

THE GENDER GAP — BRINGING MORE WOMEN INTO OUR CLUBS

# SQUAREUP!

a magazine for gay and lesbian square dancers and their friends

Issue 6 December/January/February 1996 \$4.95



WOMEN OF THE IAGSDC®

# EDITOR TALK

MIKE STAPLES

With five issues under our belt, I was actually feeling comfortable that the SquareUp staff had established a good format for covering lesbian and gay square dancing. That warm, fuzzy feeling didn't last too long though, as Paul Waters challenged me to tackle some topics with more heat, controversy, and substance. Specifically, Paul suggested an issue on women in the IAGSDC®.

Of course, there is nothing inherently "heated" or "controversial" about women in the IAGSDC®. But two of the specific topics we chose to address — attracting and retaining women in our clubs, and the Women's International Convention — have the potential for pushing hot buttons. I had to work through my reservations about our ability to cover these topics in a constructive way. Liz Hutar helped by assuring me that the series would work as long as we presented a diverse and balanced set of opinions.

Though the articles are not representative of all opinions, I hope we've included enough to provoke thought and stimulate discussion. There are a wide range of topics that I decided to exclude, only for the sake of keeping the articles focused on a few subjects that we could cover in a cogent manner. You will also find another half of the magazine with articles unrelated to the women's series.

Having said all that, I hope you enjoy Issue number 6, and that you will share your reactions in a "Letter to the Editor." This issue is different from the others and we want to know if you like the format. Letters can be sent to SquareUp Magazine, 501 Mulberry Street NE, Albuquerque, NM 87106, or e-mailed to "mstaples@lanl.gov".



*Happy New Year from the SquareUp staff!*

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# THE GENDER GAP

Bringing More Women Into Our Clubs

An Introduction by PAUL WATERS

*Paul Waters lives in Valley Village, California with his husband Kevin Voecks. He started square dancing in February 1972 and calling in December of the same year. Currently, Paul calls for all of the gay square dance clubs in the Los Angeles area and is most closely associated with the Tinseltown Squares and the new club in Simi Valley. Paul is a frequent contributor to SquareUp!*

Although the ranks of gay square dancing are primarily populated with men, the women have been an integral part of our activity right from the start. From Agnes Smith, who was instrumental in starting the Western Star Dancers of San Francisco (one of the very first gay square dance clubs), to Sally Maneker, who has been a major player in starting the brand new club in Simi Valley, California, the women of gay square dancing have left their mark. Yet their numbers have remained small, rarely approaching parity with the number of men, and often not even representing one-third, the best estimate of the ratio of gay women to gay men in the general population. So what's going on here? Why is it that women appear to be so rare in gay square dancing, yet a few clubs actually have more women than men? Why is it that we seem to have a problem attracting women into our activity and then keeping them involved once they've joined?

My interest in this topic stems from two sources. First, my intense interest in understanding the complexities of the world within which we live with its varied diversity. Second, my strong desire to attract, and then keep people involved in square dancing. Since women tend to be underrepresented, this is a logical place to look to go about increasing the number of participants in our activity, and as a bonus, an opportu-

nity to get a better understanding of issues that I have no basis for personal knowledge. It was one of the women members of the Tinseltown Squares that gave me a clue that there was something going on of which I was completely unaware. She spoke to me about her interaction with the other women at the '95 Pass the Sea Fly-in, hosted by the Finest City Squares of San Diego. It started me on a quest for knowledge that has led me to a number of interesting revelations about not only the women involved in square dancing, but about the men and myself too.

Presented in this issue of SquareUp are several articles about the women who participate in gay square dancing. Liz Hutar tells us about the recent success of the Chi-Town Squares in recruiting women using Ian Henzel's marketing techniques. I have written an article on what I have learned about the differences between gay men and lesbians and how they interact with each other in social settings. The ever witty Grace Cummins tells us about the Wilde Bunch, one of three "gender parity" IAGSDC® clubs and how/why the gender balance works so well. The Board of Directors of *Sugar & Spice Sister Squares* tell us about the purpose of the annual women-only square dance convention. And Liz provides us with a word of caution about some of the separatist elements of that event. To round out this series, there is a showcase

of the women of the Gay Callers Association, ranging from some of our up-and-coming newer callers, to some with experience that predates the origination of gay square dancing in 1980.

My hope is that these articles on the women of gay square dancing will provide food for thought, and perhaps yield a better understanding of the issues involved with attracting and keeping women in our clubs. Some of the topics could be considered "airing our dirty laundry in public," but with a little luck, bringing these issues to the surface will afford all an opportunity to gain a better understanding of what's going on.

Armed with this information, we will be in a better position to be more sensitive

to the needs of the women in our ranks and be better able to create an environment that is more conducive to attracting and retaining women in our activity.

But of everything I've learned about our "sisters of the allemande," the most significant is that it is very important to be careful what you



*What can our clubs do to attract more women?*

wish for — sometimes your wishes are answered in ways you don't expect. The brand new gay square dance club that I just started in Simi Valley has more women than men. And as such, they will soon join the ranks of the other three gender parity gay square dance clubs, the Independence Squares of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the Wilde Bunch of Albuquerque, New Mexico, and the Diablo Dancers of Concord, California. I couldn't be more pleased, and no doubt my understanding of the things that are important to our lesbian compatriots will grow through this increased opportunity for contact. Who knows, at this rate, I may someday find myself bestowed with the title of "Honorary Lesbian."

Until then, happy dancing!

# YES, WE RECRUIT

Attracting Women to Gay and Lesbian Square Dancing

BY LIZ HUTAR

*Liz has been a member of Chi-Town Squares since 1992. She is currently unemployed, and loving every minute of it. Send her flight vouchers, and she'll happily come to your fly-in.*

It really doesn't seem fair that gay and lesbian square dancing is such a well-kept secret. If most of us could have our way, entire cities would be devoted to beginning classes, with full level dances every night.

And, if we could have our way, those classes and dances would be an equal mix of women and men. Why do some clubs have such a difficult time attracting and keeping women? Each city has its own particularities to face, but perhaps a discussion of Chi-Town Squares' recent efforts in this area could be

useful to other groups. Anyone interested in learning details about specific recruiting techniques can contact Ian Henzel at Chi-Town Squares, or any participant in his recruitment workshop held this year at the IAGSDC® convention in Chicago.

Let's take a look at several years' worth of statistics. After the same old attempts at collecting names of prospective new dancers for Chi-Town's 1993-4 Basic/Mainstream/Plus (BMP) class, 20 people signed up for the class, of which only 15 graduated. Then, Ian Henzel took over. Chi-Town collected 420 names for the 1994-5 class, of which 54 signed up and 48 graduated (46 Plus, 2 Mainstream). Not bad, hmm? Well, for our 1995-6 BMP class, Chi-Town collected 597 names (Ian complained a little, because his goal was 750), and the current BMP class now stands at 72 new

dancers, of which 11 are women. In two years, we went from one active woman member to 20.

Now, I hear you ask, what exactly were those recruiting techniques? Let's start with the old method first. Once upon a time, Chi-Town's approach had centered around several gay and lesbian community events spread out evenly during the year. We would march in the annual Pride parade, dancing on a flat-

bed truck and distributing leaflets. We staffed a booth every August at the annual two-day street fair on Halsted, a predominately gay thoroughfare. We kept a stack of information cards at the entrance to Charlie's, the local gay and lesbian country/western bar. We performed demonstration squares throughout the year at various gay and lesbian events, especially country/western venues such as the gay rodeo. In addition, of course, we badgered our friends to join us.

So, what was wrong with this picture? The same old members kept going over the listings in their little black books, hoping to find new names to pest-ter, I mean, entice into square dancing. No new blood there, after a year or two in the club. And gathering names at public events months before classes begin does not guarantee that the people in question will remember what the heck you're talking about when you call them at the beginning of September to remind them that classes will be starting soon.

But then, Chi-Town Squares got smart, and gave the recruiting reins to a club member who knew what he was doing, because he was transferring expertise from his career in marketing and public relations to the activity of

recruitment. The club did not significantly change how it solicited new names, but once the names were received, they no longer sat idle for months on a computer mailing list. Ian wrote every new contact within three days of receipt of their name, thanking them for their interest and making them feel welcome. He also created a new recruit newsletter which was sent to every name on the list each month, to keep prospective members aware of the club and mindful of the upcoming season of classes and dances. A few "ice-breaker" events were held during the summer, combining basic square dancing instruction with general socializing. Finally, every person on the mailing list was contacted by a Chi-Town member to personally invite him or her to come try out the club. I was put in charge of calling all of the women on the list, approximately 100, so that they would know they had a lesbian contact in the club in case that was important to any of them. By the time September 1994 rolled around, there was a record number in attendance at the three open house classes held prior to the beginning of the new BMP class.

Many of the people contacted made a point of saying that they were impressed by the professionalism with which they were welcomed — and that this red carpet treatment is what made them decide that they wanted to give square dancing (and our club) a chance. In a large city with hundreds of social activities from which to choose, Chi-Town's best selling point wasn't square dancing itself, but the friendly and organized welcome we offered.

In one year, BMP attendance soared from 20 to 54. Perhaps even more telling, the number of new dancers who continued through the entire year went from 15, or 75%, to 48, or 89% of initial attendance. After all, retention is a crucial component of recruitment. The new members came to Chi-Town already psyched to have a good time and be part of a fun, social group, and the club, in turn, was energized by the size and eagerness of the new class. The new members felt valued, and part of a well-run organization.

Interestingly, Chi-Town tried one approach which did not work as well as expected. The club purchased the Metro-



No longer Chi-Town's only woman



politan Sports Association (MSA) mailing list, anticipating that physically active lesbians and gay men might want to find an indoor aerobic activity during the winter months. There was not a substantial response from the MSA list, and not one woman was recruited from this list.

**T**his curious fact brings us to the second question at hand: how can a virtually all-male club attract women? Purchasing the mailing list was, at least in part, an attempt to reach women. In Chicago, the lesbian community has a separatist streak, so there isn't as much interaction between lesbians and gay men as there may be in other cities. I am ashamed to admit that I have been verbally and physically harassed by lesbians every year that I have marched

with Chi-Town in Chicago's Pride Parade, for "fraternizing" with the enemy. In comparison, MSA is one of the few truly integrated gay and lesbian groups in Chicago. Therefore, if there is a lack of interest among lesbians who have already shown themselves to be non-separatist and interested in club-sponsored physical activity, then the problem isn't just getting women onto a recruiting list, but convincing them that square dancing is a desirable, fun activity. Based on Chi-Town's experience of the past few years, the best way to get people, women or men, hooked on square dancing is first to get them hooked on the club as a friendly social activity, then allow the love of square dancing to develop naturally over time.

By most accounts, Ian's first year on

the job was a success, with 48 new members graduating in May 1995. However, as a club we felt that we had failed once again in recruiting women. Although a number of women had come to our open houses, only eight or nine stayed for classes, and several of them had to drop out due to personal circumstances (death in the family, serious injuries, etc.). Granted, I was no longer the only lesbian, so things were looking up from my point of view, but seven lesbians in a club of over 100 men is a very tenuous group.

Critical mass was the key. With 48 new members, most of whom knew one or two lesbians, the second year of Ian's recruiting plan started yielding encouraging results. As mentioned before, in 1994-5 the push to attract and keep new

# The Women's International Square Dance Convention

A Time to Say "This One's For Us"

*Sugar & Spice Sister Squares* BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**T**he Women's International Square Dance Convention offers beginning and advanced dancers a weekend of fun with other women. It is the only convention of its kind that incorporates a program for new square dancers. The convention provides a time for women to enjoy being together and a time to say: "This one's for us." While we enjoy focusing on ourselves and our common interests, we also enjoy square dancing with the "community at large." On Sunday, everyone is invited to dance. We don't believe in separatism, but we do believe in women spending time together and joining together in women-only space. We all have the right to agree or disagree with this



*Dvorah and Anne celebrate at last year's event*

philosophy. But, these differences should not stop us from supporting each other and having a good time together.

