



This newsletter provides promotion and marketing ideas, shines a light on people in our dance community, provides history and general information about our much loved activity, and highlights provincial and national events. If you wish to contribute an article, or see an event, topic, person, or club featured, contact the editor.



## STAYING CONNECTED - by Editor Claudia Littlefair

It's been a hard adjustment for Dave and I to go from dancing, cueing and/or calling 3 to 4 times a week and weekends filled with dance events to nothing with a capital 'N'! We know many others are going through the same withdrawal, too. More than the physical activity, we miss the comradery of the dance community. I think the social aspect of dance is the greatest, albeit unexpected, gift that we receive.

We recently had our club's AGM via Zoom and the best thing was seeing each other on the screen. Our club has also arranged weekly Zoom coffee klatches, and kept in touch through emails, phone calls and texts. We plan to get together for outside visits and BYOF (Bring Your Own Food) barbecues, while physically distancing.

It's hard to imagine when we'll be dancing again, or who will be dancing, calling and cueing. If we continue to meet as a club or with others in our dance community during this unforeseen pandemic break, chances are pretty good that we'll see each other on the dance floor again. So please make the effort to stay connected – we're going to need you!

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## ON THE INSIDE TRACK

- by Editor Barry Wonson, 'Around The Square' Newsletter, Australia

Editor's Note: If you wish to receive this newsletter, email your request to Barry Wonson at: [bjwonson@gmail.com](mailto:bjwonson@gmail.com).

Barry is a club caller and has been calling for 51 years. He and his wife, Susan, live in Wollongong, NSW, Australia.



**WELCOME to the fourth Edition of "AROUND THE SQUARE"; a magazine for square dancers, round dancers, cloggers and anyone else that has an interest in aspects of our great activity.** Our aim is for each issue to present to you articles, ideas, commentary, and much more, providing Information, Education, Entertainment, and even Enlightenment.

Over the last couple of months, the world has been turned upside down due to the impact of the COVID 19 virus. **For our activity, the effects have been catastrophic.** National Conventions, State Conventions, Conference, Weekends, Festivals, plus all club dances and events just gone. Who knows when we will see our activity up and running again?

**Unfortunately, square dancing is the one recreational activity that is the most severely affected by the possibilities associated with transmission of this virus.** Our entire activity is based on not just close contact, but on continuous contact with every person involved in any given square-dancing session. Given this basic structure, it is obvious that our activity will be one that takes some time to recover.

However, we all know that a recovery will come, albeit a slow one. By the time we are ready to get back in the saddle again, there may be some out there who will possibly balk at attending our dances...the fears created by the impact of the virus will not dissipate straight away, and this may result in dancers deciding to try something else that has less contact. The social distancing guidelines that are currently present and in force in just about every country in the world, have shown the benefits in flattening the curve. The statistics show that those areas that have had the strictest guidelines, have been the most effective in cutting transmission. Of course, most realize that we can use statistical analysis to show what we want (all depends on data collection), but in this case, the overall facts are obvious.

**These guidelines may be in place for some time to come...and we are the most affected in square dancing.** All that we can do is to wait for the future to unfold...with a positive outcome. **This means however, that we do have time to prepare**

**for this new future.** It is not the time for complacency. While the world will definitely be a very different place in the future, that does not mean that we do not go on...but it does mean that we need to look to our laurels and be ready for change.

**Many areas have changed the way that they are looking at our activity.** Many callers' associations have responded by involvement in online discussions via forums on social media, as well as face-to-face meetings with programs such as Zoom. Our own Australian Callers Federation (ACF) had a board meeting with 18 members last month. It turned out to be an exciting and positive step in continuing debate and communication. Many other groups have also accepted the challenge of the times... there are now many callers' schools, associations, etc., getting together in this way.

**Likewise, even local square dance clubs have taken the plunge and kept up communication via like methods.** This is an extremely positive approach and will have a major impact on keeping everyone together and looking to the future.

It seems that we currently have more general communication within all areas of our activity than ever before! This can only be positive. If you have not already done so, check with your local area friends, and see just what is available to you...the future is in your hands.

**To keep everyone involved and sane while in lockdown, you may wish to visit some of these pages** available on social media.

