the end there was only a handful of us that really were left with getting the ball rolling. In these meetings we discussed ways to increase the numbers of new dancers recruited and the importance of us working **together** to make this happen. We decided to purchase polo shirts with the logo on them "Ask Me About Square Dancing". In all, from August to October, we sold over 160 shirts. That is 160 bill boards of advertisement. We also created a business type card that had the same logo on it. The background of the card was the U.S. flag, with two people's names, phone numbers and e-mail address as points of contact. The back of the card was a coupon for two free dances lessons with the locations of where they were being held in two different parts of town. We also stated on the card that if those locations did not work for the person, to please call one of the numbers on the other side of the card for information of clubs in "their" area. The two of us listed had already agreed that we need dancers and that it did not matter what club they chose, and I know several people were referred to clubs that did not participate in our campaign just because that was the closest club for the new dancer. We put these cards on bulletin boards in libraries, grocery stores, post offices—anywhere we were allowed. All during our summer dances we reminded our dancers of these meetings and encouraged them to join us. In late August and early September we wore our polo shirts and went to street dances and demos to do our best to get new dancers. We passed out flyers to anyone who might be interested, giving them information about square dancing and the health benefits received from square dancing, as well as listings of locations where they could go to learn. We had pot luck open beginner dances at two different locations to help get people interested. There was also a pot luck meal at one group's first free beginner class. Other promotional activities included writing articles and sending them, along with photos, to local publications, and posting dance class information on a number of free on-line listings of community activities. Some clubs added or improved their websites. All the attention placed on recruitment seemed to energize the dancers to talk to people about our wonderful activity.

I believe the combination of all of these things, as well as the efforts of those that were involved on the committee, are why our classes have increased as much as they have this year. We are starting to really work **together** to keep our culture alive. We have 98 new dancers who started classes this fall: 25 at Bucks & Does Singles; 18 in the combined Orbiting Squares/Friendly Ties class; 14 at Grove City Squares; 13 at Little Brown Jug; 13 at Westerville Promenaders; 8 at Bunkhouse Reelers; and 7 at Hicks & Chicks. One club, Rhythm Reelers, will be starting their class Nov 10.

I would just like to say “THANK YOU” to everyone who helped with this campaign, even if you were not able to attend every meeting. Your efforts are seen in our results!

“NEW DANCER PROMOTION PROGRAM”
BRECKSVILLE SQUARES
By Bill and Marge Webb
November 7, 2009

How do you make a club grow and how do you invigorate a club—by getting new dancers! But how do you do that? As always, it’s by asking people to come to lessons and learn. But we’ve tried that and we’ve asked everyone we know and got no takers. So then what?

The last two or three years we’ve had three or four new dancers in our classes and limited success in keeping them. So I decided we could do better. I talked to some of our more recent graduates and invited them to my house in November (before Marge and I went to Florida for the winter) and tossed around some ideas. We decided to meet once a month after we got back from Florida to come up with names of people who might be interested. We encouraged all of our club members to get involved and put names into a prospective new member box. We promised we would draw a name out of this box in July and give the lucky club member a special prize. That was the start.

Starting in May, we gathered and talked about ways to advertise our club and lessons. General calling cards were made and given to all club members to give to anyone they talked to who had any interest in square dancing. This was just general information with two contact names; the person who gave out the card and mine. We had a nice article in the local paper and we did a demo at a summer concert on our town square.

At the end of July, we sent out a general letter to all those names we had collected telling about the value of square dancing, our local club, etc. and emphasized that lessons start only once a year in September at almost all clubs around Cleveland. We made new cards which promoted our “Fun Night” with finger foods 30 minutes before we started dancing. In August, we sent another letter out emphasizing that it now was only 2 weeks away and reminded them to be sure they had it on their calendar. Finally, we had the club member who solicited the new dancer call them and get their reaction and interest in coming. This initial mailing had 98 names. We followed this with personal calls and we had about 40 who were interested. The first night we had 29 show up and about 40 “angels”. It was an exciting beginning!