We would like to offer the voices of women who attended the First Convention.

The following quotes are

from our survey sheets:

"I liked being a part of square dance herstory."

"I loved meeting women from other clubs and cities."

"This environment has enabled my heart to open for the first time in many years."

"This is the first time I've felt I could belong in a square dance setting."

"I liked having the chance to meet other female square dancers."

"I would never have started to square dance if it weren't for this convention."

"I am absolutely thrilled at the prospect of an International Directory of Women Square Dancers & Supporters."

Gina Robideaux wrote an article in the *Foggy City News* about her experience at the convention. Gina's comments expressed the feelings of many women: "The energy in the women-only space is just so incredible! It's an experience I highly recommend!"

We invite women dancers, experienced and beginners, to the '96 convention.

You'll be in for great fun, new friends, and lots of dancing.

members netted Chi-Town the largest first-year class in the club's history. In 1995, all those new eager members could each draw in a few of their friends (including women), bringing the number of women showing up to the September open houses to an acceptable amount for them to not feel overwhelmed by men. As several of them confided to me, they like men well enough, it's just that they want to know that, as long as they're

going to spend time and money on a regular social activity, they'll have a reasonable chance of meeting new women for friendship or more. Not too much to ask, right?

In addition, there were three women recruiting volunteers to call prospective new women members this year — three to call 120, as opposed to just me calling about 100 the previous year. Now, some women may like me, but let's face it —

no one pleases everyone equally. With three very different women as contacts, we have had three times the possibility of attracting other women to the club this year. In fact, this year we've managed to attract a number of straight women as well as lesbians, doubling our future pool of prospects.

How nice to realize that I will probably never again hear: "Oh, *you're* the woman from Chi-Town Squares".

## They May Recruit More Women, But Will They Share With Us?

A different perspective on the Women's Convention

LIZ HUTAR

**M**any of my friends have already made their plans to be in Denver for the 2nd annual Women's Square Dance Convention, Mile High Pass By, organized by *Sugar & Spice Sister Squares*. I know that they will have a great time. I also know that I will not be there.

Some powerfully persuasive arguments have been made by last year's participants. They will tell you that extra effort has to be made to attract more women into lesbian and gay square dancing, and that any activity which does expose more women to the joys of square dancing is an activity worth encouraging and supporting. They're right, of course. But I am troubled by the stories of two women from Chicago, which I would like to share with you.

My girlfriend, let's call her Diana, had been very supportive of my square dancing mania and had even come to dances as a non-square dancing partner (is that the current politically correct term for it?). Nothing I said or did could convince her to try square dancing for herself. Think of it — one of the most rabidly enthusiastic lesbian square dancers in the U.S. couldn't get her own girlfriend to square dance. Then, with the promise of a nice relaxing hotel room practically to herself over a long weekend, Diana decided to join me at the 1995 IAGSDC® convention in Chicago. The very first day, while watching from the sidelines at the Women's Tip, Diana was dragged in to make a square. The other women promised to pull her through. Little did they know that, despite having never taken a square dancing lesson, Diana apparently had been paying attention at Chi-Town dances and was light on her feet. One tip turned into two, until Diana realized that she had been dancing the entire hour and loving every minute of it. She danced virtually every

minute at convention — much more than I did, in fact. The first night, she phoned several of her friends to gush over how much fun she'd been having. Listening to her on the phone, trying to explain to them that, no matter how silly they thought it was, if they'd only try it for themselves they'd love square dancing too, gave me such a thrill. That's why we have a Women's Tip at convention: to mingle and to welcome new women square dancers and to enjoy being together again, dancing.

Later in the convention, Diana came to me with a concern. She'd noticed that some women would stand on the sidelines near a section of the dance floor where there were a number of women in nearby squares and wait for a tip to be over. During the break between tips, these women would arrange for an all-women's square. What woman would say no? It's fun to dance

with all women. The guys may not even realize that most of the time they are dancing in all-male squares; in many clubs, there aren't enough women to even have that option. But what bothered Diana is that if a man heard they were putting together a square and offered to join them, the women organizers would send the man away. Diana knew that this was an infringement of IAGSDC® regulations, and wondered why no one was paying attention to the breach.

I explained to Diana that we had a group of separatist women square dancers in Chicago, and that they had been welcomed, as had the straight square dancing community, to come to convention for a significantly reduced rate.

They were not IAGSDC® members, nor members of any square dancing association, gay or straight, because of their refusal to play by the

rules. They were at convention to take advantage of the activities provided, but had no intention of altering their politics.

Later that same convention, I was in the Mainstream hall dancing to Mike DeSisto. You can imagine how many hundreds of people were in the hall. Well, Mike good-naturedly gets on his microphone between tips to announce that there was a group of women trying to set up a women-only square, and they needed one more dancer. The entire hall stood there for several minutes waiting patiently, but all the other women in the room were happily paired up in mixed-gender squares. Finally, just to keep things moving, Ron Goodman ran across the room to fill in the missing spot. In front of several hundred



Dana and Liz



# WOMEN IN THE RANKS

Differences in the way gay men and lesbians interact

PAUL WATERS

**A**lthough women have been a factor in gay square dancing from the start, their numbers have always been significantly less than those of their male counterparts — but why? There are many possible factors, but it appears that a significant one, perhaps even the most significant one, is an issue that is much larger than gay square dancing. It involves the way that gay men and lesbians interact with each other.

Sweeping generalizations have the potential for masking the truth (for example, humans, on average, have one breast and one testicle), yet it seems that gay men tend to react differently to the approach of another gay man than lesbians do to the approach of another lesbian. And therein lies a difference that can explain a lot in terms of why gay square dancing is primarily populated by men.

When lesbians are approached by another lesbian, a common response is “What does SHE want?!” even if the approach is only of a friendship nature. The consequence of this is the broadcast-

ing of subliminal messages that the approach is not welcome. Their gay male counterparts, on the other hand, are just as apt to be flattered by attention from another man, and to send an equal but opposite message that the approach *is* welcome. It appears that many lesbians exhibit behavior patterns that keep them isolated from each other. This has an effect over time, and the archetypal lesbian potluck among the few close friends is far more the rule than the exception. Since breaking the ice is more difficult for women, once this has been accomplished there is a tendency to stay within a known group rather than continuing to venture into unknown territory.

It has been well established that an individual's longevity in square dancing is directly related to the number and the depths of the friendships they develop. The fact that gay men tend to make new friends more easily than their female counterparts could explain the women's lower representation in gay square dancing. This delay in forming friendship bonds during beginners' classes appears to be enough to dramatically increase the

dropout rate.

It is not at all unusual for a number of women to come to the early part of a beginner's class, then drop out after a few weeks. This is easy to rationalize if the women are few in number, but it seems to happen even if the numbers are larger. The Summer '95 beginner's class for the Tinseltown Squares of Los Angeles had over a square of women for the first eight sessions. Starting on week nine, all but one were never to be seen again. The same situation played out during the Fall '94 class of the Chi-Town Squares of Chicago. The class started out with seventeen women, but finished with only two.

So, given this situation, what can be done?

The Diablo Dancers from Concord, California have implemented a novel solution. They know that it is very important to not only create an environment that is friendly to women, but one that is friendly to women *for women*. Since many lesbians are reluctant to approach each other, the men of the Diablo Dancers have been asked to take another woman with them when they are introducing themselves and making small talk with one of the new women. It appears that gay men are natural socializers, and that this skill has been enlisted by the club to help them ensure the lesbians are more quickly put at ease with each other.

Due to the infinite variety of the human experience, along with the exist-

people, the women threw him out of the square. Ron Goodman is the co-founder of gay and lesbian square dancing in Chicago. I snapped, and would have run over immediately to give them a piece of my mind, but my (female) partner physically restrained me to keep me from making a scene.

**L**et's jump to story number two. After the convention, Chi-Town Squares was contacted by a woman from the local separatist group. Let's call her Hope. Although Chi-Town has consistently invited members of this group to join us for classes and dances, Hope had never heard of Chi-Town until she came to convention. She was overjoyed to learn that she was welcome to join us, and was informed specifically that we had no restriction against her belonging to both groups simultaneously. Imagine Hope's dismay when she learned that the women's group decided to change its weekly meeting to coincide with Chi-Town's beginning class. When Hope complained that they were forcing her to choose between the two groups, she was told that the switch had been purpose-

ful. She was counselled to leave Chi-Town, and told lies about the group which she already knew to be false due to her ongoing association with the club. Within two months, the women's group had disbanded due to insufficient membership, and the few women who were interested in continuing to square dance were commuting out to the suburbs to dance with a straight club, despite the fact that Chi-Town holds classes and dances in a church in the heart of the lesbian neighbourhood, only a mile away from the site of their former meeting place. Apparently, they too, like Hope, had not been informed of their options.

I think of these stories as I contemplate the prospect of going to Sugar & Spice's Mile High Pass By. I'm absolutely certain that most of the dancers going to Denver are honestly and eagerly trying to recruit more women into gay and lesbian square dancing. But please bear in mind that some of the participants will be there not simply because they like dancing with women but because they refuse to dance with men. It's easy to discover who they are at an IAGSDC® function; how will you know at an all-women's event?

ence of the socially inept gay man, there also exists the gregarious lesbian. The Diablo Dancers have identified these "gay men trapped in the body of a lesbian," and have pressed them into service alongside the guys.

So it appears that the secret to retaining women is not just creating an environment that is friendly to women, but creating one that is friendly *for* women as well. Of the men in gay square dancing, the ones that want little or nothing to do with women are few and far between. So smiling male faces eager to greet the women who walk through the door are a given. But having the environment be friendly for the women to feel comfortable with each other is another thing altogether, and one that doesn't just happen on its own. The Diablo Dancers have recognized this, and have taken steps to create this "friendly for women" atmosphere by involving the entire club in the effort. But it needn't be a club-wide effort to be successful if the right individual is involved.

Ric Gonzalez, a longtime member of the Wilde Bunch, has been the gay man on a mission to create this "friendly for women" environment in Albuquerque. Ric makes a point of greeting all the new class members (both men and women) and makes them feel like they've known each other for years. So on the gay man scale of gregariousness, Ric is a major over-achiever. Considering the number of lesbians that are members of the Wilde Bunch, he's been wildly successful to the point where the women now outnumber the men.

So it appears that anyone is capable of making the difference in creating this "friendly for women" environment, man or woman. Although it would be nice if it were a club-wide effort, Ric has shown that all it takes is a single individual to get the job done. Although the results elsewhere have not been as dramatic as in Albuquerque, there has been a steady increase in the number of women involved in gay square dancing throughout the country. For example, in 1991, the Los Angeles area had only three women members between the two clubs in the entire metropolitan area. Since then the number has increased

dramatically to the point where seeing a square comprised entirely of women is commonplace.

Every club is different, and it is unlikely that the solutions that have been implemented successfully by the Wilde Bunch or the Diablo dancers will be "plug-and-play" successful for another

club. But given that knowledge is a powerful thing, armed with this information about the differences between gay men and lesbians, every club is in a position to implement its own version of a solution. With a little luck, the coming years will see a dramatic increase of women in the ranks.

## WILDE WOMEN

### GRACE CUMMINS

*Grace has danced with the Wilde Bunch since 1988, and is one of the original staff members of SquareUp.*

Amidst all the anguish and pop psychology about women, or the lack thereof, in the IAGSDC®, there are some success stories. There are clubs that have started out with a good mix of men and women. There are clubs that have begun as all-male and progressed to a 50-50 split.