- Square dance Choreography - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/299315447319027/?ref=bookmarks>
- Translate Square Dance Calls For me - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/644043732282756/>
- Square Dance Topics & Issues - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/562404143864058/>
- Square Dance Video - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/747598525277159/>
- Square Dancing Australia - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/squaredancingaustralia/>
- CALLERLAB Public Relations - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/CALLERLAB.PR/>
- Square Dance - Corona Learning Assistance Seminar Series - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/861059987655116/>
- Sustainable Square Dance Program - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/319491818505954/>
- Square Dance Society of Australia - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1397239143929309/>
- Newbie Callers - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/newbiecallers/>
- Callers in Training - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/443473255839071/>
- Square Dance Music - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/SquareDanceMusic/>

**There are many others out there, including local, state, and national bodies...just do a good google search and it is amazing what you can come up with.**

**You can also stay involved with Virtual Square Dances on face book using ZOOM.** You can get live links and participate in the dance or watch the videos back later. Here is the link - [www.facebook.com/groups/VirtualSquareDances](https://www.facebook.com/groups/VirtualSquareDances). Mike Dusoe has a regular video dance section on face book.... check out his page on facebook. You can also find a really neat song (WHEN WE DANCE AGAIN) written and sung by caller Barry Peck here (have a good listen to a set of very topical lyrics): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XnKQN9XBVYk>.

- You want proof baseball players are smarter than football players? How often do you see a baseball team penalized for too many men on the field? —Jim Bouton, Yankees Pitcher
- Yesterday I saw a guy spill all his Scrabble letters on the road. I asked him, "What's the word on the street?"
- I was in the gym earlier and decided to jump on the treadmill. People were giving me weird looks, so I started jogging instead.
- Did you hear about the mathematician who's afraid of negative numbers? He'll stop at nothing to avoid them.
- Never trust math teachers who use graph paper. They're always plotting something.
- All pro athletes are bilingual. They speak English and profanity. Gordie Howe, hockey player.

## VIRTUAL SQUARE & ROUND DANCING - The Next-Best Only Thing?

- by Editor Claudia Littlefair

Hats off to the several callers and cuers who are hosting square and round dance sessions through social media programs such as Zoom, Facebook videos and You-Tube. Because of you, we get to dance!



Callers Bob Simpson and Darby Love, and cuer Dorothy Simpson, from Quesnel, BC, made a decision to post daily square dance patters, singers and round dances on Facebook during the Covid-19 pandemic. On May 26, "Dancing in the Garage Volume 45" was posted. Depending on weather, they have called, cued and danced in the Simpson's garage, driveway and backyard. The other day they danced in the park with other square dancers who dance as couples only, and not in squares of eight.

That post got 4200 views within 36 hours. Find the collection of videos on YouTube or Bob Simpson's facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/bob.simpson.75054/videos/10158206709325149>.

About 70% of the Mainstream square dance program consists of calls that are for one couple (eg. partner trade) or two couples (eg. right and left thru). Calgary caller Lorne Smith calls weekly Zoom dances for Mainstream and Plus, that introduce the concept of "Two-Couple Square Dancing". He limits his calling to only these one and two couple calls. As dancers become proficient at dancing with phantoms, the program will expand to include the four couple calls. The Calgary & District Association supports this initiative and posts links to videos of the Zoom dances. It's website states:

*"Virtual Square Dancing: This new program has become a weekly event. We encourage all local square dancers to attend. It is a great way to keep up your dancing skills and get exercise during the COVID-19 restrictions on social gatherings.*

*Our Dances: At present, our dances are focusing on introducing local dancers to the concepts of Two-Couple square dancing and dancing with a Phantom Couple. Once the dancers are familiar with these concepts, the program will expand to include dancing in full squares, with one Live couple (or individual dancer) and three Phantom Couples. In future, the program will expand to include dances at the Plus, Advanced or Challenge levels."*

For more information go to: <http://www.squaredancecalgary.com/virtual/> and Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/squaredancecalgary/>



Round Dance Cuer couple Mary & Bruce Nelson from Sherwood Park have set up three 12 week recurring Zoom meetings, 7:30-8:30pm MDT, for easy level Phase II Waltz and Two-Step on Fridays, Phase III on Mondays and Phase IV on Tuesdays.

