

SEPARATE

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Issue 17 Winter 1999 \$4.95

SQUAREUP!

a magazine for gay and lesbian square dancers and their friends

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WAVE

PASS TO
THE CENTER

PEEL OFF

SHOOT
THE STAR

**CLASSES
THAT
WORK**

RECYCLE

SLIDE
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Building the Bridge

MIKE STAPLES

I WOULD LIKE TO ASSURE EVERYONE THAT THE SQUAREUP STAFF has addressed and resolved all Year 2000 bugs. Our computer system is fully Y2K compliant and our data base does not have a 2-digit date field — in fact it doesn't have a date field at all. On January 1, 2000 you may be without power, water, transportation, and other necessities, but SquareUp will surely arrive soon thereafter. Rest assured — our staff will do our part to build a bridge into the 21st century.

That hurdle tackled, what others could remain? Seriously, there is plenty to be done. I think it is time for some changes before SquareUp becomes too predictable. I invite those who have an eye for layout to work with me to give SquareUp a facelift, if for no other reason but to break the established pattern.

As always, I also invite writers to share their talents. I have received several unsolicited articles in 1998 and hope to continue the trend this year. With others' input, SquareUp continues to become more of a community publication rather than an individual endeavor.

Another item on the plate for 1999 is a Web page. SquareUp hasn't truly built a bridge into the 21st century if we aren't affording people an easy way to find out about us. Does anyone with web page skills want to help with this?

That's my wish list — how about yours? Call, write, or e-mail with any ideas. (See the "How to Reach Us" section to the right.) I welcome your ideas and your help with the magazine as we approach our fifth year of publishing. We expect to be around long enough to assure you that all Y3K bugs have been addressed and resolved.



photo courtesy of Mary Steele

All the best in 1999 from the SquareUp staff

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Truly Titanic

Load the Boat VIII

BOB DOWNING

CLEVELAND'S LOAD THE BOAT VIII WAS TRULY TITANIC! The eighth Load the Boat fly-in was the biggest party the Cleveland City Country Dancers have ever had. Looking for a boat related theme the committee hit on "A Titanic Affair." The tee shirt you no doubt saw was designed and used as an advertising tool at all the fly-ins we attended, including Portland. The invitation sent to all clubs and distributed at convention was a formal invitation offering First Class for early registrants.

The Titanic theme was used throughout. The planning committee eagerly did research — easy this year with all the Titanic media attention. Friday night was the embarkation and bon voyage party. All passengers received a packet of LifeSavers — First Class a large roll, Second Class a smaller, and Third class one candy. An elegant candle-lit party replaced our traditional potluck. There was an abundance of Canapés and hors d'oeuvres. Saturday, 125 people enjoyed the brunch on a local riverboat cruise called appropriately enough "The Nautica Queen." We squared up on the top deck while cruising the Cuyahoga River and Lake Erie harbor.

Saturday evening was the very formal "Nearer My God to Thee Ball." Many wore tuxedos, tails or a basic formal black tee shirt. Of course there was Mollie Brown, a pregnant Mrs. Astor, and some definitely third class wenches. The hall was decorated as the Titanic. Passengers relaxed in the comfort of a first Class lounge with a fireplace and a digitized copy of the same picture that hung over the mantle on the Titanic. There was a Candela-brum at the bottom of the staircase and a wonderful copy of the clock — carved out of Styrofoam by our Art Director, Drew Hocevar — on the landing. The main hall on the second floor was the ballroom of the Titanic. Twelve columns, paladin windows, palms with a starlit deck, and a copy of the chandelier helped to recreate the setting of the doomed liner. At 10:00 PM all levels met in the main hall and at 10:30 the lights were dimmed and an iceberg was seen passing the windows. Then we danced an iceberg tip, complete with heads of ice-

berg lettuce! Other specialty tips and entertainment were enjoyed and the final tip was accompanied by a choir singing "Nearer My God to Thee."

After everyone left, the crew worked until 2:00 AM changing the Titanic to a sunken ship. In the morning after the Carpathian brunch in the lower hall, the guest were greeted with the sight of seaweed and fish covering all the Titanic Artifacts!

The committee had great fun planning the event. (You should have seen the ideas we rejected!) We hit on a great theme and ran with it. But as always the best part was the great square dancing, led by callers Betsy Gotta and Dave Wilson. We are already working on next year, a WWII theme, "Load The Boat IX — The Fleets In." ■



Above: Formal "Nearer My God to Thee" Square Dance, on Titanic
Below: Sunday Square Dancing on sunken Titanic



Like, It's 1999!

SUBMITTED BY LCLA STAFF

NO ONE IS LOOKING FORWARD TO *LIGHTS, CAMERA, Linear Action!* more than grand co-hostess Uma. "This year we're going to party like it's 1999!" she's taken to exclaim ("at every conceivable opportunity," adds grand co-hostess Oprah). While Oprah takes Uma aside (again) to explain that it's not *like* 1999, it *is* 1999, you can read a little more about what's put the tingle in Uma's tint job.

Of course, you don't need to square dance to get excited about L.A. This is the land of cutting-edge science, world-class culture, and grown people dancing around theme parks wearing rodent suits. There are spacious skies, amber waves of grain, purple mountain's majesty, and, hey, you can't find a more fruited plain than West Hollywood. From the UCLA kinesiology majors hanging 10 in Malibu (or 11 if they know how to do it right) to the women's dance parties spilling out onto Santa Monica Boulevard, L.A.'s the place to celebrate a birthday, an anniversary, a seven-year itch or a unanimous acquittal.

The one thing L.A. isn't is centralized. If you plan to come early and do your own exploring, you will need a car. But if you just can't pass up that bargain \$13 shuttle from LAX to the Westin Bonaventure Hotel, don't fret. California Leisure Consultants are offering 14 exciting tours between Monday, June 28, and Thursday, July 1, so you can leave the driving (and boating) to someone else. On these full- and half-day excursions, you can:

- Savor the seafood on Catalina Island
- Hunt for the beauties and beasts at Disneyland (with early and late return options)
- Get back to the future at Universal Studios
- Delve into history at the high-tech Museum of Tolerance
- Go daffy at Warner Bros.
- Get lubed at a movie prop house that doubles as the Elbow Grease factory
- Find an artful perch at the sky-high Getty Museum
- Enjoy an art/antiques/gardens tour of Pasadena, the city of roses
- Dig up fossils, art and autos on Museum Row
- Hunt for stars in Beverly Hills, then shop till you drop on Rodeo Drive
- Discover gay L.A.'s past and present with a famous do-cent.

Of course, you can always come *really* early for the Christopher Street West Lesbian and Gay Pride Festival and Parade June 12-13, or detour down from San Francisco's pride celebration June 25-27. Meanwhile, the Gay and Lesbian Square Dance Consortium will be hosting a two-session "foreplay" dance on June 27 to help loosen up those newer dancers. But whenever you arrive, make sure not to book your departure flight before 3 p.m. Monday, July 5 in order to participate in the always-spectacular Fun Badge Tour. (The FBT is available directly through LCLA!, as is a Thursday night Leather Bar Tour.)

How can you afford to do all this? For a start, standard accommodations at the four-star Bonaventure are only \$85 per room per night for an intimate 180 square foot guest room. This convention rate is being offered from Friday, June 25, through Sunday, July 10. Since the hotel is a multi-towered high-rise with a gargantuan atrium, the rooms are more akin to San Francisco's Hyatt Regency than the suburban sprawl of Portland's Doubletrees. So if you're planning on squeezing your dollars by squeezing four people into a room, opt for a quad-occupancy Tower suite at twice the size but only \$100 per night. For those who need extra space for their crinolines, the hotel's other suites — ranging from 480 to 1,080 square feet — can be had at 25 percent off rack rate. Remember: full-size rollout beds are available for no extra charge.