The Wilde Bunch belongs to the latter group. It was formed in 1983 as a male square dance group, probably for no other reason than a bunch of guys decided to get together and dance. They danced at the Albuquerque Social Club, which was a predominately male bar in those days.

In 1985, Kris Warmoth arrived as the first woman in the Wilde Bunch. She joined after an invitation from Bill Eyler, with whom she had taken a Country-Western dance class. Later she dragged Jean Effron in, who dragged Sue Steketee, who dragged ... Little by little, the number of women grew. When this author started dancing in 1988, there were still a greater number of men, but not so that I even thought about it. The Wilde Bunch attained 50-50 status in 1992, and it remains so today.

Kris recounts being comfortable from

the very beginning. It was a small club and there were some wonderful men in it, Bill and Ric Gonzalez and Bucky Bouxsein. When talking to some of the other "women pioneers" the same response was given. They credit these same men with making them feel welcome. How? The men sat down and talked to them, one on one, every week. They danced with them, they went for ice cream, they cared.

As our comfort level grew, we partied together, traveled together, roomed together, cried and laughed together. We gloried in our sameness while we respected our differences — the men cooked and sewed while the women brought paper plates and chips.

As a club, the Wilde Bunch realized that we had a special

thing going, and so we worked hard to keep it that way. We were adamant that the board be evenly divided along gender lines. If a new class was predominantly female, we targeted males for our next class. We supported each other and were sensitive to each other's needs. And we constantly discussed how much we just liked being a mixed group.

These days we don't seem to need to focus on our gender mix, because it is established and seems to continue without any organized help. That is the true success story.



*A time to be practical*



What about the rest of the IAGSDC®? The Wilde Bunch is not the only successful club out there. What do these other clubs have in common? Does the size of the club make a difference? Does the vast majority of the club want to be integrated or is it enough to have a few dedicated individuals?

**T**his author does not purport to have the answers for our "gender problem." But I am tired of listening to people who say that women aren't social enough, or that women are threatened by other women, or that men don't make enough effort, or any of dozens of other pop theories.

It is ludicrous to be bewildered when a woman walks into a club of 100 men, is treated nicely, and then never comes back. The IAGSDC® is committed to women in square dance, but the woman attending her first square dance class hasn't a clue about that. And she probably hasn't come there out of some burning love for or desire to square dance. More than likely, she is looking for a new activity where she can have fun and feel comfortable. She walks in and says "OOPS, I'm in the wrong place." Would it be any different if a man walked into a group of 100 women?

Perhaps the larger clubs where this is happening should just accept this and change their way of dealing with it. Have them encourage women in their cities to start square dance clubs. Help them do it. Give them time to become viable and then reach out and organize mutual functions. Forty women dancing with 100 men is strangely more comfortable than three with 100. Future mergers would become a goal.

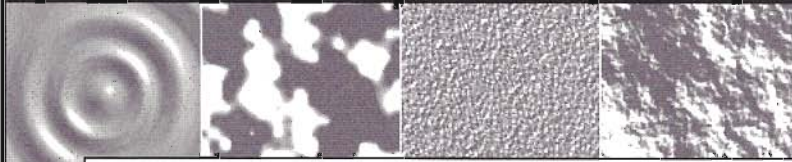
The IAGSDC® should accept and welcome these clubs. The non-exclusion policy would be in effect, but is a club with little or no men any different than our existing clubs of little or no women? We already have some ambiguous policies. We allow a women's tip at convention, but god forbid that there would ever be a men's tip or an exclusive moonshine tip.

It is time to be practical. The integration of new or small clubs is immensely easier than our larger clubs. The same strategies are not working in the big clubs. Let's take a chance and do it differently.

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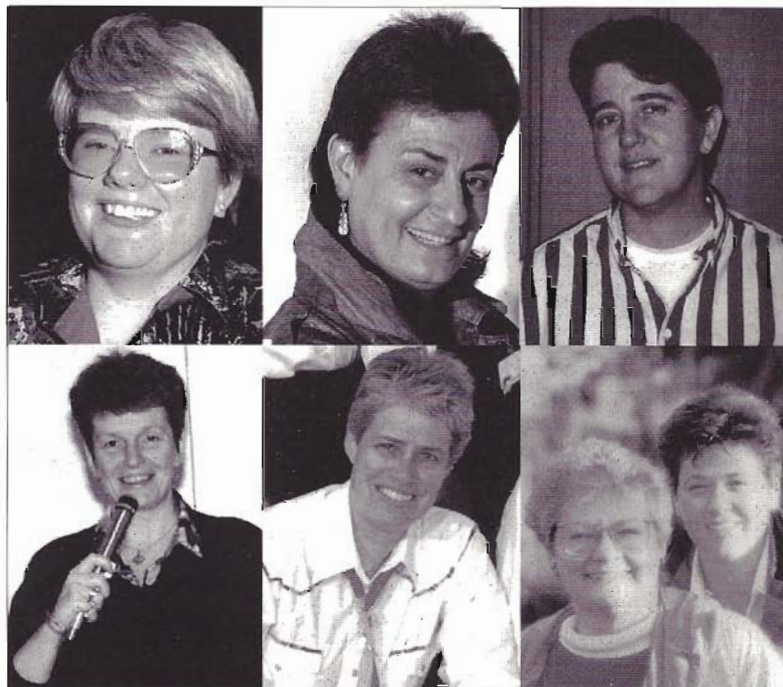
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# WOMEN CALLERS OF THE IAGSDC®

Autobiographies Compiled by MIKE STAPLES

**A**s part of our series on women in the IAGSDC®, we elected to end on a high note by inviting all GCA women callers to submit an autobiography. We received one response for every two invitations we sent out, so not all women callers are represented. Among those who did respond, all are active contributors within our square dance community.

The questions for the autobiography were loosely constructed and we encouraged each caller to tell her story in whatever way she wanted. Though the stories are varied, you'll find common threads among them.



*Clockwise, starting with upper left, Ett McAtee, Dvorah Dnali, Nicky Hood, Donna Williams (back), Kris Jensen, Anne Uebelacker*

---

## Donna Williams

**I** currently live in Seattle with my partner of four years, Pat. We are both members of Puddletown Dancers. I have been a square dancer for the past nine years. I began "dabbling" with singing calls years ago in San Francisco and in Seattle. About two years ago, after being on hiatus from square dancing altogether, I received a phone call from the new class representative, asking if I would be interested in doing a half hour review before each class period. Coincidentally, I had been seriously contemplating getting into calling. I began doing the reviews, and met the class instructor, who took me under his wing and has been very instrumental in my continuing learning process. I have found many of the established callers, both within our community and outside, to be very supportive and encouraging, always offering advice and words of wisdom. I am also thankful for a very supportive club, which has provided many calling opportunities.

Currently, I am teaching a Plus class. I also call Basic through A2 level dances. I have recently done a couple of Intros to Square Dancing for groups outside of our square dance community. Membership in caller organizations include:

GCA (Gay Caller's Association); ACA (American Caller's Association); and Puget Sound (Local) Caller's Association. It is my intent to make calling a career. I believe calling is so much fun because the dancers are so lively and spirited and genuinely enthusiastic about dancing. Once, while discussing the nationwide decline of square dancing, some words of advice were shared: "Your contribution must be that you are willing to put something back into it." ("It" being the activity of square dancing.) That is the only way it will survive.

---

## Ett McAtee

**H**ow did I get started calling? Well, I found that my square dancing naturally extended into the calling realm in 1989, when I attended the first GCA calling school at the NY convention. Since then, I've been calling and teaching for Chesapeake Squares in Baltimore. I also call my own challenge C1 club, Ettseteras, and I share a C2 and C3A/C3 club, Fifth Wheelers, with Linda Kendall, in the Washington DC area. I've called at the National Advanced and Chal-



lenge conventions for the past 4 years, and enjoy calling at the IAGSDC® club fly-ins around the country, most notably Chesapeake Squares' own *Pass the Ocean, Hon!* fly-in held every May in Rehoboth, Delaware. I hope to see you out on the floor sometime when I'm calling in *your* area!

---

## Nicky Hood

**E**arly in my career, I was very fortunate to have Rosetown Ramblers in Portland, Puddletown in Seattle and Squares Across the Border in Vancouver all provide me with opportunities to develop as a caller. Since then, I've traveled further afield calling dances for IAGSDC® clubs in San Francisco, Washington D.C., New York and Chicago. While I very much enjoy calling Mainstream and Plus, I have always wanted to emulate my mentor and good friend, Anne Uebelacker, and hope one day to be a nationally recognized Challenge caller. To that end, I've appeared as a guest caller at Challenge festivals for PACE in San Francisco, the Heartland Jubilee in Louisville and, in June of 1995, I made it to the big one — the National Advanced and Challenge Festival in Dayton. What a thrill! I hope to have the thrill of dancing with *you*, one day soon.

---

## Dvorah Dnali

**I** am a member of the Gay Callers Association, Denver Area Callers & Cuers Association and CallerLab. I have organized and am the caller for three square dance clubs:

- The Rocky Mountain Raven Squares, (age range 7-11 years), now five years running.
- The Teen Square Ups, a teenage club supported by a grant from "Voices Against Violence."
- *Sugar & Spice Sister Squares* (one of the founders of this women's square dance club), second year running. *Sugar & Spice Sister Squares* sponsors the Annual International Women's Convention, the first convention of its kind inviting non-dancers to learn square dancing.

At present, my focus is on developing square dance clubs. I call dances up to the Plus level and will soon be calling Advanced.

---

## Kris Jensen

**I**n 1990, Turtle-Bear, my brand-new girlfriend, dragged me to the summer Wilde Bunch Basic class. As I learned (and quickly became addicted to) square dancing, I kept wondering, "How does Bill [Eyler] do that?" I knew he was improving, but he always got us back to our corners and partners. Also, I was having so much fun, I wondered why *everybody* (read more women) didn't square dance. So, with a combination of intellectual curiosity and evangelical zeal, I started learning to call in early 1991.

Calling quickly became a passion. I went to caller schools, I read books, I bribed dancers to let me practice on them. I now

call at least three times a week: for the Wilde Bunch in Albuquerque, for the High Desert Stars in Santa Fe, and for the Silver Fox Squares, a group of straight seniors who let me practice on them when I was just starting out. I've called guest tips at fly-ins around the country, and occasionally I get an out-of-the-area booking.

I've been the GCA president and I'm currently the co-editor of *The Call Sheet*, GCA's quarterly newsletter. I've also attended a couple of CALLERLAB conventions and I'm active in the local callers association.

I'm still evangelical about square dancing and I'd still like to see more lesbians involved in lesbian and gay square dancing. But one of the things I've enjoyed most about square dancing is getting to know gay men.

My biggest thrill so far? Calling for the 1995 San Francisco Gay Pride Parade. My goals? To be Anne Uebelacker and/or Sandy Bryant. Seriously, I'd like to be the best caller I can; I want dancers to have as much fun dancing to me as I have calling for them.

Turtle-Bear's no longer my brand-new girlfriend; she's now my life partner. And she even has fun dancing to my calling.

---

## Anne Uebelacker

**I** have been calling for twenty years and I don't regret having chosen my hobby as a full time career. There was a time when I had a real job as a veterinarian but it kept interfering with my square dance hobby so I decided to give it up and become a full time caller. No, it was not as easy as that! A lot of hard work and effort went into it before everything came together for me. The details of my career are rather boring and long winded so I won't go into all that stuff.