If they notice something that needs to be walked thru, they will stop and walk through the steps that are giving the dancers problems. If any of the couples dancing want to have a more in-depth workshop for a specific dance or routine, they can arrange one-on-one Zoom meetings with them.

For more information contact Mary or Bruce at: [mbnelson@shaw.ca](mailto:mbnelson@shaw.ca).

Facebook page "Virtual Square Dancing" is a group with over 1.1K members, hosted by square callers Mike Dusoe and Denise Carbonell, both from Maine, U.S., which manages Virtual Square Dances, posting dates, times, and conference links. Recordings of the Zoom dances are made public as videos after each dance event, so dancers can still enjoy the dance without being at the actual Zoom event.

"Square Dance Flyers" is another Facebook page that lists Virtual Square and Round Dances from places in Canada, U.S., Germany, England, Australia and more. For more information or links to their Zoom dances go to: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/SQUAREDANCEFLYERS>.

**Need some “how-to” help with square dance calls?** There are several on-line resources that explain and demonstrate the square dance calls.

- **“Video Square Dance Lessons On-Line – How to Square Dance”** website demonstrates all calls in the Mainstream and Plus programs. Go to: <https://videosquaredancelessons.com/lessons/>.
- **North Shore Squares in Chicago** posted videos on their website for 50 of the calls in the Mainstream program. Go to: <https://www.northshoresquares.com/alphabetical-club-50-videos>.
- **“Taminations”** Here you will find animations for square dance calls from Mainstream through C-3B. Most calls have several animations from different starting positions. Taminations are written and maintained by Brad Christie, webmaster of the Tam Twirlers Square Dance Club. <https://www.tamtwirlers.org/taminations/>

**Need help with Round Dance steps?**

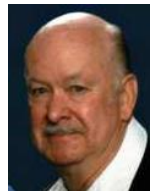
- **Google “YouTube round dancing [and name of step]”**. There are numerous Round Dance videos posted on YouTube. Some feature demonstration dances from various major Round Dance events or club round dances, and some are short teaching videos for particular Round Dance figures.
- **“RoundDancing.net”** contains an on-line Figure & Styling Manual developed by Harold and Meredith Sears, history on the different rhythms and how the figures are executed, as well as other articles of round dance interest from various instructors. Go to: <http://rounddancing.net/dance/index.html>.
- **There are other sites that offer videos and information, but they come with a cost.** One such site is Roundalab who have on-line teaching videos for a subscription cost. Go to: <https://www.roundalab.org/index.php>.

**So, leave your comfort zone and sharpen your dance skills - try virtual square or round dancing. Dance with callers, cuers and dancers from all parts of the world without ever leaving your living room!**

## **‘BASIC’ AS AN ENTRY LEVEL**

*Editor’s Note: The pandemic may last for many months. When we come back to dance, some dancers will need to relearn the program, together with new dancers. This may be a golden opportunity to make the switch to the “Sustainable Square Dance” program introduced by caller Jerry Story. For complete information on this 50-call program go to: [http://www.callerlab.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=39fp\\_mB6th4%3D&portalid=1](http://www.callerlab.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=39fp_mB6th4%3D&portalid=1).*

*The following is an excerpt from the article “NO! B-51 IS NOT A BOMBER - Basic As An Entry Level” written by long-time caller and leader Daryl Clendenin. B-51 refers to Basic 1 and Basic 2 programs which make up the first 51 calls of the Mainstream program of 68 calls. The article describes the reason and the benefits for a shorter program.*



**When square dancing ceased being a "social recreation" and became a "hobby", our problems began.** The difference between recreation and hobby is the difference between just going bowling or being part of a tournament league. The first requires little, the second requires a lot. **The idea of B-51 is to recreate a social program of dancing.**

**It has been said, “Most of us callers call material that is far too difficult for the recreational dancer.”** Today’s dancers are survivors. It is evident that the recreational dancer has not been intrigued with the challenge and has left the activity. Movements 1-51 on the list make up the Basic 1 and 2 Programs of square dancing. Notice that B-51 is only 17 movements fewer than the 68 that make up Mainstream. How can the clubs and callers help? **My opinion (along with many other caller leaders) is: we need to get a quicker, easier entry level established and accepted.**

I’m not suggesting that we change the dance level at our clubs to B-51, but **our area could benefit from local dances at an easier level of difficulty.** Keep the club level at Mainstream and when the students reach the 51 Basic level, have some real dances for them to attend while they finish their Mainstream lessons and hopefully join the club.