Of course, with 1,368 guest rooms, a 24-hour pool, 25 restaurants and a piano bar with service until 4 a.m., you can come to L.A. and just dance, swim, dance, eat, dance, drink, dance, sing and dance. (Sleep? What's that?) Trail-in is Thursday, July 1, and the dancing—spread over 89,000 square feet of space—doesn't stop until 11 p.m. Sunday night. The 11 absolutely fabulous callers are Saundra Bryant, Vic Cedar, Mike DeSisto, Mike Jacobs, Mike Kellogg, Frank Lescrinier, Seth Levine, Deborah Parnell, Ben Rubright, Anne Uebelacker and Dave Wilson. While they're resting their vocal chords, after-hours country-western dancing will fill the floor on all four nights. Want more? Specialty tips are TBA, and the women's hospitality suite will be open and very hospitable. (Attention Moms and Dads! Liz Bakwin of Chi-Town Squares is arranging a special child-care suite; for more info, contact Liz directly at 773-643-4881 or bakwin@sprintmail.com.)

As Uma says: "Come to L.A. You'll love it. It's just like being in California!"

For registration and information, access www.iagsdc.org/LAin99/; send e-mail to LCLAin99@aol.com, or telephone 818-508-6982. Snail mail goes to *Lights, Camera, Linear Action!*, P.O. Box 381102, Hollywood, CA 90038-1102. To advertise in the convention program, request a rate card from the convention committee.

For room reservations, call 800-Westin-1 and ask for the

"Lights, Camera, Linear Action!" rate. Tower suite quads are limited and must be reserved in the names of four registered attendees through John Faulds at Creative Travel; call toll-free 877-256-0700. To receive the discounted rate on the luxury suites, call the hotel directly at 213-624-1000.

Registration for the sightseeing tours must be received by June 4. For details and prices, call 562-427-0414, e-mail tharbour@cal-leisure.com, or write California Leisure Consultants, 3605 Long Beach Blvd. #201, Long Beach, CA 90807.



LCLA's host hotel - The Westin Bonaventure



How to Keep 'em Dancin'

EDDIE JOE CONLEY

Eddie Joe and his partner Paul Cahill dance with Diablo Dancers and Midnight Squares. Both have several years of experience in helping new dancers. Eddie currently calls for the Diablo Dancers and offers some tips on helping new students.

LET US HARKEN BACK TO THOSE INNOCENT DAYS, LONG AGO, when we crossed our first Square Dance threshold. Do you remember? Perhaps you felt a little out of place. Your friends assured you that you would enjoy this activity and make lasting friendships. You probably weren't entirely convinced and besides, you may have had serious doubts that you had any talent for dancing. Whatever fears or misgivings you had are worth recalling when considering how to keep that new dancer once he or she walks across the threshold into our Square Dance world. If you ignore their fears and doubts, you will most likely lose the marginal beginning dancer. In my experience as a Square Dance teacher, these are the folks that we must work hardest to keep; once they discover the joy of Square Dancing, they very often become our most reliable partners.

The Class. There are three parts to this new Square Dance world — the new dancer will become aware of all three in quick and often bewildering succession. The first is the Basic/Mainstream class. Way before I started calling, I learned from some wise old-timers at Western Star Dancers that the angels (more on these mixed blessings later) for the new class must welcome our new dancers as soon as they step over that threshold. From that moment they must feel welcome. (To this end it is probably a very good idea to forbid angels to talk to each other.) Make sure there are enough angels to greet and talk to each and every prospective dancer. It may sound trite but the first impression is critical for retaining dancers. I still occasionally have dancers remind me of how we met on their first night of class. Refreshments, introductions, even preparing nametags on the spot can help with the initial bonding. By the way, I do not think it is important that male greets male or female greet female. In fact, this sends an immediate segregation message.

At the risk of repeating what most clubs know from experience about briefing angels, I would suggest a few ground rules. It is all too natural for angels to cluster together. This is to be avoided as the class members intuitively feel excluded. Instruct the angels not to push or instruct the new dancers — I've seen students offended by this.

When the music starts, the Caller is responsible. The initial "One Big Circle" is the best way to get the new dancers comfortable with their first Square Dance steps. It is very helpful to have as many angels partnered with new dancers as possible. Patience is the single most important caller attribute when teaching new dancers. A caller/teacher must never embarrass a new dancer by singling the dancer out, even for well-intentioned correction — that dancer will probably not return. A much better idea is to say that you've noticed that some dancers are making an error, then correct everyone at that time.

There are some small things that the caller can do to help retain new dancers. It's important to keep the teaching tips short — no longer than fifteen minutes. Introduce simple singing calls early in the Basic Program. New dancers come quickly to the conclusion that 'singers' are more relaxing than hash instruction and begin to enjoy the dancing. However, dancer success with the singing call figure is *very* important here. I generally walk the new dancers through the figure first. If you plan your teaching well, you can avoid teaching new calls during the last tip when the dancers are no longer able to absorb new material. Finally, between teaching tips, get down and mix with the new dancers; learn their names and listen to their comments. We can all learn from them.

The Club. The second part of this new world is the club. Unless we are very careful, the new dancer will almost immediately feel like a second class Square Dance citizen. The second major order of business, after making the new class members feel welcome and comfortable in the class, is to make them feel welcome in the club. First the new dancers will bond with each other as class members. The task is then to make them bond to the club. A few inclusive events — Diablo Dancers use the 3 Ps: Pool Parties, PotLucks and Picnics — will go a long way to cement the social bonding. Christmas and Halloween offer fantastic opportunities to party with the new folks, and bring me to the third part of the new Square Dancer's world.

The Dance. Soon after beginning, our novices will get wind of The Big Dance. They'll listen with some trepidation and some excitement to the tales of wonderful dances called by legends like Anne Uebelacker and Mike DeSisto. The key here is, once again, to include the new dancers. Enlist your new class in the planning and execution of the dance. Decorations, food, drinks, fifty-fifty, etc. will all draw volunteers from the class. Then be sure to include several class-level tips for the class members. Chances are that they will come away from their first Big Dance exhilarated and determined to become better dancers.

One last plea: don't give up on the slow learners. Give them time and love and they'll reward you eventually. I can't begin to explain how grateful I am to Square Dancing for all the friends I've made teaching and learning. ■



Plan to Make It Work

KRIS JENSEN

A strong advocate of preparation, Kris offers advice on how to make each class a fun, inviting experience for the students.

THE FIRST NIGHT OF CLASS ... NEW DANCERS HAVE BEEN begged, persuaded, cajoled, or maybe they even sought out the club. They're signed up and ready to go, and now it's the caller's turn. The music comes on, the new dancers get out on the floor, and the caller starts the process of turning them into happy square dancing members of our community. Of course, the caller isn't alone; angels and other club members are vital to bringing folks into the square dancing world. But their efforts will be in vain if the caller doesn't provide a fun, inviting class that keeps the new dancers coming back week after week.

If calling is like juggling (controlling choreography, complexity, music, timing, resolution, voice, presentation all at the same time) then teaching is juggling while walking a tightrope with all of the calling issues, plus trying to maintain a balance on several different levels:

- Entertaining while teaching
- Covering the students' different learning styles
- Drilling enough for the dancers who need that while not boring the dancers who learned the call on the first try.

Performing this balancing act takes prior planning and preparation — callers, your job started long before the first night of class:

- Get your calling down. Balancing is easier if you don't have to think about juggling as well.
- Learn as much as you can about learning styles and how to teach. Realize that not everybody learns the same way you do. You are probably a successful learner, no matter what your primary learning style is; even if you're a newer caller, you've had to acquire a lot of different skills. Most people do not learn or even think the way you do. If you want to successfully teach square dancing, you need to learn how to describe the calls in ways that are meaningful to people with different learning styles.

People have different ways of gathering information (visual, auditory, kinesthetic/tactile) and different ways of processing information (active/reflective, sensing/intuitive, visual/verbal, linear/global). When we teach square dancing, we mostly give information auditorially, and we mostly present information in a fairly sequential way. If you're sensi-

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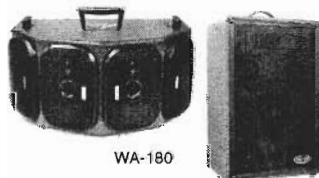


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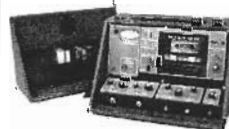


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HILTON

tive to the fact that people perceive and understand differently, then you can plan different ways to present calls so that you cover different learning styles.