Along the way all of us run into people who make a difference in our lives and sometimes we forget to acknowledge or thank them before it is too late. I feel like an old timer writing this but compared to all the new up and coming GCA callers I am "Ancient." We are fortunate to have some very talented people in our clubs and in due time they have the potential to become the next "big name caller." We all need to support these people and encourage them as much as possible. Sometimes just a pat on the back or a thank you for a great dance is all that is needed to take away the jitters that we all go through. Besides, one day you will be able to say, "I knew them when they just started" and now they are famous!

My own personal goals when I first started were 1) to be a full time traveling caller 2) to be the very best that I could possibly be at every dance 3) to make the people who believed in me proud 4) to be patient and understanding of all dancers. Twenty years of calling later, I still maintain the same goals and hopefully I can continue to please and entertain people until the day that I hang up my mike in retirement. When that will be, who knows!!

In the meantime, I wish all new and aspiring callers, all the more experienced callers, all those who are callers' significant others, and those who support their own home grown callers, the very best of luck in reaching all of the goals that you are striving for. Just remember, nothing happens overnight and nothing happens without a lot of hard work and love of the activity.

# O MOST EXALTED ONE!

An Interview with Stewart Kramer, The Square Dance Guru

MYRON TAYLOR

**O**ut in the cosmos that we call Square Dance shines a bright new star. There, within the reaches of his cyberspace domain, Stewart Kramer sensitively answers acolytes who thirst for enlightenment. His advice is honest; his manner is gentle. People call him the Square Dance Guru.

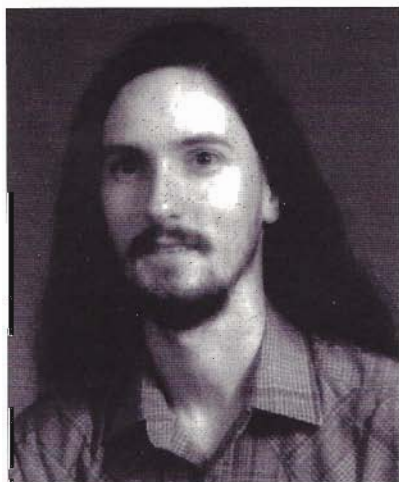
To a growing number of square dancers, Stewart Kramer has earned the respectful titles of Square Dance Guru and Most Exalted One. Via the Internet, the Square Dance Guru provides "lucky tummy rubs" to the curious who seek out explanations to complex questions. They value the guidance he dispenses which ranges from Mainstream through C-4 calls, to more esoteric discussions of square dance theory and history. His response to each query is thorough, defining the call in question, its root, and its relationship to the family of calls. When appropriate, he diagrams difficult positions in order to clarify his explanations. Even when dealing with advanced concepts, the Square Dance Guru formulates witty answers that make learning difficult square dance principles a pleasure.

Stewart's exceptional knowledge of the art of square dancing is based on years of meticulous scholarship gleaned from square dance reference materials. After he started square dancing 12 years ago, he began consulting square dance resources — some now out of print — in order to better comprehend the definition and derivation of calls. He supplemented his understanding and experience through conversations with teachers and callers, some of whom had invented the very calls themselves.

Those who know Stewart describe the Guru with the utmost admiration. Andy Shore, caller for Stewart's principal club, the El Camino Reelers, applauds his depth of knowledge, understanding of square dance theory, and his manner. "The Guru always keeps a level

head," he explains, "and will answer questions or give suggestions with reason and civility (rare sometimes among square dancers)." According to caller Bill Eyer, "Stewart is quite an amazing person. I certainly admire Stewart's attitude about the Challenge mode of square dancing. He brings a lightness to the activity that many C dancers don't ... Personally, he is kind, gentle, uninhibited ... a very soft-in-the-center soul."

Today, at age 30, Stewart maintains a full schedule as building manager for the



*Stewart Kramer, the "Guru"*

Physics Department at Stanford University and shares domesticity with Jonathan Domash, his partner of 6-1/2 years. Together, they care for a goldfish pond, enjoy gardening, and share a love for square dancing. Yet he is seldom home in the evenings because — would you believe it? — he's too busy square dancing!

Fortunately we were able to catch up with the Guru and bring you his story.

**SQUAREUP:** What is your square dance background?

**Guru:** I've been dancing since August 1983, when I started as a freshman at San Jose State University. I needed two semesters of athletics, so I took Intro to

Square Dance along with Beginning Bowling. The bowling instructor recommended using the heaviest ball possible, which gave me tendonitis, so I haven't bowled since. The textbook for the square dance class was *Sets in Order's* illustrated handbook, which, at 75 cents, was the cheapest textbook I ever bought. When that class ended, I started dancing with the Sunnyvale Singles class.

I made a hobby of collecting square dance dictionaries, and reading them for pleasure and amusement. I learned most of the calls by reading the definitions. For example, in May of 1984, I went to the Golden State Round-Up, where I discovered gay and lesbian square dancers. At one point during the festival, I wanted to watch some of the Advanced dancing. At the time, the distinction between A-1 and A-2 was not commonly made in this area, so the A-1 list had been posted at the door. I had been reading the combined definitions, and I realized that I happened to know the definitions for all of the A-1 calls, so I started dancing. I did well enough, except that the definition I had memorized for Chain Reaction had one of the conventional Boy parts as a "Meanwhile" after other parts, and I kept going through the definition from the beginning, watching all the other dancers doing their parts for several seconds, thinking to myself, "They Pass Thru, those people Hinge; meanwhile, I — oops! I should already be over there!"

The next year, in April, at the Advanced and Challenge Spectacular, I was planning to dance Advanced, but I wanted to watch some C-1, and they needed one more dancer to fill a square. I was at least as good at C-1 as anyone else in the square, so I danced the whole weekend in the C-1 hall. A year later, I got dragged into the C-2 hall by someone who needed a partner.

I started dancing with various groups, and joined several Challenge tape groups. For a brief time, I was dancing eight times a week (twice on Saturdays), at every level from Mainstream through C-4.

**SU:** Which club(s) — both gay and straight — do you dance with?

**Guru:** I currently dance with the El Camino Reelers, the Acey Deuceys (a straight Advanced club), and PACE (Pa-



cific Association of Challenge Enthusiasts) Nor-Cal, which puts on monthly dance weekends. I'm also a less-than-active member of Midnight Squares, and I dance with some Challenge-level tape groups.

**SU:** Do you either call or teach square dancing?

**Guru:** I took a caller's school once, and dabbled at calling for a while, but I'm still more interested in dancing than in calling. I've taught C-2 and C-3A, and when I've danced as an angel in various groups I've always tried to offer helpful advice to anyone who will listen.

**SU:** How did you get the name Square Dance Guru?

**Guru:** The Square Dance Guru was invented when a friend, Tom Stillman, was in charge of the PACE newsletter. I offered to write an advice column with a tongue-in-cheek attitude. I had already done some Challenge-level humor bits under the title of "Unhelpful Hints" (like "If the call is Trade Counter-Rotate, and you've started to Trade Circulate, just finish the Trade Circulate and then Concentric Trixie, and you'll be in the right spot!"), and the Guru columns seemed fairly popular while they lasted.

When Doug Sewell created the lgcwds mailing list, I decided to revive the Square Dance Guru, and I respond to direct questions and to general discussions.

**SU:** What about your screen name of Zipper Bear?

**Guru:** The nickname Zipper Bear was given to me by my parents when I was, literally, a toddler. When I was learning to walk, I could run or toddle, but if I stopped I would fall over. So I would hold on to a piece of furniture, then run to the next piece of furniture, then to the next, back and forth, zip, zip, zip, all day long. I had a lot of childhood nicknames, but Zipper Bear is the only one that lasted. Any other meanings of Zipper and Bear are conveniently coincidental.

**SU:** Are the majority of square dance questions sent to you via the Internet? Do you also get private questions for guidance?

**Guru:** Most of the Guru's answers come from actual questions or discus-

sions on the Net. I also get questions in person from people I know, and I've recently started to get questions from the Guru's page on the Web. Most of my responses are publicly posted on the mailing list, but sometimes I respond directly.

**SU:** Do you get fan mail too?

**Guru:** I don't really get a lot of fan mail, but early in my career there was a letter to the editor of the PACE newsletter that criticized me for arrogance. Some people just don't appreciate sarcasm.

**SU:** How would you describe the kind of questions that you normally receive? Are they from all levels or do

you find that the majority are geared to the upper levels?

**Guru:** I get questions at all levels. In my responses, I try to make my examples understandable to the widest possible audience, by using Mainstream or Plus calls. Sometimes the only calls available to illustrate a complicated technical point are Advanced or above, in which case I try to give a quick definition, so that Plus or Mainstream dancers can at least try to figure out what I'm saying.

Questions from newer dancers tend to be more general, whereas higher-level dancers ask very specific questions. There are a lot of complicated calls and concepts that interact in poorly-explored ways, so there's a lot more room for questions at the higher levels. On the other hand, there are a lot more callers at Advanced and below, with various peculiar ideas, so there are a lot of incompatible interpretations of lower-level calls.

**SU:** Do you base your answers primarily on Callerlab definitions or on your own experience as a square dancer?

**Guru:** Every set of definitions has its

own quirks. Callerlab has the most widely-known definitions, but there are still some shortcomings, and Callerlab only goes up to C-2. It's important to remember that the halfway point to C-4 is right after C-3A. Callerlab also has a tendency to reverse itself on controversial issues. For example, on Swing Thru And Roll, if you aren't involved with the second part of the Swing Thru, Callerlab now says that you Roll as soon as you're

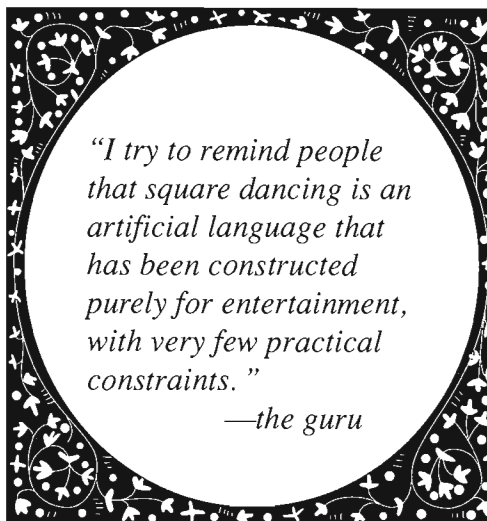
done with your part, although they once said that you spend time standing still and therefore can't Roll. It's important to realize not all callers think the same way, and if you want your square to succeed you need to do what the caller wants, "wrong" or not.

On the other hand, I'm a great believer in com-

patibility with old usages. I don't think it's a good idea to change the definitions of old calls, even if they seem wrong to us today. There's too much choreography out there, on old records and tapes, that's still worth dancing. It's one thing to play an old tape and find a call that you need to look up in a book, but it's much more of a problem if one of the calls has changed, and you need to examine every call to find the one that's different now. This is particularly a problem with the best and most innovative callers of the past, who were pushing the envelope in directions that have since been abandoned or explored differently.

**SU:** Are there also multiple interpretations of a call?

**Guru:** Whenever the situation is ambiguous, there's room for disagreement. Not everyone agrees with me about the importance of preserving the past. Some people think square dancing would be better off if it all made sense, instead of being the mishmash of special exceptions that it is now. Personally, I think those people are missing the point,



which is that simplicity is dull and complexity is interesting. I'm also not all-knowing. I can only tell you what's in the books, and what I've deduced by comparing the books, and what I've learned by dancing to different callers live and on tape. There are a lot of people who've been dancing a lot longer than I have, although few have studied calls like I have. There are also dancers and callers who know a lot of equivalents and checker-cheats for calls. In many ways, that's a much more useful skill than knowing which way to U-Turn Back on half a dozen different calls.