For the dancers whom we are losing, those who are slower to learn, the ones who need to angel the next two sets of lessons, the ones who make it through ten lessons and never get any further and mainly **those that we are losing because**

it's too much too quick, it creates a program where they can survive until they can make it at the Mainstream level. You know to whom I refer.

Here's something you might consider. Think about last year's students who made it through the full set of lessons but aren't dancing. You can just about consider them a total loss. Let them know about this more relaxed dance program. Without the pressure of anything beyond a ten lesson level knowledge, they can comfortably dance. **That's right, ten lessons as an entry level for real dancing.** As they get comfortable at B-51, they'll be looking for a good Mainstream club to vary their dance experience.

**Everyone wins—the dancer and the club.** If extended applications of the Basic moves were saved for workshop tips at the B-51 dance, ten lessons could be within reason for an entry level and ten lessons would be considerably more marketable.

### **KELLY'S KORNER - by Kelly Thompson**

*Kelly started square dancing in 2016 after being coerced by his sister. He admits that he would have never walked into the club on his own. He has since found a whole new way of looking at life, a community of new friends and personal confidence that didn't exist before.*

### **YELLOW ROCK**

*(Editor: The 'Yellow Rock' call means to hug. It's not called as often as it once was.)*

I think we can quite honestly say that it appears square dancing has been bitten by some sort of bug. Usually we would think perhaps to be bitten by a square dance bug could be seen as a good thing but such is not the case with the Covid 19 bug. This bug is nasty, especially toward our favourite activity; our square dance family is under attack.



I think as with any fight it is imperative to enter the ring with the attitude you can and will win. It appears today, more than ever before, social animals such as we are, need to hold that winning attitude to come out into that second round, rested, rejuvenated and ready to go the distance. We may have taken a knock down but we are not beaten. We need to hold on to the reasons we square dance, the benefits and maybe even set a path for the future ahead.

This Covid virus has shown us a lot of things, some of which is new, but I think also some that isn't new. Certainly we have seen weaknesses in the healthcare system but I think maybe even unique to square dancers is how the strength in community, activity and just being together can offer the necessary ingredients to ward off stress, and the health problems that associate with it. I have thought for quite some time, in fact the entire time I have been involved, square dancing should be used as part of a mental health treatment program.

I have worked on "safe distance square dancing" for a bit, well before this crisis, but have had little support for the idea. I have suggested we square dance in combines complete with the 40 foot header, but many thought that to be a dumb idea. It would have its advantages and a lot more disadvantages, but wouldn't be much different than the tractors were or the skid steers. It would take a lot of skill, learning some new things and figuring out how to start a combine. We can learn new things, although fixing combines shouldn't be one of those.

I am sure there are those working within our program to bring in new ideas, new ways of doing things and to ready square dancing toward the future. It is my opinion we all need to input our ideas, what it is you think we can do, but even better is to feel you are valued. Write a letter to your president, give that person praise for what they are doing considering what we are facing, and let's help our family grow.

As some people have said, "we are all in this together" - our team will win. We can't fix combines, but we can let those imaginary combines fix us. We will come out swinging because we have that square dance bite. Can we beat that Covid bug? It has to catch us first, and if you are dancing to the auctioneer song, it has no chance of doing that.

I think just to know a good square dance caller can talk anything into a corner or call Yellow Rock when you least expect it. We all need a rock, and I think yellow is an O.K. color (the color of a Lexion combine). - **Yellow Rock!**

## LETTER OF SUPPORT

- April/May 2020 CALLERLAB Newsletter Article by Past Chairman Patty Greene

*Editor's Note: CALLERLAB is the International Association of Square Dance Callers.*

*Past Chair Patty Greene called in Alberta (Calgary, Edmonton, Red Deer) in May, 2018.*



**Dear Beloved Square Dance Family,**

**What strange times we are going through.** Dances and major events are being cancelled and postponed hourly it seems. Clubs are choosing to go dark for a bit in order to protect their members. Some are being forced to go dark because their facilities are being temporarily shuttered or restricted. Some are going to keep on dancing as long as they can. I have been asked by more than one person what I think. So here you go.