- Research how other callers teach. You know how you were taught, but hearing other callers is always useful.
- Prepare a teaching order. Do you want to teach Courtesy Turn before you teach Right and Left Thru? How about teaching Square Thru before you teach Right and Left Thru (some callers do that to avoid the Courtesy Turn problem on a Square Thru). But can you call without Right and Left Thru for several weeks? How about teaching Quarter In before Square Thru? Quarter In isn't on the Basic list, but some callers have found it helpful for teaching Square Thru. Do some calls put you into formations that you need other calls to get out of? Should you teach Runs before Swing Thru? How are you going to get the dancers out of waves once they've done some Swing Thrus? Are some calls so similar that you want to make sure you separate teaching them by several weeks?

Are there other clubs in the area? If all the callers use the same teaching order, then your students could get together for special dances, which are great for creating enthusiastic, motivated new dancers.

- Plan how you're going to teach each call. Of course, you know the call's definition, but you also need to think about how to explain the call. Can you use calls they already know? Would a demo be useful? Would written info be useful? Would it be useful to make sure the dancers know where they're going to end up? Are there any visual aids that might make the call more vivid? Analogies? Metaphors? However, remember your balancing act: you want the dancers to be dancing, not listening to you talk. So try to come up with several succinct, clear, and memorable ways of describing a call. Pick one to try first; you can use the others if the dancers seem to be having problems.

Think about what arrangements and formations you're going to use in your first teach. Will you teach standard positioning first and go back later for extended applications, or will you teach a variety of positions from the beginning (remember that for tactile and visual learners, each new position is essentially a different call, so you have to make sure to provide enough drill from all of the positions that you teach). If you teach Square Thru from same-sex couples first, will you eliminate the Courtesy Turn problem? (For straight dancers, this works because boys won't even think about courtesy turning another boy; I'm not so sure it works for gay dancers because it's not visually obvious that the other dancer is dancing as a boy.)

- Plan the whole class: you have x calls to teach in y amount of time; that gives you a rough idea of how many calls you need to cover each night. It would be nice if you could take as long as the class needed to learn the calls, but most clubs operate on a set schedule. Remember to allow some nights of just review and to allocate extra time for the harder calls.

- Plan each class night in detail, but be prepared to be flexible. Make sure that you provide enough review. Make sure that you plan to teach the harder calls early in the evening, before the dancers are too tired. Try to program the class like a dance; think about peaks and valleys, both for difficulty and for musical energy.

- Plan your first night in lots of detail. Remember the cliché about first impressions: you want the dancers to have so much fun that they can hardly wait to come back. What music are you going to use? How are you going to get the new dancers out on the floor for the first tip? How are you going to deal with the gender issue? You'll probably use a big circle for the first tip; how are you going to get them into squares? You know these new dancers are going to be nervous; how are you going to relax them?

- Talk with the angels about what you expect. Some callers only want angels to fill in when necessary to make a complete square. Others would like every square to be half angels. All callers want angels to dance perfectly (and do the calls exactly the way the caller is teaching) and not try to explain while the caller is talking. Most callers would like feedback from the angels on possible problem areas.

So you've researched and thought and planned — and now it's class night. Here's where your balancing skills come into play:

- Be enthusiastic and fun. Remember, this is *dancing*; it's not supposed to be work.
- Be sensitive to the needs and styles of the people in the class. If you can figure out their learning styles, then you can tailor your presentation to this particular group.
- Be patient. You're probably a faster-than-average learner. In a class, you need to deal with a variety of learning styles and speeds. While it may be frustrating, you cannot let that frustration show in any way.
- Don't let the dancers get frustrated. If you've been doing hard stuff, back off and let them dance. Keep tips short, and keep sequences short. Make sure the dancers get the positive reinforcement of frequent Allemande Lefts; you want them to feel successful.
- Be flexible. You have a plan for each class, and you should try to follow that plan. But know when to back off so the dancers won't get frustrated.

- Don't single out individual students for correction. Try to keep your comments and suggestions general enough for the whole group. Do, however, learn your students' names.

- Be friendly, open, and approachable. The more you can get the students to bond to the club, the more likely they are to complete the class and stay with the club.

Remember, the goal is not to cram square dancing into their heads. Yes, we want them to learn to square dance, but we want them to learn happily and enthusiastically, and we want them to keep dancing after they've learned. The caller's responsibility is to provide a fun and successful learning experience. ■



The Joy of Angeling

ALLAN HURST

While the caller accepts the overall responsibility for any class, the angels play an important role in the students' class experience. An experienced Bay Area dancer and GCA caller, Allan Hurst reminds us of the importance of angeling.

IN SQUARE DANCE CLUBS ALL OVER THE WORLD, IT'S A FAMILIAR refrain: "Where are all our angels?" There have been excellent articles on how to angel, and on appropriate behavior for both angels and students in a square dance class. Rather than discuss how to angel, let's examine why it's important for dancers to angel.

I've heard a number of frequent complaints from experienced dancers who hate angeling.

"Students aren't worth my time, because they don't know anything yet."

This argument doesn't hold up logically; every experienced dancer started off as a student at some point. Students can't be expected to know how to square dance yet; that's why they're in the class!

A square containing experienced angels — especially if circumstances afford the luxury of pairing each angel with a student — can dramatically enhance and speed up the learning experience.

When you angel, it's a club investment and a personal investment. Students in square dancing can be easily discouraged. If made to feel shunned by experienced dancers, students will probably leave a class because they won't feel welcome. If you want to build up your club's membership — and, therefore, the local pool of possible partners — it's your duty as an experienced dancer to make students feel welcome. They'll not only complete the class, but will be more likely to join the club as ongoing, active members whom you can dance with at full level.

"Class dancing doesn't give me floor time as good as dancing at full level."

This is another argument I've heard frequently, and one which also doesn't hold water.

When you angel, floor time is floor time. Dancers who complain that they can't get enough floor time at a given level, but who won't angel for that level's current class, aren't working in their own best interest.

For example, let's say you want to improve your A2 dancing. You can practice A2 just as effectively in class as you can on a dance floor — only with better feedback and supervision in a class. It may not be the flowing, graceful extended patten tips you prefer, but it's still good practice to help polish

your technique.

Another advantage of dancing in class as an angel: if you're feeling weak on a particular call, there's no stigma attached in asking the caller "Could you review ____ again, please?" Learning and review is precisely what classes are designed for.

"Students are too rough."

Unfortunately, this is often true. Many new dancers use very rough and/or painful hand holds, or push/pull dancers very hard. Part of the responsibility lies with each club's instructor, who should talk about handholds and body motion. But an even larger part of this responsibility lies with the class angels.

When you angel, it's a feedback mechanism for the caller. In most cases, callers/instructors don't dance during teaching tips. While bodies may be moving into the right positions, there's no way for the caller to know that a given student is using a bone crushing grip. In such a situation, an angel can easily let a caller know that students are treating other dancers too roughly. This gives the caller a chance to correct the problem immediately, before it becomes an ingrained habit.

When you angel, it's a feedback mechanism for the student. If a specific student is too rough, it's perfectly OK for the angel to quietly and politely inform them that they're being too rough, and show them a gentler hand hold or more subtle body language. If an isolated student is having problems with a specific call, an angel (or group of angels) can tutor the student on the call between tips.

When you angel, you can train students to dance the way you want. Does your club have favorite styling or sound effects? When it's appropriate for your class' students to learn such things, you can help them pick up those techniques faster by personal demonstration and tutorial. This is an opportunity to help create a new dance partner for yourself that you'll enjoy dancing with!

"Dancing at [whatever] level is boring for me; I already know these calls."

There are many articles available on the web and in back issues of square dance magazines that illustrate, quite eloquently, the continuing need for higher level dancers to master and practice lower level calls. (More than one Advanced & Challenge caller I've met seems to specifically enjoy calling "Dive Thru" during A&C squares, just to see who can't remember their Basic calls.)

When you angel, you might learn something new. If you angel at different clubs with different callers, you'll pick up a different set of information about dancing the same level from each caller.

You might find yourself surprised (and delighted) to learn some background information or specific technique about a given call that's new to you. Even if you angel with

the same club from year to year, most callers will vary the “information filter” they use to teach the class from year to year, adding new information and dropping outdated information. This could be something as trivial as the history of a call — but it could also be something as important as a new or different application of an existing call from a formation you’re unfamiliar with.