**SU:** Do square dance professionals consult you?

**Guru:** Most professionals (meaning callers) have already learned to avoid the pitfalls of ambiguity at the boundaries of accepted usage, but sometimes I get questions in the aftermath of an unexpected problem. The usual answer is to use more words to make the interpretation more clear, or to avoid the situation in the future.

**SU:** Do you also get questions from straight square dancers?

**Guru:** I certainly get questions from straight dancers, especially from the World-Wide Web.

**SU:** Do you think that using the Internet is going to have any particular effect on modern square dancing or do you think it's going to be more of a reference?

**Guru:** I would hope so. The ease of getting the message out would help get rid of the sick image of square dancing and share the enthusiasm for square dancing that square dancers understand but a lot of non-square dancers think is some bizarre aberration that these weird people do. I've often encountered that myself where I tell people, "Oh, I'm into square dancing," and they give me funny looks like, "oh really?"

**SU:** Like what planet are you from?

**Guru:** Right.

**SU:** Can you remember any specific questions or one in particular posed to you that you found particularly unusual?

**Guru:** Actually, yes. It was a question that I was very surprised that I was able to answer. Somebody wanted to know

how to deal with a blind square dancer. And I happened to have danced with a blind square dancer. So I privately offered some advice on the kind of things I remembered being helpful and not helpful.

**SU:** Do you have any plans to publish your information as a guide for square dancers?

**Guru:** I've actually had sort of a long-standing pipe dream of some day writing a book, a dictionary for square dancing something like "The Square Dance Guru Explains It All," from the basics of Walk Forward and Turn In Place to complicated concepts and all of the square dance calls defined in terms of simpler things.

**SU:** Do you enjoy your status as a guru? What does it mean personally to you?

**Guru:** I enjoy being helpful, and I enjoy making use of my knowledge. I like to share my enthusiasm for the intricacies of square dance technical details. I find some of the paradoxes and contradictions

to be amusing and fascinating. I try to remind people that square dancing is an artificial language that has been constructed purely for entertainment, with very few practical constraints. There are a lot of puns built into the language; for example, two variants of Recycle are Recoil and Cy-kick ("I knew it!"). Things that are amusing are the things that become popular, and the things that are boring or uninspired are the things that fade away.

Part of my job as Square Dance Guru is to preserve the humorous things that are less well-known, and to keep alive the interesting stories from the past.

*Unsure? Confused? Squarebroken? If the hissy fits, or for lucky tummy-rubs, send email to: [The.Guru@forsythe.stanford.edu](mailto:The.Guru@forsythe.stanford.edu). Or, if you prefer, you can contact the Guru on the World Wide Web as a subpage on Rob French's web page. You can reach him at: <http://suif.stanford.edu/~rfrench/wsd/guru.html>*

## The Guru Speaks: Everything's Just Ducky

*O Most Exalted One:*

*After learning Relay the Deucey and Acey Deucey, several students wondered about the meaning of "Deucey". Is there some sort of commonality among the Deucey calls?*

*—Humble but Enquiring Mind*

Beloved Acolyte:

Yes and no. The root call is Acey Deucey, which is defined as Ends Circulate while the Centers Trade. The name is derived from either a card game or a variety of Backgammon, where it means, literally, One-Two. At the time the call was invented, it was rather novel, because it had multiple things going on, with some people Trading in pairs and other people Circulating individually. But it's not really clear which is the "Acey" and which is the "Deucey"; for example, there are at least 3 different names for Ends Zoom while the Centers Trade: Acey Zoom, Zoom The Deucey, and Deuce's Wild ("He sure was"), of which only the last one is still used at C-4.

In general, the only relation among Deucey calls is that they all have different parts, usually a Trade or Cast in the middle and some Circulate or other non-Trade-like call for the Ends or Leaders. Relay the Deucey, for example, has many Trades and many Circulates, which propagate through the formation.

"Deucey" is the preferred spelling, but my dictionary also allows "Deucy"; other spellings include "Dukey" and "Ducy," which looks like it should be pronounced "Ducky," and is the origin of the quacking sound effects for various Deucey calls.



# The Square PLANET



**T**he IAGSDC® and the DC Lambda Squares will be sponsoring a Red Ribbon Dance, a benefit for AIDS charities, on Saturday October 12, 1996. All proceeds will be split between national and local AIDS organizations. This dance will be promoted within the local square dance community and will be recognized and supported by the Washington Area Cooperative Square Dance Association (WACSA), the local square dance association. There will be a number of callers for the dance and the IAGSDC® memorial panels of square dance badges will be on display. More details will be coming, but for now, if you are planning to be in Washington for the Quilt display, plan to attend the Red Ribbon Dance. [Darrell Ertzberger]

The Bradley Family is thrilled that Linda Kaye Henning Adams (Betty Jo), Gunilla Hutton (Billie Jo), and Lori Saunders (Bobbie Jo) are new subscribers to *The Bradley Bell*. (Linda Kaye, Gunilla and Lori were the "real" Bradley sisters who appeared on the 60's sitcom, *Petticoat Junction*.) So, just how did the Bradley sisters become subscribers?

Well, Mama Jo received an urgent message from Paul Waters stating that she absolutely could not publish *Bradley Bell* until she received something from him in the mail. When the eagerly anticipated envelope arrived, in it was Paul's copy of the Seventh Edition of the directory autographed by the Misses Henning,

Hutton, and Saunders. Mama Jo was flabbergasted!

Paul relates this story. "I was reading the Saturday morning paper and chanced upon an article about a movie memorabilia show going on at the Beverly Garland Hotel, just a few miles from our home. The article mentioned that a number of celebrities would be giving autographs. The second ones mentioned were the three Bradley sisters. So in a matter of moments, I had Kevin in the car with every copy of the *Bradley Bell* I own and pictures of gay square dancing, me calling, and (of course) the Bradley family (from the DC convention).

"We found them, I explained why we were there, and began to show the things we had brought with us. They were fascinated with the idea of gay square dancing and charmed with the *Bradley Bell*. Bottom line darlin', we went over specifically to get the signatures for you as I knew how thrilled you would be to have them." [reprinted from *Bradley Bell* with Mama Jo's blessing].

Next time you are in a bookstore check out the Insight Guides book on San Francisco. You can't miss it — the book has a pink spine with SAN FRANCISCO in white letters against a red background. The spine also includes a little photo of Harvey Milk. On pages 66-67 there is a neat picture of square dancing in the street. Folks are doing the gay Do-Si-Do (a.k.a. the Highland Fling). See if you can recognize any of the dancers in the picture. [Neil Heather]

In January, **Les Carres aux Dattes d'Ottawa-Hull** will have Plus and Mainstream classes beginning as well as, hopefully, a new Basic class. We already have 15 members and, with the new Basics, we're hoping to top 25. We had our first Club Night on December 16 and everyone, including a few out of town guests, had a great time dancing to Graham Ingraham. We are now FULL members of EOSARDA, the Eastern Ontario Square and Round Dance Association and we were very warmly welcomed at our first Council of Dancers meeting! Ottawa-Hull Date Squares is hosting our first Fly-In, called Chase the Bunny, on Easter Week-



*The Bradleys, now closer than ever to Hooterville*

end with callers Paul Waters and Graham Ingraham. For more information on this, call Larry at (613) 738-2078 or e-mail us at bk191@freenet.carleton.ca. [Larry White]

After a shaky start, the **Raleighwood Squares** is off and running. We are currently meeting bi-weekly and are still looking for new members. If anyone is interested, the contact number is (919) 779-2336. [JBear]

The **Big D Longhorns**, a new club forming in Dallas, has 24 members learning the Basic/Mainstream program. Caller-cutie Bill Eyler stopped by on Nov. 29 and gave us a taste of "the gay square dance experience." Any visitors to the Lone Star State are encouraged to contact us at (214) 521-5342 x272. [Kris Anderson]

The new club in **Simi Valley**, California is so new that it doesn't even have a name. (Yes, *that* Simi Valley, the one where the trial was held that sparked the LA riots). Started in September, the group regularly dances two squares at Berylewood Elementary School on Thursday evenings.

Perhaps a first for gay square dance clubs, Paul Waters, the caller and driving force behind the formation of the group, went to the 10 straight clubs in the area to tell them of his plans to start a gay club (the proverbial, "Guess who's coming to dinner" speech). As expected, the response was mixed, but far more positive than negative. The majority being pleased at the prospect of having a new square dance club in Ventura County.

The group is planning a new-dancer hoedown on January 7th and has extended invitations to not only the other gay classes in the area, but the straight classes as well.

Truly one of the most interesting features of the club is its diversity. Attendees include straight men, straight women, gay men and lesbians with ages that range from 24 to 70. It also has more women than men. Destined to be an energetic group, several have already registered for Mile High Pass By (women's convention), Pass the Sea, and Stars, Thars and Cable Cars. [Paul Waters]

*Submittals for "The Square Planet" can be mailed to SquareUp Magazine, 501 Mulberry St. NE, Albuquerque, NM, 87106, or e-mailed to mstaples@lanl.gov.*

# HOTEL SALE!

An Update On Stars, Thars and Cable Cars

TOM TRIPP

When we decided to host an IAGSDC® convention in San Francisco, we knew that we were up against a number of obstacles. One of the greatest challenges that the Stars, Thars and Cable Cars Committee has had to deal with is affordability for our attendees. Admittedly, San Francisco is one of the most expensive cities in the United States. It's been an uphill battle for us to deal with the expensive location and the strong union influence in our effort to make San Francisco as affordable as possible for every dancer.

We told everyone that we would listen to suggestions in order to make our convention affordable and yet give them the "most bang for the buck." After negotiating with the Hyatt Regency Embarcadero for the past six months, we've finally reached an agreement which we believe is the best buy in the city. Normally the rack rate for a hotel room in one of San Francisco's nicer hotels is anywhere from \$185 to \$225 per night. (Rack rate is what you would pay for a room if you were to just walk in and ask for a room for the night.) We're happy to report that we've now negotiated new rates with the Hyatt that are even lower than the rates we originally published.

The new rate structure per night is as follows:

\$99.00 Single/Double Occupancy  
\$115.00 Triple Occupancy  
\$120.00 Quad Occupancy

We are excited about this breakthrough because it means that more people will be able to afford the hotel accommodations and be on-site for the convention. Now, if you've already made your hotel reservation at the Hyatt at the old, higher rate, worry not. All reservations made under the Stars, Thars and Cable Cars name will be honored at the new lowered rates. If you haven't made your hotel reservation yet, you can call

Hyatt at their toll free number 1-800-233-1234.

The trail-in dance is scheduled for Wednesday, July 3, 1996. If you plan on making a vacation out of your San Francisco visit, you might want to join us and a few hundred thousand of our lesbian, gay and transgender friends on Sunday, June 30th for the annual Lesbian and Gay Freedom Day Parade and Celebration. There will be a square dancing contingent in the parade that you are all invited to join.

In addition to the dancing, we're currently negotiating with Club Fugazi to buy out the house for a special presentation of "Beach Blanket Babylon." Written and produced by the late Steve Silver, this theater show combines song, dance and outlandish costumes into a story of Snow White in search of Prince Charming. Beach Blanket Babylon is a uniquely San Francisco experience. Details for this event will be announced in an upcoming convention update.

As the date for San Francisco's convention draws near, we'd like to remind you to register before March 31, 1996 when the rate goes up. Also, if you're interested in going on the fun badge tour, we'd advise early registration, since the tour has limited seating and is nearly half full. Registration booklets should be available at your local dance locations and most fly-ins and special events.

As always, we welcome your feedback and suggestions — we are listening and doing our best to give you a convention to remember for years to come. So come on to San Francisco and SquareUp!