**We are one big massive family. We are "Friendship set to Music." We are uniquely poised to be a HOPE-filled community.** We already support each other during our every day walks of life. We need to stay that course and be beacons of hope in our square dance community, our families, and in our larger circles.

**Contrary to some of the swirling conversations going on out there, I don't believe that this is the death toll of our activity.** We are entering into a little sabbatical until we are on the other side. We are NOT alone. Groups all over the world are making these same difficult decisions. Many of you are tired. This is a chance to rest, regroup, re-energize, and jump back in when the time is right.

**We should be supporting our leaders as they make these difficult decisions, supporting our fellow dancers and callers/cuers/promoters as they make decisions as best as they know how.** Not everyone is going to be happy no matter what decision is made. The family SHOULD be gracious, kind, and understanding of the difficult decisions that are coming down the pike. There's no need to second-judge, disrespect, or bad mouth the decision makers or the events. Trust me, those making the decisions are already agonizing over what to do. How about practicing some kindness? Too much judgement and inciteful language out there. Don't add to it. Err on the side of being kind.

The Family should be respectful of our dancers' decisions. If they choose to stay home for a bit, that's their right. Everyone is choosing their response according to their own circumstances and belief system, from "the sky is falling" to "just gonna live my life." **Be kind and gracious and let them know that you understand with no judgement.** Assure your dancers that they will be welcome with open arms when we get back in the swing of things.

**Reach out to your members. Get e-mails from everyone and just check in. Get together in small groups for a meal or just to fellowship. Maintain connections with new dancers and experienced dancers alike. Be giving and forgiving.**

**And when things start to return back to normal, PLEASE support your clubs, your special events, your weekends. Welcome people back to the gatherings of our family. Look forward with hope.** Don't sabotage by lamenting. Reach out to your students who will have been gone for a bit. If you have to start at Circle Left again—DO IT! Reshape and reframe your calendar. Be patient with those who are hesitant. Welcome people with a smile and an handshake or a hug. Support your leaders as they restart activities.

**I love my square dance family. I love them to infinity and beyond. I will love them during and after this current global crisis. I will be ready to jump back in with open arms and a rested spirit when we are able to fellowship again. We've got this!**

- When somebody eats something that they think has gone bad, why do they always want you to taste it?
- When a person says, "I'm going outside for some air," what was he breathing inside?
- When they first invented the clock, how did they know what time to set it to?
- When we borrowed customs from other countries, why didn't we borrow the siesta?
- Where did people hang their kids' pictures before the invention of the refrigerator?
- Why is it that lemonade cans say, "Contains artificial lemon juice," and a can of Pledge advertises, "Contains real lemon juice"?
- Why is the Miss Universe competition always won by someone from Earth?

## THE LIGHTER SIDE OF DARKNESS - by Dee Jackins



*Dee is an avid square and round dancer, and enjoys writing. She shares the lighter side of some of her experiences, challenges and near disasters as a sight impaired person. See issue #2015-6 for her complete story under "Chatter Close-up".*

*Dee and her husband square danced from 1969 to 1971. In 1975, she lost sight in her left eye, and by 1989 her vision was completely gone. While trying to cope with her blindness, Dee's husband was diagnosed with cancer. He died 10 months later in October, 1991. A friend suggested that she try square dancing again, and in 1995 she joined Calgary's singles club. Dee has been dancing ever since. She dances by visualizing the calls and positions, and with the gentle guidance of dancers' hands for no-hand calls such as weave the ring.*

'Habits' - a regular practice which is in most cases, hard to break. People are so kind and thoughtful, so willing to help. For example, one time when I arrived at the hall, a good friend took my arm and proceeded to take me across the floor to where I normally sit but we were so busy chatting all the way, I never took much notice as to where we were headed. "Here you are- the chair is to your left." I gave her a questioning look and remarked, "Oh sorry, wrong place, I have to go to the kitchen first." It was so automatic; I forgot to inform her of my destination. After some discussion and everything was kosher, we just had to retreat to where it all began. Now if you look on the positive side, just think of all the good updated information we exchanged. Can't go wrong there - can we?