More importantly, call lists change over time, and it’s helpful to angel in order to retrain yourself to know what the current call list looks like, and to learn (or review) any new calls added to the list since you took your first class at that dance level.

When you angel, it’s a terrific way to meet new people. Traveling to a strange city? Want to make new friends easily? Call ahead for schedules, arrange to drop in on a local club during their class night, and offer to angel for them. Angeling for another club is an easy and fun way to break the ice with local residents in a strange city. It’s also possible

that you’ll pick up or pass on new dance techniques, sound effects, or call mnemonics. In all cases, you’ll probably have more fun than you originally thought.

When you angel, it strengthens our sense of community. Interclub angeling fosters a sense of mutual support. It’s not unusual for members of a given club to reciprocate during a trip to another area after receiving a visiting angel at their local club from that area.

Does your club host a regular fly-in? Angeling at other clubs is a terrific long-term method to build fly-in attendance by spreading the word about your event to new dancers, as well building goodwill with that club’s experienced dancers.

Even if you don’t travel to other cities, angeling for other clubs in your local area helps build a sense of community, cooperation and trust that helps all of square dancing.

Remember, “today’s student is tomorrow’s dance partner.” By choosing to participate in your club’s classes as an angel, you are directly supporting your club and your community.



On the Head of a Pin

Advice for “earning one’s wings”

Reprinted from the September 1993 *Times Squared*, the newsletter of the Times Squares Square Dance Club. (Author unknown).

IS YOUR HALO ON STRAIGHT? AS DISCUSSED LAST month, it is important that as many of our club members as possible come to the Beginner class as “angels.” What are angels? They are the wonderful people who volunteer their time to ensure that a class has the best possible learning experience.

Angels provide the new class members with their first real look at the club (since class members don’t generally see the instructor as a club member until after graduation). How angels behave and treat the new dancers, other angels, and visitors will affect class members’ decisions whether or not to join our club. Angels are also role models. No matter what the instructor and club try to communicate to the students concerning etiquette, attitudes, or styling, class members inevitably take their cues from what they see the angels doing. So it is important that angels be extra careful to provide good role models. Smile, be enthusiastic, and enjoy the dancing. Be friendly, courteous, and gentle. This is sometimes easier to say than to do, especially if it has been a long day. And, let’s be honest, some of us have personal agendas, perhaps disagreements with club policies or less-than-cordial relations with specific club members, that are out of place here and must be put aside.

Although most of us do the right things instinctively, at least most of the time, it can’t hurt to reiterate certain points.

The following advice for angels has been extracted from several sources, including articles in square dance magazines and handouts prepared for other clubs.

Thanks go to Betsy Gotta and Nick Martellacci for providing some of these articles.

Angels are not teachers. This is perhaps the most common misconception that causes problems. Angels' primary teaching function is to teach by example — to be in the right place at the right time. One important thing you can do is to establish hand-holds after every move. This not only helps the students maintain their orientation in the squares, it is a very good habit to develop. It is always tempting to explain something your square is not getting, and the students will often ask you to do this — but you must resist. It diverts the students' attention from the teacher, and one of the most important things to learn in beginner class is to listen to the teacher/caller. Sometimes you can clarify a simple point for students between tips; this is fine, but not while the caller is at the microphone.

Another difficult point is just how much "help" you should give in getting dancers into the right place. Dancers, after all, must learn to do the moves on their own. To gently guide someone through a maneuver if they have a momentary lapse of memory might be okay, and sometimes one can help by indicating nonverbally where a person should go, but we accomplish little by pushing or pulling a dancer through an action when he or she doesn't know what was supposed to have been done. It is better to let a square break down rather than to use too much force getting people into the right place. Broken down squares are an indication to the instructor that the dancers are having problems. Do be sure the teacher is aware of problems; raise your hand if necessary and ask the teacher to explain something if your square is having trouble. Be careful, however, not to embarrass any dancer by the way you ask for help. For example, say "We're not getting this or that" not "He (or she) is having trouble." Do encourage students; let them know that all beginners make mistakes and that things get better with practice. Also, angels do sometimes make mistakes, too, and it is good to admit to them cheerfully; it makes the students less tense about their own mistakes.

Club styling is always a third major source of contention. It is important that beginners learn the calls with standard Callerlab styling; that is, without the flourishes we like so much. The teacher

will introduce our club styling at appropriate times after the calls are mastered. Angels must use only the styling which has been taught to the class. This is not always easy. How many of us even remember how to do a do-sa-do without a Highland fling? But it really is very important. Students are going to want you to teach them "how it's done" before they have mastered the call, but you should resist the temptation. (In fact, it helps the angels to be reminded how the calls are really supposed to be done; some of our styling causes havoc when a caller says, for example, do-sa-do once and a half or ferris wheel and roll.)

And some random additional advice:

- Square up with everyone, not just a few friends. Seek out the weaker students and ask them to dance with you. Make sure that students are not sitting out because angels are dancing.

Angels are not teachers. This is perhaps the most common misconception that causes problems. Angels' primary teaching function is to teach by example — to be in the right place at the right time.

- End conversations promptly when the teacher begins a tip. If you are not dancing, keep your conversations far away from the dance area.
- Lend a hand cheerfully if you are asked to help set up or take down sound equipment, to help with refreshments, or to take attendance. Keep an eye out for security problems, accidents, and dangerous situations like spills or debris on the floor.

- Let the instructor know if there are problems with the sound.
- Don't complain about the hall, the floor, the caller. Don't criticize students or other angels.
- Remember your name badge. ■

This article can also be viewed on the IAGSDC web page at <http://www.iagsdc.org/angels.html>.



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may have tomorrow what other don't!*



Editor: All San Francisco clubs were invited to submit bios for this issue. We heard from Foggy City and Western Star, but not Midnight Squares. Maybe another issue?

Western Star Dancers

FELIX FORNINO

WESTERN STAR DANCERS (WSD) HAD ITS BEGINNINGS in January of 1982 when five friends — Scott Carey, Ron Douglass, Dennis Ficken, Roger Perry and Agnes Smith — got together in Ron and Scott's kitchen to try to figure out what square dancing was all about. Three phantoms were summoned to make a square, and a 1954 Square Dance Manual provided the instructions. All five were members of Skip Barrett's Foggy City Squares, but Skip had a very idiosyncratic approach — teaching singing calls only, encouraging rote memorization of each dance, and not teaching the individual calls very thoroughly or accurately. They knew there was a lot more to learn, but they weren't sure how to begin.

A few more dancers from Foggy City Squares soon expressed interest. On Friday, March 5, 1982, WSD began weekly drop-in square dancing at an American Conservatory Theater rehearsal studio on Geary Street. Records purchased from an Oakland Folk Dance Shop were used to conduct the sessions.

One night an experienced dancer by the name of Bill Klein dropped by and volunteered to teach an organized class using Callerlab definitions and teaching order. His offer was eagerly accepted. Since the dancers already had some experience, Bill taught all 68 Basic and Mainstream calls in only ten weeks. This class was taught in the second floor lobby of the Civic Center YMCA.

After graduating its first class, WSD elected its first Board of Directors — the five founders and Larry Foster and Paul Zimmerman. They then began the steps to formally organize as a nonprofit organization.

Bill taught another class that fall and a second night for club dancing was added to the schedule. Bill, however, was basically a dancer rather than a teacher. He soon informed the Board that he would like to move on. Fortunately, several members had met an experienced caller named Phil Payton at a California Motorcycle Club Carnival in November — an impromptu exhibition with Linda Lane and Western Electric (a country western band) had been hastily arranged for the entertainment of the crowd. Phil agreed to teach the third class in January 1983 and became the primary club caller.

At this point WSD moved from the lobby to the YMCA

Theater, which would serve as the club's home for the next several years. With Phil — and later Bill Hanzel — doing most of the teaching and calling, an increasing outreach was made to the straight square dance community for club night guest callers. In 1986, club member Bob Belville became the first openly gay man to be approved for full membership in the Northern California Callers Association. Bob later took over as principal caller.

In 1988, Bill Whitefield became the club instructor. On April 3, 1989 WSD began its long association with the San Francisco Parks and Recreation at the Eureka Valley Recreation Center in the heart of the Castro District. In 1989 Eddie. (read as Eddie Period) Smith became part of the teaching team. In 1991, Ron Masker became the class teacher and is still in that role.