The numbers have fallen off to about 15 to 18 showing up each week. I have made a point of calling those who miss to see if everything is alright and encourage them to come back. We have a short 15 minute review before our regular class to catch up anyone who missed the previous lesson. Each week I have come up with a saying on a business size card and a treat for the new dancers to take home. It’s corny, but they seem to look forward to it. After 9 weeks now, we are very pleased that it looks like we will have almost 20 who should graduate in April.

This effort took some time and the committee of seven couples helped keep us all excited about the end goal, but no one killed themselves and we had a lot of fun. The primary effort was to talk to anyone, where ever we were, about our great activity and if they showed any

interest, get their name, address, and phone number so that we could follow up. It certainly was worth the effort and we hope we can do it again next year. Thanks to our great committee!

“NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY DANCES”

By Dave Harry

March 2, 2015

Last year, in preparation for our 2014 fall Mount Baker Council Dance, we set the groundwork for a successful Mainstream and “No Experience Necessary Dance”, to be run simultaneously. We rented Leota Junior High, which included the teacher’s lounge, cafeteria, small gym, and large gym. Then we went to work on our ad campaign. First, we notified the greater Seattle Square Dance Councils of our intent and then we sent e-mails to all of the teachers and schools where I teach square dancing. We invited the schools to participate in the “No Experience Necessary Dance”, and we encouraged the Seattle area square dancers to invite their new students to dance with us and also to bring a non-dancing friend. We advertised in a local social dance calendar and a weekly online newspaper calendar.

The dance was a huge success! We had 72 paid squares, 15 of which danced in the “No Experience Necessary Hall” and over 50 squares danced in the Mainstream Hall. To put things in perspective, our average council dance is about 25 squares. We featured “The B C Boys” (Ray Brendzy, Steve Edlund, and Brent Mawdsley, all of Canada) as the Mainstream callers and me as the new dancer caller. In the new dancer hall we had a display board featuring square dance information and a drawing container for a free set of lessons. We collected about 40 names in it. We invited the brand new dancers into the Mainstream Hall for the last set of squares of the evening. I watched them as they migrated over there; not one couple left early! It was bumper to bumper, shoulder to shoulder in that huge gym, and they had a great time. I can’t think of a better way to introduce new dancers to our activity!

Our school participation could have been better. In the beginning, we offered the PTSAs of the school district a percentage of the net proceeds, thinking this would create active involvement, but word of the plan didn’t apparently spread. Also, we didn’t know that we needed to have our flyers approved by the school district ahead of time, so we lost some advertising time there (the flyers in the schools were being destroyed), and one of the high schools had a major football game that night. So we didn’t get the student participation that we wanted (20 students participated), but considering all, we feel we had a huge success! We did follow through with our monetary donation to the PTSAs, hoping to build Goodwill.

We already have a plan like this in place for our upcoming Washington State Festival, where a dance floor and two evening time slots are set aside for “No Experience Necessary Dances”. Our council dance was so successful that the club sponsoring our next fall council dance has also decided to include a “No Experience Necessary Dance” in its format.

It is my opinion that every big square dance and CALLERLAB function should include a dance like this, so the general public can not only see but also experience the joy and excitement of our festive activity.

Happy Dancing!

**News From
New Jersey
RUTGERS PROMENADERS
By Ken Robinson
March 2, 2015**

Here are a few things that I think helped turn the club around:

1) We moved our dances from Thursday evening (which worked well when the club was still a college club) to Sunday afternoon. The original thought was that we would get families with young kids to come then. Initially, that didn't work; we got senior citizens who didn't want to drive at night.

2) The club always encouraged families with young kids to come to the dances, even if the kids didn't dance. There was always an adult to watch the kids; many of those kids are now dancing. We now say we are a "family friendly" club.

3) About six or seven years ago, a family of with home schooled kids showed up at one of our dances and asked when we were starting lessons. We hadn't planned on doing lessons that year, but we said "Today"; that was the start of the club's growth. The kids in that family got their friends to come and the momentum built from there. Then some of the teens got their parents to learn!