Hair salons are usually visited on a regular basis by their customers. Like everyone else they can pick up habits quite easily and of course you hope it's in your favor. My hairdresser has gotten in the habit of automatically grabbing my arm as soon as I step one foot in the door and leads me to her chair without any questions. Whenever some of my neighbors go in without me, she still automatically escorts them by the arm to her chair. After some questionable looks she comes back to reality and quickly drops her grip with an apology and a hasty explanation for her doings. That starts up a conversation if nothing else along with a good chuckle.

After she has me seated, facing the mirror of course, (that's for her own benefit) she does her wonderful magic and when the time comes to approve of her tremendous haircut, she comments "Go for it." which is the signal to get my hands in my hair and do a thorough check to make sure I'm satisfied with her achievements. After doing this for so many years she has found it very helpful in determining any faulty slips that may have occurred - so now she has all her clientele do the same routine. Some of them give her a slight grin and a very questionable look. One can only guess at what is going through their minds. Old habits never die.

With all these extra hours in a day, it came time to tackle my deep freeze with its semi-annual cleanup. After the defrosting was finished, I started with sorting all the different variety of meat products into separate cloth shopping bags and stapling a brailed plastic tag to the handle of each one. It sure has simplified matters as far as locating my desired items. What a job, but with vitality and determination, a couple hours later my task was completed.

With a sense of relief, I headed back upstairs for a nice cold glass of ice water from the fridge when the phone rang. I circled around to pick up the phone off of the kitchen island but it wasn't there. When it rang again, I noticed it was behind me so back I went to the counter where I had started out - but no phone was in 'sight'. The phones were ringing in harmony, one in the living room and another in the den but the one in the kitchen was chiming right along. It continued to ring; the island was behind me once again so I circled back to the opposite side where it might possibly be, but to no avail. When it continued to ring and it was still behind me, I turned around once more but this time I was heading for the garage door. "Something is amiss here." I immediately stopped in my tracks- a flash of light finally came on. I had just done something out of the norm. Before I went downstairs I had taken the phone with me and hung it on the back pocket of my jeans and put it completely out of my mind. I couldn't believe it! Now I sensed the frustration that a dog must experience when it chases its own tail! I was literally going around in circles from one end to another. Thank goodness there was no one else present, they probably would have bound me up in a straight jacket and then hauled me away to the Funny Farm. I had formed a clear picture in my mind and all I could do was laugh. One must keep a sense of humor even when the joke is on you. One question crossed my mind, "Is this the result of being isolated?" Let's hope it ends soon.

## **DANCIN' IS FER GIRLS**

- by Walt Horoschak, Pennsylvania, reprinted from American Squaredance Magazine, July 1990

In my early teens, summers were spent doing boy things; picking coal, roller skating, hardball, or swimming in one of the many water-filled strip mines. Our peer pressure message at the time was that *"dancin' is fer girls"*. Five female siblings and a mother who sang, *"When Walter Francis dances with me, holy gee, I'm as gay as can be"*, did little to change my belief. Grammar and high school were the same, we boys just didn't dance.

When I enlisted in the Army Air Corps in 1944 at 18, I knew all the words to every popular song of the day, and enjoyed singing them, but I never danced.

How well I remember the time while stationed in Wisconsin, during a Sunday visit to the University at Madison. I wandered through a double door into a large room where a dance was in progress. Standing nearby was a pretty young college student who immediately asked me to dance. Shyly backing away, I mumbled something about not knowing how, and she followed me out the door, smiled and graciously offered to show me. As much as I needed a friend, especially female companionship, reluctantly I backed further away and said to myself, *"dancin' is fer girls"*. (Lessons learned early die hard.)

I was 19 and serving in Greece the first time I tried to dance. A pretty Greek girl took me to a private party where American music was being banged out on a piano, so after a few drinks and a lot of coaxing by my date, I got up enough courage to get up and randomly percolate to the beat while she danced, and I made a complete idiot of myself. I took the girl home, never saw her again and swore from now on *"dancin' really is fer girls"*.