WSD has organized an annual retreat since 1983. First held at Wildwood, it moved to Cazadero Music Camp from 1984 to 1986, and Camp Swig in 1987. After a one year hiatus, we started a long retreat tradition at Camp Cazadero in 1989. This first retreat was held three days after the 1989 San Francisco Earthquake. Nerves were shot and everyone was ready for time to relax. Chris Phillips was here from Florida. He was used to hurricanes, not earthquakes, so was very nervous. On Saturday afternoon, Gold Rush threw its famous Margaritaville party. They ran out of margarita mix, so tequila was frosted in the blender and limes were recycled into the puree. The first thing you know Chris Phillips was so drunk, he could hardly see straight. After several cold showers and many, many cups of hot coffee, Chris was ready to call the dancing that night. (*Ed:* Sybil was mixing the drinks, and apparently there was some confusion about which were virgin (no-alcohol), and which were slut (tequila). Chris recalls "I didn't feel so bad 'til I saw the other survivors of the Margarita Party trying to actually "dance!"

In 1999, Billy Eyler will call our 17th Anniversary Dance on March 6. On June 26 Darren Gallina will call our "Promenade with Pride '99" Gay Pride Dance. On September 25, Anne Uebelacker will call at our annual Leather and Lace Dance as part of the San Francisco Leather Week — we have assured Anne that she would be welcomed in her little leather outfit. She will also be calling on Sunday at San Francisco's infamous Folsom Street Fair. All dances, except for the Folsom Steet Fair, will be at Temple United Methodist Church, 1111 Junipero Serra Blvd (at 19th Avenue), San Francisco. The site has plenty of parking on Beverly Street and can be reached by the "M" Oceanview Muni Line.

The present Board has high hopes in planning another retreat in 1999. We will also be trying to get together with Foggy City Dancers and Midnight Squares to plan a San Francisco Fly-In.

At this time, we have 56 members and dance through Plus. We dance on Mondays at the Eureka Valley Recreation Center, 100 Collingwood (between 18th and 19th Streets) at 7:30 PM. All activities can be checked out at our website at: www.iagsdc.org/westernstar. ■



Foggy City Dancers

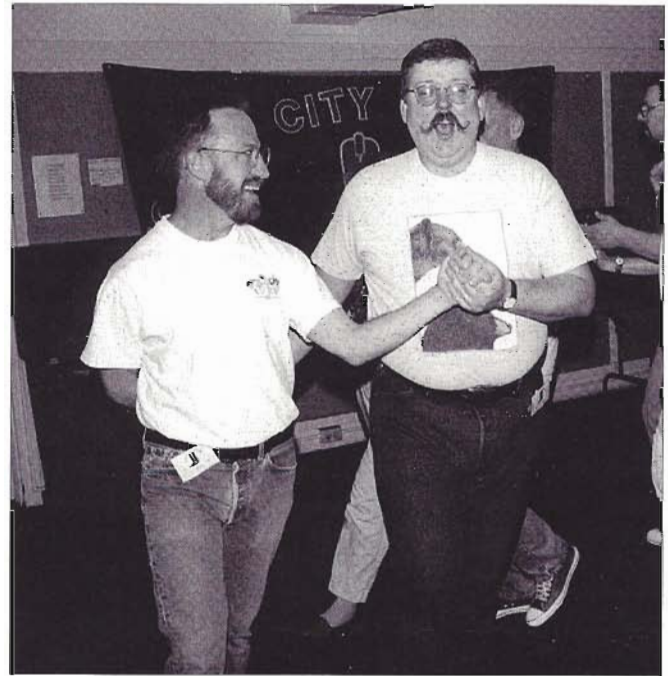
GARY LINDERS

IN LATE 1983, BILL WHITEFIELD, REN BROWN, LORI FAZELL and Andrea Barton — all members of a dance group called Foggy City Squares — made an agreement with owner Skip Barrett to purchase the group from him. These four individuals bought the music and membership list of Foggy City Squares and then incorporated in November 1983 as the Foggy City Dancers. Their goal was to form a club whose dancing followed the Callerlab approach rather than the learned and memorized dancing routines advocated by Skip. They envisioned the fun and enjoyment of gay square dancing replacing the rehearsed routines taught by Skip. These four also made up the very first Board of Directors of Foggy City Dancers. Bill Whitefield (President) and Ren Brown (Vice President) were both teachers who followed the Callerlab format and encouraged the high spirited, high energy aerobic dancing that continues today. One of the first locations they danced in was the Rawhide bar where they routinely filled the dance floor with 10-12 squares at their weekly class nights. Gay square dancing quickly became popular in San Francisco and drew an enthusiastic crowd!

Foggy City Dancers currently has more than 140 active members in the club making it one of the larger gay and lesbian clubs in the San Francisco Bay area. Two Basic/Mainstream classes are taught each year. The first begins in late January with graduation before the annual convention. The second begins in July just after San Francisco's Lesbian and Gay Pride celebration and graduates in December. Basic/Mainstream classes are held on Tuesday nights with a typical class of 20-25 new dancers. Foggy City is fortunate to have popular GCA caller Andy Shore as their instructor for Basic/Mainstream dance levels. Andy just finished teaching his 15th class for Foggy City and the club graduated 19 new members on December 12. Foggy City also teaches a large Plus class each year beginning the first Thursday night in February. The Plus class graduates in late May so that everyone can then dance that level at convention. We're pleased to have Peggy Schumway as the instructor for our next Plus class beginning on February 4.

All class and club night dancing currently takes place at Live Oak School in the heart of San Francisco's Castro District at 117 Diamond Street. Basic/Mainstream classes are taught from 7:30-9:30 on Tuesday nights. Plus classes are taught on Thursdays from 7:00-8:30 with club night dancing following from 8:30-10:00. Always check our club hotline at 415-905-4546 for the current listing of dances, events and times.

Over the years, most square dance clubs develop their



share of memorable characters and events and Foggy City is certainly no exception. One of our members named Terry was well known as the popular and notorious "Sybil." At the annual convention, Sybil would delight everyone with her antics, especially at the Honky Tonk Queen contest. It seemed nothing was too outrageous for Sybil to do (or wear). Finally after years of entertaining her audiences, Sybil decided to retire from public life and killed herself off. But not so fast — imagine the surprise and peals of laughter the following year at the annual contest when the "dead" Sybil was carried onstage and was brought back to life! Her reincarnation was short lived however as this reappearance was truly her last. The story doesn't quite end here however, for Terry finally did introduce us to his namesake — the real life Sybil! This genuine Sybil, Terry's ex-wife, apparently felt right at home with members of Foggy City, because she later wrote a letter informing Terry that she had left her husband and come out as a Lesbian!

The members of Foggy City will always find a reason to dance — just give us enough dancers to form a square, a little space, a caller, and the fun begins. After the Miami convention, several members extended their vacation by traveling to Disneyworld in Orlando. Caller Andy Shore was part of that contingent, so people took the opportunity to square up along the way. I'm quite sure that there were several tourists who had stories to tell when they got back home that year.

Foggy City holds several dances throughout the year. In 1999 we will host our Valentines Dance on February 13, (continued, page 17)

Eighteen and Going Strong!

The story of how 2 individuals — George Fox and Rich Wilkes — have kept Capital City Squares on solid ground.

BY CAPITAL CITY SQUARES, SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

PEOPLE TEND TO THINK OF SAN FRANCISCO, New York, and Los Angeles as the centers of the gay community," says George Fox. "But right here in the middle of the Sacramento Valley is one of the longest existing gay groups in the entire area."

He's talking about Capital City Squares — eighteen years old this year! A mainstay in Sacramento's social scene.

"Many of the social groups in Sacramento — the softball teams, speakers' bureaus, leather associations — evolve, or disappear, or change direction over the years," he says.