Stars, Thars and Cable Cars Convention Committee

Voice: (415) 824-6107

E-mail: [stcc@mtdiablo.sj.ca.us](mailto:stcc@mtdiablo.sj.ca.us)

or visit our World Wide Web page:

<http://www.glyphic.com/stcc/home.html>



# COME ON, LET'S DANCE!

Capital City Squares, Sacramento, California

RUSSELL MARSH, Administrator, 1995-96

**F**ounded in 1981, Capital City Squares (CCS) is the second oldest gay and lesbian square dance club in the IAGSDC®.

While other gay square dance clubs forming in California around that time taught performance routines set to specific songs, CCS taught Callerlab definitions from the beginning. Fortunately, all of the clubs eventually chose the Callerlab standard. Originally a Mainstream level club, CCS now offers instruction through Plus. A closely related organization, Prime 8s, teaches the Advanced program. Our current curriculum runs year round, beginning with Basic in September, reaching full mainstream by April, and completing Plus in late August.

In January 1995, CCS joined the Associated Square Dancers of Superior California (ASDSC). This organization was very open to having a gay club join, even to the point of changing some by-laws and rules that might have otherwise been exclusionary. The opportunities presented through the ASDSC have offered gay and lesbian square dancing greater visibility throughout California. For example, it was through this association that CCS was invited to host an evening of dancing at the California State Fair in August 1995. The "Fair and Square Dance" is believed to be the first such event hosted by a gay and lesbian club at any state fair. CCS was singled out by the ASDSC for its high attendance (both dancers and spectators) and enthusiasm. The event was so successful that CCS will again host a State Fair night on August 17, 1996, with caller Andy Shore repeating his fabulous performance. Ya'll come!

Since its inception, Capital City

Squares has hosted an annual "retreat" at various locations outside Sacramento. In recent years, the "Stumptown Stomp" Fly-In has been held at Fifes Resort, a popular gay vacation spot in Guerneville on the Russian River. Guerneville, once called "Stumptown," was seriously flooded in early 1995. Despite the temporary closure of Fifes, the club still hosted a successful weekend with guest callers Sandra Bryant and Paul Waters. Improvements made during the renovation of Fifes will ensure that future events can be

held there come Hell or High Water! Featured callers for the April 19-21, 1996 fly-in will be the nationally known Larry Letson and local hunk Roger Loney. Consider the Stumptown Stomp for your



*A photo break after dancing at the California State Fair*

spring vacation.

Two important events on this year's calendar are the Red Ribbon and Pink Ribbon dances. October's Red Ribbon Dance featured quilt panels and an information table from the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt (Sacramento Chapter), the IAGSDC® Memorial Panels, and

a special performance by the Barbary Coast Cloggers. The Pink Ribbon Dance, featuring Deborah Parnell, is scheduled for April 27 and will feature displays on breast cancer awareness and survival. Portions of the proceeds from each dance will benefit local support organizations.

Even for a club entering its fifteenth year, CCS is not without its problems. Most significantly, CCS has had trouble attracting and keeping new dancers, especially women. When the IAGSDC® announced a recruitment workshop at Track 2 Chicago, the CCS leadership decided it was an opportunity not to be missed. As a direct result of Ian Henzel's workshop, a committee was formed to recruit new dancers for the Fall class. The payoff came when thirty five people joined the new dancer class (an increase of about 50% over previous years). The percentage of women increased as well. The committee quickly shifted to retention efforts, with encouraging results so far. In the past, there have been two (maybe three) squares on class night, but this year there have been consistently five or six squares. There are more angels participating, and their energy seems to be spreading to the class. The club hopes to build on these successes.

But even we know our limitations. Sacramento may never have the appeal to host a convention of its own (espe-

cially when San Francisco is only 90 miles away), so CCS is happy and proud to be one of the nine clubs co-hosting Stars, Thars and Cable Cars, the 13th Annual IAGSDC® Convention. The members of Capital City invite you to join them in the City by the Bay in July 1996.

# HILTON

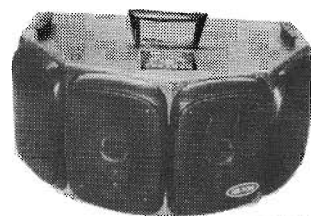
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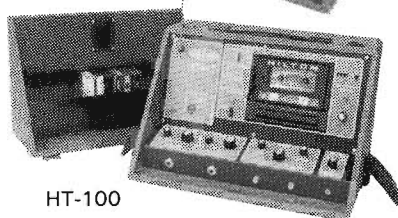
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# WRITING HOME: THE SEQUEL

by DAN ROBUCK

Since "Writing Home" (*SquareUp* issue #5) was published, new IAGSDC® newsletters have been popping up across the country. In all cases, the question has come up: substance and style, how do you balance them? The bottom line is always to meet the needs of your audience. On pages 20-22 are three honorable IAGSDC® newsletters from three different clubs with three different sets of problems which have each mastered substance and style issues.

*Ed. We're happy to welcome Dan as a new member of our staff!*

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# THE WILDE TIMES

Albuquerque, New Mexico, The Wilde Bunch

"It's not what you do, it's how you look when you do it!"

RIC GONZALEZ, Editor

## The Wilde Times

"It's not what you do, but how you look when you do it."

Albuquerque, New Mexico

July/August 1995

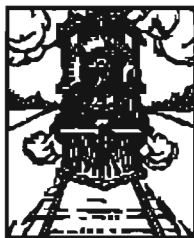
Member IAGSDC™: ALGO

### CONVENTION REPORT (BETTER LATE THAN NEVER)

Why did 20 Wilde Bunchers trek off to Chicago May 27-29? They went to participate in an annual gay square dance get together — the IAGSDC Convention. This year, Chicago hosted Track 2 Chicago and 1100 of us showed up to participate. It happened at the beautiful Hyatt Regency Hotel along the Chicago River.

With 12 callers putting us through our paces in 7 different ballrooms, there was definitely no lack of dance time for anyone (just ask Orlando — our only Mainstream level dancer to make the sojourn). The one twist to this convention was that the International Mister Leather Convention was being held at the same hotel at the same time. So the mix of square dancers and leather people (and square/leather people, and leather/square people) lent a unique feeling to our 12th convention.

by Ric Gonzalez



So, what happened? Well, first you go to the Mainstream room and dance — then go to the "leather mall" to see cages for sale. Go to the Plus room to dance — then go to the escalators to cruise. On to the Advanced rooms to dance — then to the BIG Bar (actual name and

description) to observe the mix of leather and square. Finally to a Challenge room to dance — then to Siberia (the square dance vendor area) to keep Mike company as he tries to sell subscriptions to SQUAREUP! magazine. (By the way, he's still selling subscriptions — those of you who don't receive the mag might want to see him about becoming a subscriber.)

We had a wonderful banquet (very elegant, good food and discreet service), a 50/50 drawing worth over \$1400, a brunch where our own Jay Torres received his 10 year medallion, a hilarious Honky Tonk Queen Contest where Sybil (who was killed off three years ago by her creator) was brought back (although not to life) to steal the opening number, (Lois Common Denominator from Chi-Town won the contest), the Grand March and

Continued on page 2

#### Upcoming Events

- Aug 26: Fun Dance, 7-9pm
- Sept 4: Labor Day. We'll be dancing!!
- Sept 7: TBA: Board Meeting, all members welcome to attend, 6:15pm
- Sept 13: New Basic Class begins, 7pm
- Sept 15-17: "Explode the Rockies" Make your travel plans!
- Sept 24: ASC General Membership Mtg.
- Sept 30: Fun Dance, 7-9pm



#### In This Issue

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The staff of *The Wilde Times* has always espoused the philosophy that you can never take things too seriously or your face will crack. Whether we are reporting on club activities, announcing future activities, chiding our members on the number of dislocated arms we had due to tight handholds, or encouraging our dancers to go to a fly-in or IAGSDC® Convention, we feel that an entertaining article is more likely to be read than a ponderous or dry treatise.

Since its inception in January 1988, *The Wilde Times* has had a plethora of Pulitzer Prize (or National Enquirer) quality writers. In the beginning Jeff Lutz wrote "Diary of a Mad Queen" (a gossip column) and I wrote "Do It Yourself Square Dancing" (a "teaching" column). We firmly established *The Wilde Times* as a vehicle for fun and creativity as well as for information dissemination.

Although the Queen now rules from another dimension, and the Perffessor has writer's constipation, we still carry on the tradition. One of the things we feel proud of is our mix of women (Turtle-Bear, Grace Cummins, Kris Jensen) and men

- A "writing to your best friend" style that incorporates inspiration ("You can do it."), inclusion ("Join us again."), and a conversational tone of voice ("You, and I, and we....")
- A tasteful sense of humor that allows readers to *laugh with* and not *laugh at* its members.
- Delightful graphics that lead a reader's eye to the story and lighten the weight of a page of text.

Continued from page 1

the Fun Badge Tour.

Of course, we all hit the Magnificent Mile to see the great stores, the Loop to see all the wonderful architecture and we even had side forays to the fantastic museums, aquariums, etc.. The convention was a wonderful time and Chicago was a super city to visit (thankfully before the heat wave). Congratulations to Tip the Cow, Inc. who staged a convention that ran like clockwork and showed all the work they put into it.

By the way, next year's convention is in San Francisco and will be held at the Hyatt Regency on Market Street. The dates will be July 3-7, so you may want to look for the regis-



Remember: Please bring items for the Necessities of Life Project on our club nights.

#### Square Dancing: A Contact Sport?

by Bill Eyer

Those of us who have been dance-

#### The President's Corner

It's back to school time again. The teachers are back to work, the children are running down the halls and we are starting new square dance classes. In August we've started new Plus and C-1 levels on Monday nights and in September we will be starting Basic and Mainstream classes on Wednesday nights.

I hope that you will all participate in these classes either by learning that new level, learning to dance a different position or being an angel for some of the level you have already mastered.

The board of directors have made a few changes in this season's classes.

#### CLUB EVENTS THAT HAVE TAKEN PLACE

by Ric Gonzalez

In the months since our last newsletter, we've had a few club functions that deserve mention in this esteemed publication.

carrot cake that I had my eye on! we spent a great afternoon in the park dancing and enjoying each other's company.

Last on my list of special Bunch activities was The Bunch's participation in the Pride Day Parade (over two squares marching and speed dancing enroute) and two squares doing an exhibition at the fair grounds (including Basic Susan in an unplanned performance). It was the biggest pride parade in Albuquerque so far, and I would encourage all of you to march and celebrate next year.

Then we were the second to last act in the annual Caught In The Act variety show at the KiMo Theater. From the audience comments heard following the show, we should have been the final act so that the show would have ended with the best! Here's a little backstage look at this performance.

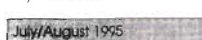


Happy Anniversary to us — we're reaching puberty! We celebrated our 12th Anniversary by dancing to the calling of Shelby Dawson. With 60 of us in attendance, this was one of the biggest parties we have had in a long time. Many new dancers had their debuting experience of dancing to an outside caller. Shelby was his typically high energy self and had everyone whooping, moving and having a great time.

As the weather warmed up, we had a Box Lunch Social in Hyder Park. Gail Tate took the reins on this activity and 20-25 of us showed up to donate lunches and buy a different lunch from the one we brought (similar to when we used to trade lunches with our friends in school). We ended up making over \$200 for the club as Matthew Slain begged and pleaded with us to buy, buy, buy.

Of course, after downing our lunches (including the tragedy of Sue Smith getting that piece of Rick Weber's

The music was TV theme songs, including "I Love Lucy," the "Beverly Hillsbillies," the "Addams Family," and the "Jeopardy" theme song. With a VERY big screen TV (thanks to Corinne Tippit) and four of our 16 dancers in character, we really were a big hit — although the cue to start the music came WAY TOO SOON. Imagine 12 people lying down on stage in their pj's — not even in any particular order or position with over 800 people looking on. Four others behind the huge TV were ready to make an entrance. The music starts. WAIT! The music shouldn't be on



July/August 1995

Page 3

The Wilde Times

(Rick Weber and me). Turtle-Bear's superb graphics and layout lead readers through the newsletter without the feeling you get when you see a page full of unappetizing text.