I can probably count on one hand the number of times my wife Betty and I danced over the next 35 years. She did manage to teach me a two-step movement and bit of a polka at one time, but that was it.

I first became aware of the thrill and pleasure of body movement to the beat and rhythm of music when Betty and I decided to take roller skating lessons. We really got involved, buying each other the best shoe skates on wheels, and leaving the house at 5 AM Saturday mornings to drive to the rink for private lessons. It was when we advanced to the early stages of couple dance skating that we recognized how much fun it was to skate to the beat of live organ or recorded music. Unfortunately, the inevitable fall now and then, which happens to everyone, was a little too traumatic on my then 54-year old body. The healing takes forever. So we quit taking lessons and only skated on occasion for fun.

Later that year and totally against our will, we were first introduced to square dancing. We agreed to go to one "old timers" session just to shut up the kids, who insisted we would enjoy it. I knew from experience that I wouldn't enjoy it, but perhaps my wife would.

It was a cold rainy night, and we were sitting in the parking lot of Tom Hoffman's Ranchland. Our skates were in the car so we decided to try the dance for a half hour or so, and then go skating. At 11:30 while Tom was turning out lights, we were still asking questions. It was the most fun we had in years, and we signed up for classes that night. We learned from the ground up all of the intricacies of western-style square dancing, and after a year of basics and six months of Plus, came to realize, we had developed a gift too long held in limbo, muscle expression to music. It was great.

Then appeared a new challenge. Round dancing was so beautiful to watch that we just had to take lessons and learn how to expand our dancing ability. I believe I quit rounds classes every week for the first twelve weeks. Never having learned any dance steps before, I couldn't even do the simplest movements. Talk about frustration. Once again I began thinking, *"dancin' is fer girls"*. I couldn't remember steps from week to week.

Worse yet we were concentrating so hard on rounds that we were faltering in our newly learned square dance moves. We talked about pitching the whole darned works and going back to roller skating. But this was really a challenge, and what we did learn was so enjoyable that we just had to stick it out. Besides, roller skating could never be the same after this.

So anyway we stayed in class – we tried, we struggled and with the winter flu and bad driving weather, we missed seven lessons and fell further behind. Although our teacher, Linda, was extremely qualified, very helpful and most encouraging, I thought that our eventual success at rounds was questionable.



Graduation came in May but we stayed home because we knew we didn't deserve a diploma. During the summer we concentrated on perfecting our squares, and in September registered for rounds class as new students. We were amazed at how well it went the second time around. It seemed that everything suddenly clicked into place. The months went by quickly, and all the pieces began fitting together nicely. It was so much more enjoyable now.



We began to concentrate on timing and grace, and slowly became, at least in our own minds, good round dancers. In other words we now had confidence. The big red-letter day came when Linda told us, "Hey, you guys are doing really well." That made our day. We realize that we have a long way to go, but the important thing is that we are having fun. Boy, are we having fun.

Dancing is now a very important part of our lives. More so than any other activity we have ever engaged in. Our vacations, our travel, our friends, all center around square and round dancing.

Regrets regarding dancing? Yes, one; that I didn't overcome my obvious handicap in 1944, when I refused an offer from a pretty young Wisconsin lady to learn to dance. I could have spent more wonderful years enjoying dancing.

"Dancin' is fer girls, but it's also fer boys!" The gift which has been in limbo, locked up inside for so many years, is now free to soar, free to experiment, free to be the best, to excel, to whatever extent my arthritic arms and knees will permit.

How I wasted that part of my life!

## 21<sup>st</sup> CANADIAN SQUARE & ROUND DANCE FESTIVAL



We hope everyone is staying safe and healthy through these unprecedented times or supporting loved ones through their battle with COVID-19.

**It is with deep regret that we inform you of the postponement of the 2020 Canadian National Square Dance Festival in Surrey, BC.**

Over the past number of weeks, we have been monitoring developments related to COVID-19. With the World Health Organization and the Canadian Government recommending self-quarantine and many institutions strongly advising individuals to restrict travel, along with the Government of British Columbia advising us that there will be no conferences or large gatherings this summer, we know it is no longer practical nor ethical to continue with plans for the 2020 Canadian National Square Dance Convention this summer.