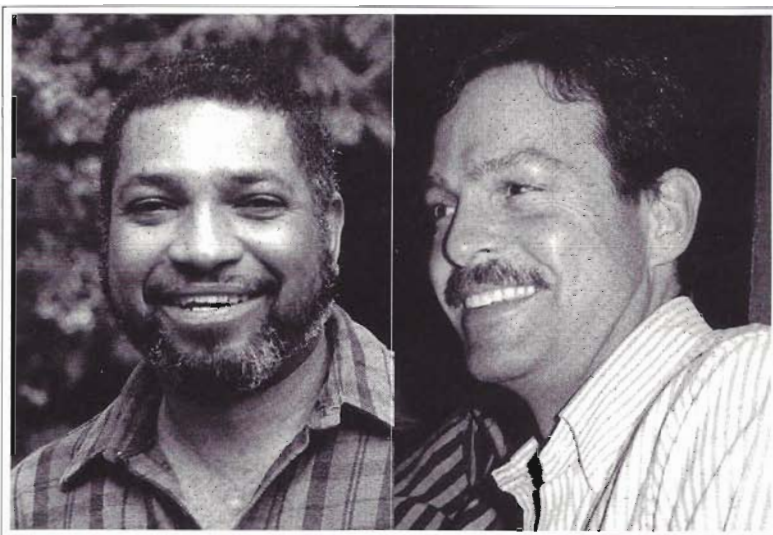
Rich Wilkes, one of the founding members of the club in 1981, agrees. "We're still going strong, still focused on our original goal of dancing well and having fun. We'd like to see even more people come out to learn to dance, but we've maintained a good, solid group of about 60 folks for years. Some years there are more than others, but they know we're always here."

"This year, for example," he says, "Cindy returned after taking a break for a couple of years. She started with us in the very early years, and now she's returned not only as a dancer, but as an officer — serving as club Administrator this term."

"I think that part of the decline in membership in many organizations and clubs in the last couple of years has to do with the recent growth of communication capabilities over the Internet," says George. "But people are starting to get tired of fingertip relationships — after a year or so on the net, they need to get back to physical contact. And if some of the smaller clubs can hold on, gay or straight, I think we'll all be seeing more people coming back."

On occasion, Cap City Squares has also hit some dry spots of declining membership, and some times when creative and expert management and leadership were needed. Fortunately, the club has been able to rely on Rich and George's willingness to offer sound advice and to take the helm when officer candidates were sparse, or when the road got bumpy.

Both Rich and George have served on the club's Board in one capacity or another since they joined the group. Rich has



Rich (left), and George

been supporting the club since it formed in 1981. George, who received his 10-year Medallion last year, figures he's missed only about half-dozen Tuesday evening classes since he started dancing with Cap City in 1987. ("Of course, it may have something to do with having all the club's property stacked in my garage," he wryly adds.)

So it's little wonder they have a unique grasp of what's going on and what's needed for the club to maintain its continuity. Both stepped back on to the Board last year, after the short tenure of a previous Board had created a need for some quick, masterful leadership.

When George agreed to serve as Treasurer, his newly elected fellow Board members were delighted — and for good reason. Ever since he joined the Sacramento club in 1987, his fellow dancers have looked forward to his high energy, his decision-making expertise, his unique responses under pressure, his fun personality and dancing style, his form-fitting blue jeans, and his wit in the face of storm.

Since George joined Cap City, he's served as Treasurer in early 1988, Administrator (club president) for the next five years, an at-large Board member from 1993 to 1994, and Treasurer again in 1997-1998. This year, he's enjoying dancing as "just a club member," he says.

Rich danced from 1981, when the club began, to 1986 and then stopped for several years until returning in 1992. Since then, he's served as Administrator (94-95), Treasurer (95-96), a Board member (96-97), and headed the group as Administrator again from 1997-98. He, too, is taking a hiatus from Board service for the first time this year.

He remembers the early years with a crooked grin and a smile.

"Capital City Squares started in 1981 as a Mainstream club," says Rich. "In those early years, several of us started a separate sister club called Prime-8s so that we could also

learn Plus. About 1987 we started including Plus as part of Cap City's regular Tuesday evening teaching program, dancing one year Mainstream, and then the next year teaching Plus."

"We did this until about three years ago," he says, "when the Board decided to teach Basic and Mainstream from September to April, and then go right through the summer teaching Plus. This way, we were able to dance all year. Another great advantage, of course, was that within just one year, even our new dancers could start attending the Saturday night Plus dances held by other clubs throughout the Bay Area."

"Prime-8s now," says Rich, "has evolved into Cap City's advanced (A-1 and A-2) sister group, dancing on Thursday evenings." Both Rich and George are advanced dancers and encourage Plus dancers to continue their learning experience with Prime-8s. "This year, we're teaching advanced again," Rich explains, "and having a great time dancing at least twice a week!"

"At first, Cap City danced wherever we could," he remembers. "We started on the patio of a local bar called the Mercantile Saloon, and then at several other bars in town, including the Power Plant and the Parking Lot. We even had our first hoedown there, and invited Foggy City Dancers to come up to join us. Soon after, we started dancing in school gyms, which has turned out best for us here in Sacramento. We've done this for the past several years, and have maintained a good relationship with the local school districts to continue these contracts."

Over the years, Capital City Squares has performed at numerous local events to promote square dancing throughout the area. "As a group, we marched in Sacramento's first gay pride parade in 1982, we attended the 1982 Reno rodeo, and in 1983 we did an exhibition performance at the rodeo," he says.

Rich holds fond memories of the group's first rodeo performance. "All the rehearsals had gone extremely well, and we were confident that we were ready for the big time," he says. "On the night of the exhibition, the announcer introduced us, the music began, we smiled and ran out on the floor and squared up, and only then realized there were just six of us out there. All six heads swung stage-left, and there stood our missing couple, dealing with extreme stage fright."

"Our instructor remarked that this would not do and made us go off stage. Then, restarting the music, we all ran

out — our recalcitrant couple in tow — and gave a perfect performance! And all eight of us had fun doing it, too."

"Cap City has also danced at the city's annual Rainbow Festival and its Lambda Fair, with the Sacramento Men's Chorus, and at numerous other events," says Rich. "As we approach 18 years, Capital City Squares is still thriving, and bringing a continuity to the entire area."

One of the club's favorite traditions is its fly-in, with this year's huge blowout scheduled for Guerneville April 23-25, 1999. This has been George's major energy expenditure since 1989, when the event moved from Sunset Point at Clear Lake to Guerneville, with accommodations through Fife's Resort.

"The event started out as a club retreat, but we soon made it a fly-in because we want other clubs in the IAGSDC to join us," says George. "For the first couple of years at Fife's, we danced on their blacktop parking lot, but by about 1992 we expanded into additional space at the nearby Veterans' Hall, and now dance in two halls at once throughout the weekend."

"Over time," says George, "Cap City's Guerneville fly-in has grown in size, and this year again, after a two-year hiatus, we invite folks to join us at this very special site. In the past, we've included housing as well as the dancing as part of the fly-in package. But this year, we're providing the names of several local places to stay so dancers can have their choice."

Another project that George took on was the creation and design of the club's AIDS Memorial Quilt panel in 1993. After he submitted his panel to the NAMES Project, he jotted down his thoughts about the dancers lost, and about the panel-making experience, for the Cap City newsletter. The story, "19 names, 19 lives," was so extraordinary, it went

on to be reproduced in Sacramento's main gay newspaper, read by thousands throughout the area. "It's a sad fact," says George, "that Cap City has lost another half dozen or so since that Quilt was made."

Although George and Rich are sitting back from the Cap City Board this year, both serve as club delegates to the Associated Square Dancers of Superior California, the association of about 40 northern California clubs that has been in existence for decades. Prior to its affiliation with Cap City, the ASDSC was made up exclusively of straight dancers, predominantly in the 40 to 65 age group.

"Well, a fascinating thing happened about three years ago," says Rich. "These two organizations found each other!

GEORGE FOX

Club Treasurer 1988

Administrator 1988-1993

Board Member 1993-1994

Treasurer 1997-1998

Association Delegate 1996-1999

RICH WILKES

Administrator 1994-1995

Treasurer 1995-1996

Board Member 1996-1997

Administrator 1997-1998

Association Delegate 1996-1999

Capital City Squares applied for membership to the ASDSC to broaden our contact with the entire Sacramento Valley square dance community."