4) We hold our lessons before our regular dance. One hour of lessons and then there are class level tips during our regular dance. This way the class members feel like they are in the club from day one. They also get used to coming to the dance on our regular dance day, not some other day/time. We don't quite get through the Mainstream program by the end of the dance season, but we graduate the class anyway and encourage them to get out and dance. Our retention rate has been very good over the last few years. I don't have exact figures, but I would guess that it's on the order of about 90%.

5) Although we are technically a "couples" club, we do not require people to be coupled up before getting into a square. There are almost always people who are willing to fill a spot in a square, and many of our regular dancers can dance either part.

6) Since almost everyone in the club has an e-mail address, communication is done via e-mail.

7) We dance the Mainstream program and welcome dancers who are coming back into the activity. We've had some members ask if we would dance any Plus tips at the dance and both Betsy and Dan have said "No Way"!

8) We are a fun club to dance with and we dance with our visitors!

9) We moved to a nice facility with no steps, a good floor, and good lighting. It was more than double the cost of our old dance hall, but the increased attendance at our dances more than paid for the move.

Here are a few things we don't do:

1) We don't require any specific dress code. While personally, I don't think this matters all that much, I've noticed that teens like to dress up and the new dancers love to buy square dance outfits.

2) We don't have committees and require members to be on them.

3) We don't require members to bring refreshment, but almost everyone does. We have one couple who has been refreshment chairs for years and they set up the punch bowl and some refreshments, but there's no sign-up sheets

4) We don't push new dancers into leadership roles. For example, a few years ago a new graduate came up to me and asked what her job was for the following year. I told her that her job was to come to dances and have fun!

5) We don't discourage rowdiness in the squares. If the kids (and those of us who never grew up) want to horse around in a square (dancing as couples, nine pin, trading between squares), we let them.

“A SUCCESS STORY GROWING CLASSES”

By Don Wood

Much like many other areas, five years ago we were failing. Our classes were small, if we had enough for a class at all, and clubs were stagnating if not dying. Five years back we decided a change was necessary. Our dancer's organization and callers got together and came up with a modification of another caller's program that was having success in his area. Our success did not happen overnight. It took a couple of years and some tweaking. More importantly, it took cooperation between callers and clubs. Frankly, it was change or die as an activity. Thankfully we chose to change.

I should mention this amount of attendance is not an anomaly, it is fairly typical; at least it has been for the past three years or 18 classes. In any event, I thought you might enjoy seeing a success. We had 9 squares last night. What fun! My colleague (Glenn Raiha) was teaching, and I attended as my Monday class just ended and won't start until February. What a joy it was to see a full hall of happy smiling faces. I do hope that others will consider what we are doing and be able to take something positive away from this. Please feel free to contact me should anyone want more information.

I recently read a posting from a caller proposing a ten week course for square dancing. This would, in that callers' opinion, require the removal of some calls and the addition of others; specifically some Plus calls. This was from an ACA member. As you are aware, I am a member of both organizations. What prompted me to write to you is this.

Without respect to the Plus calls, this is close to the program we run in our area. I work with another caller (a CALLERLAB Member) and we run a program structured as follows. To begin with, there are six start dates in our program over a given year. We have class on Monday or Thursday.

1. In September, a ten week program from 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. on Thursday; the Basic 51 program is taught.
2. Five weeks after starting the Thursday class, a Monday class begins; the Basic 51 program is taught again.
3. Once the Thursday class has completed the ten week course, another Basic 51 class is started. Basic is taught from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. and Mainstream from 8:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
4. Dancers who completed the Basic 51 program can choose to return and “angel” the new Basic 51 class and attend the Mainstream portion.
5. This scenario is duplicated for the Monday night class.

Generally, this structure is working well. It is relatively standard for me to have between five and eight squares attending every Monday or Thursday. This is our fifth year, and we believe the program is working. Many of the dancers will go thru the program multiple times to get comfortable with the calls. They are actively joining clubs; and in our area, square dancing is growing.