**The committee has elected to postpone our convention, and our new dates will be July 8-10, 2021. The location will remain the Sheraton Hotel in Surrey, BC.**

We understand that this may change your circumstances or your ability to attend next year, and we are offering you the opportunity to have your registration refunded or rolled over to next year. For those of you with hotel reservations, the hotel will move your reservation to comparable dates as your existing reservation with no change in the room rate.

**We are excited to share our beautiful city and province with you and hope you will join us for "More Fun in 2021".** Thanks and be well!



Two campers are hiking in the woods when one is bitten on the rear end by a rattlesnake. "I'll go into town for a doctor," the other says. He runs ten miles to a small town and finds the only doctor delivering a baby. "I can't leave," the doctor says. "But here's what to do. Take a knife, cut a little X where the bite is, suck out the poison and spit it on the ground." The guy runs back to his friend, who is in agony. "What did the doctor say?" the victim cries. "He says you're gonna die."

# 52<sup>ND</sup> ALBERTA DANCE CONVENTION - EDMONTON

To 2020 AB Convention Registrants, and interested persons:

April 14, 2020



We hope this letter finds you and your loved ones safe and healthy.

The 2020 Alberta Convention Committee has been faced with numerous challenges regarding our Labour Day weekend 2020 Alberta Convention. At our convention committee meeting of April 4th (via Zoom) a fulsome discussion occurred. **We made the difficult decision to cancel the 2020 Alberta Convention in Edmonton.**

**We have since confirmed the Central Lion’s facilities will be reserved, for CDCDA to host the Alberta Convention - Let’s Have Fun in 2021!**

**As was previously communicated, anyone who has registered for the 2020 AB Convention will automatically have their registration applied to 2021. Alternatively, registrants can request a refund.**

We will be communicating directly with all registrants.

As you know, the COVID-19 has ravaged our activity. All dancing has been shut down. Our rec centres, and community league facilities are closed. We are unable to maintain physical distancing in our activity as we know it, and many of our dancers are in the most vulnerable age demographic. In addition our committee was unable to attend numerous end-of-year dance events to promote our convention, due to their cancellation. The Central Lions facility is currently closed, and they are unsure whether they will be allowed to reopen so that we could host our event.

Our committee felt that even if our event were allowed to proceed in 2020, with physical distancing relaxed by the end of the summer, many dancers would feel uncomfortable attending our event given demographics of our dance population, number of attendees (approximately 300), and the nature of our hand holding during dancing. The economics would be challenging for the convention to be a success with potentially empty halls.

The Committee therefore decided to postpone the Convention to 2021, in consultation with CDCDA, Alberta Square and Round Dance Federation, and Calgary & District Square & Round Dancers Association. This allowed us to secure the Central Lion’s Facility for 2021, and allowed the 2021 Convention Committee to proceed with plans for a convention in 2022.



**We would like to extend a big thank you to our volunteer 2020 AB Convention committee for agreeing to support our event in 2021.** Please watch our webpage for updates. Thank you in advance for your understanding, and we hope you will come out to support our convention in 2021!

**Gary & Eileen Smith, Chair couple of the 2020 Alberta Convention Committee**

A panda walked into a restaurant and ordered a sandwich and a drink. When he finished, he pulled out a pistol and shot up the place, scaring customers and breaking dishes, glasses and liquor bottles before turning to leave. Stunned, the manager said, "Hey, where are you going?"

The panda glanced back over his shoulder and said, "I'm a panda - look it up," before disappearing out the door. The bartender pulled out a dictionary and thumbed through it until he found an entry for *panda*. The definition read: "A tree-dwelling animal of Asian origin characterized by distinct black-and-white markings. Eats shoots and leaves."

\* \* \* \* \*

Gary called his good friend Dave over to help him move a couch that had become stuck in the doorway. They pushed and pulled until they were exhausted, but the couch wouldn't budge. "Forget it," Gary finally gasped. "We'll never get this in." Dave looked at him puzzled and said, "In?!"

\* \* \* \* \*

A mother took her six kids to school on opening day. The principal asked how old they were, and she replied, "These two are six, these two are eight and these two are ten."

"That's incredible," said the principal. "Do you get two every time?"

"No," the mother answered. "Sometimes we don't get any."