"Fortune smiled on everyone when Cap City's Sacramento location fell within the ASDSC district directorship of a husband-and-wife team who supported our membership and welcomed us with open arms," explains Rich. "This paved the way to what has evolved into a unique and caring relationship with the clubs in this Association. The ASDSC changed their bylaws to allow Cap City members to attend dances wearing nontraditional dress, and Cap City was delighted to see a regular attendance of ASDSC dancers at our events."

"This collaboration has provided scores of people an opportunity to actually get to know gay folks," says George, "and glean an up-close understanding of the issues that are important to us. And it gives our club members a chance not only to dance nearly every night of the week should they

choose to do so, but to learn firsthand that it's really only a minority of the straight community who are intolerant."

"Cap City members have the reputation in the local square dance community of being dancers that others want to square up with," says George, "because, even while we're having a good time socializing, we're learning the calls from every possible position, thanks to the efforts of excellent instructors (Robin and Kris) who've been with us for years. We're proud to have them in our corner, and we're proud of the reputation we have among other dancers."

"And, as it turns out," he says, "our ability to dance well helped open the door to our being respected among the straight clubs as well, and has helped us meet dozens of wonderful people with whom we've developed close personal ties. We have all learned from one another by taking one step at a time over the years, and many genuine and comfortable friendships have formed. This is what square dancing is all about." ■

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor:

I have been a subscriber of SquareUp since the first issue in 1994 and definitely save all my issues. It seems that SquareUp keeps getting better and better! This is my second letter to the editor — by the way, how about a "Letters to the Editor" section so maybe there will be more feedback on what subscribers want in the magazine?

What prompted me to write this letter was the article on "Edo 8s, Gay Square Dancing in Japan." (Issue 16). I met Michael Zellner at the Portland Weave the Rose, found out that he lived in Tokyo, and knew that I would be going to Japan for seven weeks in the fall. On a previous trip, I had already visited four straight square dance clubs, including the Hiroshima City Squares. But — opposite of gay clubs — they have the universal problem of so many

extra women. In fact, one club was all women. It was natural for me to dance lead as I wear jeans anyway. The clubs dance strictly by the rules — in other words, a do sa do is done back to back without styling.

On my last 11 days in Tokyo, I was Michael's house guest — a godsend as Japan is very expensive. I was able to sample the gay scene — a 20 minute walk from his apartment — and visit the Edo 8s at the public hall only a block from his apartment. Most all square dance clubs dance in public halls — large modern buildings with a large wood floor and no rent to pay!

At Edo 8s that Saturday afternoon we had two squares plus extras. We danced to Paul Waters' tapes and did the gay styling just like home. The group was about half Japanese and half Americans who lived in Tokyo, with the usual small percentage of women.

The Japanese callers I encountered were quite a challenge to understand, especially the ones who did not speak English. I had the most difficulty with the "s" sound — Split Circulate caught me every time! It was like I remembered when I danced with Big Bird

Club in 1970 while I was in Japan for ten weeks. (Yes, Japan has changed, of course). The Big Bird Club is 40 years old now. The same caller and his wife — I had corresponded with them for awhile — were present, but no one else who was in the club in 1970. There were 50 in attendance that night. Afterwards, at a restaurant, they threw a big party in my honor with 15 attendees. They knew about Edo 8s, but I didn't get any feedback — I wish that I could have understood Japanese. Maybe I should have questioned the English speaker more. (She was the woman who had met me at Yokohama Station my first week for two square dances — one was Challenge night but changed to advanced for my benefit.)

I do appreciate Michael's efforts for starting gay square dancing in Japan, not an easy task considering the small resources. This is a success story and many kudos to Michael.

NAIDA HINDERT

Ed: I'm more than happy to print Letters to the Editor, but I don't receive that many. As the saying goes, no news is good news?

Dancing In The Nude

BRIAN TREGLOWN

Ed: Brian submitted this article in July, but I overlooked it when putting together our *Weave the Rose* coverage. As a participant in the WTR Moonshine Tip, Brian “sheds some light” on this popular event.

“**O**K, here are the rules. You must take all your clothes off and keep them off. The doors are sealed; no one comes in or out for one hour. And if I catch any cameras, they’re mine!”

Welcome to nude gay square dancing. The voice came from a naked, no-nonsense Filipino dyke who meant what she said. No one was about to test her on this. With a bevy of self-conscious smiles, clusters of eight naked bodies formed up and got ready to dance. At the far end of the room, two naked callers, mike in hand, shouted the “square ‘em up” order, and the dance began.

Like so many straight activities that gays borrow and incorporate into our lives, gay square dancing has many similarities to traditional square dancing. The rules, the music, even many of the callers are the same. But gay square dancing adds lots of extras. There are dances specifically for men and women in leather. There are dances for bears; dances for women-only; even dances for munchkins (5’6” and under, thank you). But the most popular is the Moonshine Dance — no crinolines, no levis, no clothes at all. Jewelry is OK, honey, but that’s it.

I certainly was self-conscious about do sa do-ing in the buff. But inquiring minds want to know, right? So I was one of about 180 reluctantly eager souls that filed into the ballroom last month at the annual convention. Hairy chests, smooth chests, cut/uncut, bubble butts, wide loads, they were all there, ready to party.

Square dancing is divided into lead-follow roles — boy-girl if you like — so finding the right partner is always a bit of a task. Finding someone when you’re without clothes is harder still. But I found a guy and we formed an all-Chicago square to start things out. Now one of the problems with nude square dancing is that, well er your mind wanders. For one thing, the view is unique. While there were plenty of stoop-shouldered, hairy-backed, less than perfect bodies, there were also some stunners. Think about it. If you have perfect pecs and a washboard stomach, you want to show them off, right? Sure enough, all the Mr. Universe wannabes were there. I had to tell myself to concentrate on the dancing. Don’t want to mess up on a call. And really don’t want to embarrass myself by showing too much inter-

est in someone, either.

Another distraction was body adornments. If you’ve gone to the bother of getting something — anything — on your body pierced or imprinted with a picture, here is your chance to display it. Pierced nipples, tattoos, and about a dozen “Prince Alberts” were there *allemand-lefting* with the rest of us.

By about midpoint through the hour, I was starting to relax a bit. I was dancing with a guy from Portland who was even more self-conscious than I was. At one point I snuck a peek below the belt (er had there been a belt), and realized this man had nothing to be self-conscious about. He was indeed a star. Next chance I got to swing him, child, we were swinging for days.

And just like in Cinderella, midnight finally arrived. The music stopped and we all filed over to the wall to retrieve our clothes. The doors were unsealed. Modesty returned. The next night at the banquet all was back to normal. Pretty much. Except that the guy from Portland was seated at the table next to me, and I knew.... ■

Foggy City Dancers, continued

Spring Dance on April 10, Graduation Dance in early June, Harvest Dance on August 21, our 16th Anniversary Dance on November 6 with Mike Desisto, and another Graduation Dance in December. In addition to these dances, the club hosts an annual Picnic and numerous potlucks, holds weekly classes, and has lively dancing to many of our fine local GCA callers on Thursday club nights throughout the year. We also hold special theme club nights during the year such as our popular Halloween Dance and Holiday Dance.

When visiting San Francisco, please call our events hotline at 415-905-4546. The hotline recording will list all current dance information and locations. The club address is P.O. Box 14324, San Francisco, CA 94114. You can also check out website at www.glyphic.com/foggycity/. We look forward to having you join us for a fun-filled night of high energy dancing! ■

Correction

In our last issue, we stated that Donna Matrix was crowned as Honky Tonk Queen at *Weave the Rose*. We stand corrected — Donna escorted the winners, “The Belles of San Francisco.”

Notes from the Editor

Remember to send us your change of address whenever you move. Don’t trust the Post Office to forward our mailing.

Ever wonder when your subscription expires? Not to worry — we always insert a notice in your last issue.

IAGSDC® Event Calendar

International Association of Gay Square Dance Clubs:
A Lesbian and Gay Organization

P.O. Box 15428, Crystal City VA 22215-0428, (800) 835-6462
Web site: <http://www.iagsdc.org/calendar.html>

— 1999 —

FEB

- 12-14 **Star Thru Hollywood '99**, Tinseltown Squares, Los Angeles CA. Callers: S.Bryant, A.Uebelacker, P.Waters. Phone: Jeff Ballam (818) 508-6982. E-mail: jballam@earthlink.net.
- 19-21 **10th Annual Winter Dance Camp**, Lavender Country and Folk Dance, Becket MA (The Berkshires). Phone: Jim LaBonté (781) 642-7544. E-mail: jbdakota@ix.netcom.com. —T
- 24-01 **Spin to the Top** (week of gay square dancing and skiing). Sponsor: Community Visions, Inc. Location: Mt Bachelor Ski Resort near Bend OR. Callers: John Herriot and TBA. Phone: (888) 546-6378.