We encourage our dancers to use *The Wilde Times* as an outlet for their creative juices, and we get on our hands and knees and thank the Pentium Powers in the sky that IBM and Apple had the good sense to invent personal computers for our use and abuse. — RIC GONZALEZ



# THE FOGHORN

San Francisco, California, Foggy City Dancers

"Promoting the best in gay and lesbian square dancing"

DAN ROBUCK, Editor; JOE HULL, Associate Editor

- Each issue honors the spirited pride, teamwork, change, and personal growth within the club community.
- A powerful, eye-catching layout makes reading the newsletter an adventure for the readers.
- Emphasis is always on the membership's voice and all articles revolve around their participation both inside the club and in the IAGSDC® at large.



## FCD reaches adolescence:

### Celebrating our 12th year of growth and challenge

**H**appy 12th Anniversary, Foggy City Dancers! But before we leave puberty and enter our adolescence 13th year, let's turn back to some of the highlights of our past 12 months and take pride in the growth we've accomplished in just a year.

#### A new look for the newsletter

This year our newsletter, *The Foggy City News*, took on a new name. *The Foghorn* (suggested by two spring class members, Jim Stavrides and Marian Hopping). Plus a new editor (Dan Robuck), a featured "Women's Corner" (edited by

Gina Robideaux), and a new associate editor and layout designer, Joe Hull, who is responsible for our new glossy, absolutely fabulous look.

#### Record class attendance

Two of the largest Foggy City classes ever got underway in 1995. The Spring Class was big, but the Fall Class is huge, and members of both classes show steady attendance, supply great help as angels, and provide constant support as volunteers. Many thanks to the new Recruitment Team for giving us the kind of growing pains we love to see. New recruitment ideas are already numbering for next year's classes.

#### Performance team reborn

The Foggy City Performance Team was resurrected by choreographer Steve Browning, and brought back the glory of exhibition dancing to our club. Their performance at the Anniversary Dance on November 4 showcased some spectacular hoofing and raised a



## The 4th annual Barn Dance:

### A newcomer's impressions

by Joe Hull

**N**earing Charter Oaks Farm in Wildcat San Mateo County for the 4th Annual Barn Dance & Barbecue on September 16, this newcomer had second thoughts. Sure, we members of this fall's basicism stream course had been encouraged to attend, and for us the dance itself was free. But would we be really welcome among the "old-timers," not only from Foggy City Dancers, but various South Bay clubs as well?

It turned out my negotiation was unfounded. Those of us new "bouts" who showed up—and we accounted for a goodly number of the 75 attendees—were made to feel very at ease as we were at class every Tuesday night.

*(continued on back page)*

## The Foghorn 4

## New Boots

**I**n the last Foghorn, we introduced you to some of this year's outstanding crop of new "boots" who are taking the current basicism stream course under Andy Shore's expert direction. Say hello to some more!

#### Mont Stong



## Happy Birthday!

Best wishes to everyone whose birthday is coming up soon. Here are some more names to add to those we published in the last issue, and, with our sincere apologies, some that we missed.

1044	Larry Edgerton
1047	Joe Hull
1010	Paul Dileo
1019	Douk Wambolt
1020	Paul Dileo
103	Peter Helm
1113	Stephen Stone
1116	Joe Browning
1118	Gary Lenders
1122	Mike Baker
1122	Mark Small
121	John Moore
1211	Michael Forester
1212	Richard Reed
1213	Gene Telles
1214	Tony Olson
1215	Gary Cahn
1216	Barry Petraso
1224	Dwayne Trevis
1225	Dan Robuck
114	Viccar Victor
121	Oliver Vaquera
1117	Steve Newton

## Hallo Michael, Hallo Jay: It's so nice to have you back where you belong

Who says you can't keep on down on the farm after they've seen New York?

Michael Borden and Jay Bolchik, former Foggy City dancer volunteers and regular dancer-type guys, are giving up life in the Big Apple and coming back home to San Francisco.

"We are looking forward to dancing with FCD again," they write, and we are looking forward to having them with us...back where they belong.

"two-stepper through and through," and adds, "I thought square dancing was too hokey and polyester for me." But since acting on a don't-knock-it-until-you-try-it philosophy, Mont has found to his amazement he actually loves square dancing, and is really glad he tried. "It's a lot of fun and everyone is having a good time," he says, "and it's also very social." Did y'all hear that? He likes us, he really likes us. Glad to have you with us, Mont.

#### Mike Lias

What do you do after you've spent your childhood milking cows on a dairy farm near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania? You wear them! From "runt of the litter" in PA, Mike Lias grew up to become 1994 Mr. San Francisco Leather in CA—and we couldn't be happier to have him with us at Foggy City.



"racetrack" circuit to keep us all safe from harm.

After moving to Los Angeles (and getting two job offers in three days), Hugh ultimately worked his way to San Francisco. Once here, he became part of Foggy City history by joining the Foggy City Squares, our precursors which at that time held classes on the second floor of YMCA Central under the calling expertise of Skip Barrett.

Hugh became obsessed with square dancing, and year after year not only angled, but danced exhibitions and the Gay Freedom Day Parade. Even then his boots weren't tired, so he added clogging as well. But later, "burn-out" set in, so Hugh took a five-year hiatus before coming back to Foggy City. His biggest surprise has been the number of new calls that have been added since he left. Hugh now calls himself a student again, but he is really just a saphire in disguise, still flying—but now on the dance floor.

## The Women's Corner

by Gina Robideaux & Debbie Roth

**W**ell, it's been a busy couple of months!

The plus class has begun with great success. We've had three squares almost every night! The Barn Dance was an overwhelming success (again). The Board sponsored our first ever Women's Recruitment meeting to brainstorm on ideas to get and keep a larger number of women in the club.

We also had a very successful Picnic in Lindley Meadow and raised \$235 with our dessert auction for GMA. (Community United Against Violence). Best of all, the last two months we've had a great turnout at the Women's Dinner/Dinner/Dance to everyone who attended. We had lots of fun, didn't we?

#### Boys & girls together?

Speaking of fun, I think some of the guys are jealous of our dinner/dance nights. I've talked to several who tell slip that they would like to have dinner before going to club night and wanted to know if they could show up some time. Well, I wasn't too sure what to say about that. After all, the Women's Dinner/Dance was designed

to bring more women together on club night. Although we had a slow start, it now seems to be doing quite well. However, I wouldn't mind a joint dinner/dance night on a separate night from the women's. In fact, what do you think of a spaghetti feed at the school? Or a potluck? That would be even more fun! I'm sure that y'all have lots of other ideas for socializing between the sexes. It doesn't always have to be women doing this and men doing that.

#### A survey?

So, to get the creative juices flowing, I've whipped up a survey (enclosed with this issue) to see what club members do in their spare time, and what kinds of hobbies they have. I'm sure that, like me, there are quite a few of you who like to go camping. Or maybe cycling is your passion, and you can't go a day without hitting the pad. Whatever your favorite pastime is, share it! Maybe we can find ways to spend some time together as a club outside of square dancing. I think it could be great fun and we'd probably learn more about each other. Who knows, we might even pick up a new hobby.

*It doesn't always have to be women doing this and men doing that.*

P.S. Thanks to all of you who contributed to the survey in the last Women's Corner, and for all of the positive feedback that we've received from both women and men. It's great to have a newsletter which takes pains to represent the viewpoints of all the members in our club! Thank you Dan!



## FCD Memory

Square dancing clubs have come so far since 1984. There was so much gossip and cliques at one time. It was hard work to change all that, but now there is more of a community spirit, people having fun together, and showing more support for other clubs and callers. Persistence, that's what has made things work.

Andrea Schenker,  
Square Dance Prime Ballerina  
Foggy City Dancers

**A**s an editor there are not many thrills greater than distribution day. That is when we personally find out that even with e-mail and faxes and announcements and hoopdeedoo, the newsletter remains the source of inner-club communication for the group. From its inception, *The Foghorn* was there to introduce new and old members, maintain awareness of Foggy City and IAGSDC® events, and encourage full participation from Foggy City Dancers in club activities.

Therein lay the marketing merits of *The Foghorn*. The newsletter could be published within short turnover times, targeting specific audiences (new class members, the FCD Performance Team, women's activities through Gina Robideaux's "Women's Corner"), keeping the events up-to-date (a calendar that projected two months or more, news of special dances and getaways), and promoting personal growth by offering participation in higher skill level dance classes, and offering involvement as volunteers to make the fun keep happening at Foggy City.

Human interest, personal stories, eyewitness accounts, and

contributions have always been what has made *The Foghorn* special. There has always been a special reward in seeing someone's name in print. Special praise and recognition of those class members who have "gone the extra mile" has given us all role models to follow. The bottom line is that *The Foghorn* has been able to promote not only the good in all of us as gay and lesbian square dancers, but also the best in us as gay and lesbian people. — DAN ROBUCK

# SPREAD AND CIRCULATE

Chicago, Illinois, Chi-Town Squares

"Inform, inflame, and entertain."

GEORGE GRAYSON, Editor

- First page stories that market local club activities and project club activities to come.
- Articles such as "Wrong Way Grand" reinforce classwork by explaining square dancing rules to a larger audience.
- Special columns, such as "The Papal Bull" give voice to the club community, and names names.
- The "Travel Report" in each issue highlights an event outside of the local club (such as a fly-in), and is so well-written that you feel like you've been there.

## Spread & Circulate

The Newsletter of the Chi-Town Squares

Volume Nine

August 1995

Issue Three



### Northalsted Market Days is Here!

Street Fair is Club's Biggest Recruiting Event; SheDevs to Do Fundraising

It is one of the Red Letter weekends on the Gay calendar and consequently one of the biggest for Chi-Town: Northalsted Market Days is this August 12th and 13th.

We are setting up in our traditional location in front of R.J.'s Video and Audio. In fact, much will be as it has been in past years: we will be dancing a couple of tips each hour to demonstrate just how much fun square dancing is. Ian's army will be there armed with clipboards to catch the names of passers-by who seem interested and the SheDevs will be on hand to sell their wares for \$5 a pop.

The importance of Market Days to the club cannot be overstressed. It is our single biggest recruiting event. Last year over 200 names were added to the mailing list and many of those people were there for the start



Cheaper by the Pound  
All this for \$5? This gentleman got the full

of classes. We will again be going great guns on recruiting at this event with a goal of 300 names. So if you aren't dancing during the demos then be out there working the crowd for

names! Contact Craig Neumann at 348-5834 to volunteer.

The other important aspect of Market Days to the club is Fundraising. The SheDevs will again be exploiting their charms to lure strangers in for a quick photo and to lighten their hapless victim's wallets by \$5. This is one of the three major fundraising events for the year so your support is essential. We need individuals to help with photo taking and "ghost signing" the picture sleeves.

We will also need people throughout the day to help with a whole variety of things besides the dancing: set-up, barking on the mike, take-down and much more. Please call Michael Mulholland at 549-1951 and volunteer your services. I assure you he'll be happy to hear from you.

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(yes that awful Subic-click is back)

### Open House Party a Big Success

Some things cannot be measured in just numbers. While the turnout of 16 new people at the Open House Party may not seem big, given the limited promotion and a Saturday night time slot, it is actually quite a good response. More importantly the newbies that came seemed to have a very good time.

Lin Jarvis did the calling and had the whole room smiling (and sweating) in no time. We were sweating not because Lin was running us ragged but because it was hot in there. No one really seemed to mind too terribly much though as everyone was laughing and whooping and generally having a gay old time.