MAR

- 05-07 **Square Thru 3 Rivers**, Iron City Squares, Pittsburgh PA. Callers: D.Hodge, C.Hoffner, E.McAtee. Phone: Chi Chi Hoffner (412) 244-8196. E-mail: kmstola@ibm.net.
- 12-14 **Ropin' the River '99**, Grand River Squares, Grand Rapids MI. Caller: M.DeSisto. Phone: Gerry Wheeler (616) 336-8678. E-mail: gwheeler@iserv.net.
- 18-21 **Spin Chain the Plains**, Sho-Me Squares, Kansas City MO. Callers: T.Harris, B.Tucker. Phone: Jim Burton (816) 363-8407. E-mail: jburton@kumc.edu.
- 19-21 **Philadelphia Freedom Fly-in VII**, Independence Squares, Philadelphia PA. Callers: M.DeSisto, G.Matthew, A.Uebelacker. Phone: Zip Warmerdam (215) 508-3623. E-mail: Kevin Melvin at melvink482@aol.com. Web: www.voicenet.com/~teacher/indsq.html.
- 26-28 **Pass the Sea**, Finest City Squares, San Diego CA. Callers: M.DeSisto, R.Nelson, J.Preston. Phone: Scott Parker (619) 583-4595.

E-mail: ferraripar@aol.com.
Web: www.lanz.com/finestdcity/pts.htm.

- 29-31 **26th Annual Callerlab Convention**. Location: Dallas Grand Hotel, Dallas TX. Phone: (800) 331-2577 or (507) 288-5121. —*

APR

- 01-04 **Chase the Bunny '99**, Les Carrés aux Dattes, Ottawa ON Canada. Callers: G.Ingram, P.Waters. Phone: Larry White (613) 727-9446. E-mail: datesquares@gayottawa.com. Web: www.gayottawa.com/datesquares.
- 09-10 **PACE Spectacular**, Cloverdale CA (north of Santa Rosa). Callers: D.Hodson, M.Jacobs, J.Sybalsky. Phone: Nancy Shelton (415) 479-7076. E-mail: hsmn21a@prodigy.com. Web: www.mixed-up.com/pace/. —*
- 23-25 **Stumptown Stomp**, Capital City Squares, Guerneville CA. Callers: E.Henerlau, A.Shore. Phone: George Fox (916) 929-8697. E-mail: CapCitySqs@aol.com. Web: www.iagsdc.org/capitalcitysquares/april99.htm.
- 23-25 **Shoot the North Star V**, Minnesota Wild Roses, Minneapolis MN. Callers: S.Bryant, D.Sahlstrom. Phone: Karol Rubin (612) 722-3987. E-mail: karol.r.rubin-1@tc.umn.edu.
- 30-02 **Pass the Ocean, Hon!**, Chesapeake Squares, Rehoboth DE. Callers: M.DeSisto, D.Hodge, M.Jacobs, E.McAtee. Phone: Michael Deets (410) 730-8360. E-mail: mdeets@fmd.ab.umd.edu. Web: www.iagsdc.org/chesapeake Squares.

MAY

- 14-16 **Legacy XIV Biennial Meeting**. Location: Cleveland OH. Phone: Doc and Peg Tirrell (802) 748-8538. E-mail: dptirrell@juno.com. —*

28-31 Scoot Across the Border, Triangle Squares, Toronto ON Canada. Callers: D.Hutchinson, C.Phillips. Phone: David Whitney (905) 457-7147. E-mail: whitdoc@interlog.com. Web: www.glyphic.com/iagsdc/toronto/homepage.htm.

JUN

17-19 33rd National Advanced and Challenge Convention. Location: Dayton OH. Callers: multiple. Phone: Ed Foote (412) 935-2734. —*

23-26 48th National Square Dance Convention, Indianapolis IN. Phone: General Chairman Homer and Betty Jo Unger (317) 878-9948. Web: www.iei.net/48nsdc. —*

28-30 11th GCA Caller School, Los Angeles CA. Coaches: M.Jacobs, A.Uebelacker, D.Wilson. Phone: Carlos Mosca (415) 826-7440.

JUL

02-04 Lights, Camera, Linear Action!, 16th IAGSDC Convention, Tinseltown Squares, et al, Los Angeles CA. Callers: S.Bryant, V.Ceder, M.DeSisto, M.Jacobs, M.Kellogg, F.Lescrinier, S.Levine, D.Parnell, B.Rubright, A.Uebelacker, D.Wilson. Location: Westin Bonaventure Hotel phone (213) 624-1000. Gen info, phone: (818) 508-6982. E-mail: LCLain99@aol.com. Web: www.lanz.com/lcla/.

AUG

05-07 18th American Advanced and Challenge Convention, Toledo OH. Callers: multiple. Phone: Bill and Trudy Wallace (505) 881-9323. —*

11-14 3rd Annual USA West Square Dance Convention, Las Vegas NV. Callers: multiple. Phone: TBA. E-mail: TBA. Web: www.square-dancing.com/usaWEST/NV. —*

27-29 Spin the Needle, Puddletown Dancers, Seattle WA. Callers: M.DeSisto, A.Uebelacker. Phone: Chris Vance (253) 839-4296. E-mail: chrsv9398@aol.com. Web: http://members.aol.com/puddletown/flyin.htm.

SEP

01-30 September is International Gay Square Dance Month.

03-05 29th National Singles Dance-A-Rama, SSDUSA, St

Louis MO. Callers: multiple. Phone: TBA. —*

24-26 Explode the Rockies III, Rocky Mountain Rainbeaus, Denver CO. Caller: Steve Kopman. Phone: Don Kuzela (303) 388-5733. E-mail: RMRsquares@aol.com. Web: members.aol.com/rmrsquares.

01-30 September is International Gay Square Dance Month.

OCT

01-31 The 5th annual Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual History Month, National AIDS Awareness Month and Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

01-03 Tahoe Rewind, 10th Gay A&C Weekend, Prime 8's, Stanford Sierra Camp, Fallen Leaf Lake (Lake Tahoe) CA. Callers: S.Bryant, V.Ceder, R.Howell, G.Jedlicka, A.Uebelacker, D.Wilson. Phone: Dennis Moore (916) 645-9306. E-mail: Dmmore@ns.net. Web: www.ns.net/~dmmore. Stanford Sierra Camp website: http://sunsite1.dc.stanford.org/SOLAR/xINTERNAL/SierraCamp/.

08-10 Zoom to the Beach '99, Shoreline Squares, Long Beach CA. Callers: V.Ceder, D.Gallina, A.Uebelacker. Phone: Michael Levy (562) 425-0706. E-mail: mlevy@kofax.com. Web: www.ShorelineSquares.com.

29-31 Scares and Squares '99, Rosetown Ramblers, Portland OR. Callers: M.DeSisto, G.Sauvé. Phone: Paul (503) 690-8844. E-mail: paul.findlay@tek.com. Web: www.rdrop.com/users/ramblers/scaresnsquares.html.

26-28 PACE Extravaganza. Location: Doubletree Hotel, Ventura CA. Callers: V.Ceder, R.Howell, L.Kendall, L.Kopman. Phone: Casey and Lis Taylor (818) 883-3369. E-mail: cwemtayl4@juno.com. Web: www.wgn.net/~thefron/. —*

DEC

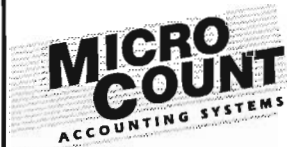
01 World AIDS Day/A Day Without Art, many cities.

Asterisk (*): ostensibly straight square dance / "T": gender-free traditional or country dance. Please make Calendar available to club members.

Verify info with local contacts. Updates: James Ozanich, 1815 Urbana Way, Sacramento CA 95833-2646, (916) 925-4242. E-mail: ozmar@aol.com.

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