The new people that attended met the calling with great enthusiasm and vigor. Lin is wonderful at these open sessions and we can't thank him enough for donating his services for this dance. When the dancing was over everyone hung around and socialized; no one was in a hurry to leave, a sure sign that they had enjoyed themselves.

Club members did an excellent job of grabbing the hand of the new folks and dragging them out on the floor - making them feel welcome and wanted. Judging from the smiles on their faces and the comments overhead, it's a good bet that most of these people will be back for classes in the Fall.



#### As The Crinoline Twirls

In our last episode the Chi-Town Squares, that very together, fun group of people, had just pulled off the international gay square dance event of the year. All the members were so happy with the way Track 2 Chicago came off that all squabbling was put to rest. Chi-Towners every where were beaming in the after glow of a job well done. The Parade came and went without a hitch. Summer, then, looked to be full of pleasant valley Sunday's at Charlie's, an active recruiting schedule and a few social get togethers just for fun.

Of course there were plans to be laid for the up coming fall with classes, dances and all. The board of seven had to get to know each other and determine the critical topics of concern. The first newsletters put out by the new editor looked swell, the social calendar started to fill up with a Babcockian flare and the club could C-1 new class on the weekly fare.

So what could be better? All those rosy cheeks smiling at each other as we all put on our best behavior for the absolutely fabulous Leo and John papa. Well, if the truth be known there seems to be a strong undercurrent in those calm waters out there that could develop into a typhoon of attitude flaunting and tempers flaring. What are these hot topics that are swirling around out there? Most of it seems to center around the new class Chi-Town is to offer this fall.

### Recruiting Report

by Ian Henzel

Imagine it, it's the first day of the beginner's class. Everyone is anxiously waiting to see how many new people are going to show up. And then they start arriving. More and more people arrive. The line goes out of the church and starts to run down the block. Everyone is working furiously to greet the new people and make them feel welcome. It turns out that nearly 200 new people have shown up for the beginner's class. A few weeks later the new membership applications come in, Chi-Town Squares has added 100 new members!

Seem like a fantasy? Well it isn't! This dream can come true. Since my last column, the recruiting mailing list has leapt ahead! So far we have collected 358 names! We are at 47% of our ultimate goal of 750 names on the recruitment mailing list! But, I am also writing to ask for your help.

Our biggest event of the summer is coming up this month. August 12 - 13 is Halsted Market Days. Last year we collected 200 names at this event, this year, in order to make our goal, we need to collect over 300 names. This is a very reachable goal, especially if you help! Here's what we need:

We need volunteers for recruiting teams during Halsted Market Days. The recruiting organized into 2 person teams. We would like to have 3 to 4 teams working at a time. The more volunteers, the shorter the recruiting shift. You can make a difference and help to push us over the top towards our goal of 750 names. Please call either myself at 878-9224 or Craig Neumann at 348-5834 to get on a team.

You can also help in other ways. Don't forget the great Chi-Town Squares Summer Casual Recruiting Contest! You can win a year's worth of free classes at the dance level of your choice! Casual recruiting is easy! If you talk to someone and they show any interest in square dancing, just take their name, address and phone number (don't forget the phone number) and offer to pass it on to the recruiting committee.

So get out there and recruit! Recruit when you're waiting on line in Jewel, in the pews at mass, or in the pit at the Eagle! The more names you turn in the better your chances. The more encouragement you offer your referrals, the better your chances!

This is it folks, we're in the home stretch now! Remember how great it was last year having a huge energetic beginner's class? Well, this coming year can be even better and you can help to make it happen!

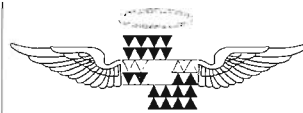
### Travel Report:

Dancin' with the Cotton Pickin' Squares



Memphis Club Dishes Out Good Ol' Southern Hospitality

by Bruce Wexleberg



### Wanna Earn Your Wings?

Class Committee Forming; Angels Needed

by John Pope

If Chi-Town Squares is about anything, learning to square dance is it. Classes are at the heart of everything we do. This is where members really get to know each other and have some great times.

Needless to say they are very important

How classes are run has been an accumulation of what the club has learned over the years. Each year we need to evaluate what works best and what needs to improve, on our way to teach people to Do Sa Do, Chain React or whatever.

The class committee will deal with those and other issues this year. Want to be an Angel, have a suggestion or just interested? Show up for the first class committee meeting 7:30 PM Tuesday August 23 at 1336 Newport, my house.

### Are You Taken For This Tip?

Social Update

by Rick Babcock

Saturday, August 19th: Dancing on the Rocks 1:00 PM at the Belmont Rocks.

Just a little more exposure! No, we're not doing a moonshine tip. Come join the fun and, hopefully, we can interest others in becoming square dancers. Your continued help and support are necessary! The rain date for this event is Sunday, August 20th.

Saturday, September 9th: Welcome Back Dance at the home of Gary Schardine.

Picnic at noon and dancing at 1:00. The club will again provide the entrees and the beverages. Please bring something to share (snacks, vegetables, salads, desserts). \$5.00 for the Picnic if you don't bring a dish. \$5.00 for the dance. The map to Gary's is on the back of the calendar.

My apparent goal with every issue of *Spread and Circulate* is pretty mundane: to get pertinent information out in a timely manner. So the first thing I do is sit down and take care of those dry little morsels (elections, class schedules, etc.) that are supposedly the reason we have a newsletter in the first place. Having taken care of the "business" aspect of the newsletter, I can then focus on what I think is the purpose of the newsletter: to foster a sense of belonging or community within the membership.

This is an idea that is a little more slippery, and it is what, in my opinion, distinguishes a good newsletter. That is why *Spread and Circulate* runs so much "fluff." I could easily just print up a calendar and a couple of newsflash articles, but I can guarantee that such a newsletter would hit the roundfile very quickly. What happens when *Spread and Circulate* is handed out at class is interesting. During the first dance break, most people are flipping through the newsletter, pointing out this or that to their friends and asking each other if they've met that Sukie bitch.

I think what *Spread and Circulate* does best is that it offers a good variety. There should be something for almost everyone in every issue. Hopefully every issue will do 3 things: inform, inflame and entertain. Inform club members of what's going on; inflame their interest in dancing and the club; and entertain them well enough so they don't realize (or don't care) that they are being fed propaganda. — GEORGE GRAYSON



# ADVENTURES IN RECRUITINGLAND

## Close Encounters of the Third Kind

IAN HENZEL

I was sitting on the shores of Lake Michigan. It was a pleasant summer day, with a gentle breeze blowing in off the lake. I was enjoying a good book when suddenly, a white rabbit dashed past me. And it wasn't just any old white rabbit, it was a white rabbit that was wearing a black leather vest and carrying a book under its arm. A book with "The Big Five" written on the cover. The rabbit was muttering to itself, "Recruit! recruit!"

I decided to follow him. He hopped along the lake and then disappeared into some bushes. "Aha!" I thought to myself, "I know what he's up to." But I was wrong. I pushed my way through the bushes and found the rabbit had disappeared into a large hole. I peered into it, but as I did so, I lost my balance and fell into the darkness.

I was falling, falling, falling, until I suddenly landed on my rump with a loud and painful thump. "Allemande Left!" said a voice behind me. I turned to see a large striped Cheshire Cat grinning from ear to ear.

"Circle left!" he commanded.

"I beg your pardon?" I asked.

"Follow your neighbor and spread!" he said.

"Don't be ridiculous!" I said, "I can't do any of those things by myself! Don't you know it takes eight people to square dance!"

"Precisely," replied the cat, flicking through his collection of Barbra Streisand CDs with a sharpened claw, "So go and find seven others, girlfriend."

"How do I do that?" I asked.

"Don't be a ditz!" snapped the Cheshire Cat, yanking open the cover of *Funny Girl*, "Go and recruit them!"

Puzzled by my blank look, the Cheshire Cat said, "You do know why we recruit, don't you? And don't tell me it's because we can't reproduce. We recruit so that our square dance clubs can grow and get larger, prosper and be more ... more fabulous! Have you had any experience recruiting?"

"No," I answered, feebly. "But I have seen how poor recruiting can affect a club. Last year in my square dance club we had a horrible year. We had a very small beginners' square dance class. The lack of people and funds from the beginners' class caused a financial drain on our club's resources. We had fewer dances and morale among the club members plummeted. There were no new ideas or new perspectives coming in to the club."

"That's what I'm saying," said the Cheshire cat, "You must learn how to recruit right away, or you'll end up square dancing all by yourself. Now I do know of a club in some far away land

called Chicago, and they were in the same predicament. Luckily for them they had two very clever members who worked in sales and marketing. These two members decided they would apply their job skills to recruiting new members. They thought they might be able to increase membership. Besides, they felt that this would be more rewarding than foisting a new brand of spray cheese onto an unsuspecting public.

Needless to say, they were very, very successful. They managed to recruit 54 new members, and this year they recruited another 82 people into their club."

"How do I learn recruiting?" I asked.

"Well, I just happen to have an MBA" said the Cheshire Cat, "For a very handsome consulting fee, I could be persuaded to help you."

"But I don't have any money," I answered.

"In that case," sighed the Cheshire Cat, "You'll have to look for the information in the

public domain." He pointed a paw into the distance, then slipped *Funny Girl* into the CD player, "There are many things to learn, and fortunately, I know several people who might be able to help you out. First let me see your basic plan."

"But ... but I don't have a basic plan," I said.

"Oh dear, oh dear, oh dear!" sighed the Cheshire cat, "Then we'll start at the very beginning, it's a very good place to start. First you'll have to learn how to define your plan and how to enlist others to help you. You'll have to learn about the different methods of recruiting and how to manage a database, and also the importance of good statistical data. You'll also have to learn how to communicate with prospective members and the importance of follow-up. Fortunately, all this can be a lot of fun. Now, the first person I want you to see is the Red Queen. She's rather fabulous ... gowns to die for! ... and although she's a smidge anal retentive, she can tell you everything you need to know about basic planning. She's also an absolute whiz at getting other people to help her out. No-one wants to get stuck with doing all the work. And she makes a wonderful quiche, but that's another story. Go on then, go see the Red Queen."

The Cheshire Cat pointed the way into the woods. As I headed for the trees I could hear the cat meowling, "Don't Send Around A Cloud, To Rain On My Parade ..."

And so, I began my search for the Red Queen. My recruiting adventure had begun.

*Stay tuned in our next issue for the beginning of Ian's series on Marketing and Recruiting in our clubs.*





## 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

*We regret not having the space to print the entire calendar.*

### FEB

- 02-04 Shoot the North Star II, Minnesota Wild Roses, Mpls MN.  
Callers: M.Floyd, M.Driscoll, D.Sahlstrom.  
Info: Thom Rohloff (612) 536-8862.
- 09-11 Gay and Lesbian Western Jamboree, Avalon CA.  
Callers: L.Ward, P.Waters. (Also, 2-step, line, clogging )  
Info: P.Waters (818) 762-2865.
- 16-19 Dive Thru Long Beach, Tinseltown and Golden State  
Sqs, Long Beach CA. R.French, CJ Smith,  
A.Uebelacker. Info: Ted K. (818) 785-9764.
- 21-06 Pink Triangles Down Under, a square dance journey to  
Australia. Caller: A.Shore.  
Info: John Paul (800) 843-0181.
- 29-03 Mile High Pass By (for women), Sugar & Spice Sister  
Squares, Denver CO. Caller: A.Uebelacker.  
Info: Dvorah Dnali (303) 433-4948.

### MAR

- 15-17 Cloverleaf in the Sand, South Florida Mustangs,  
Hollywood FL. Callers: C.Phillips, D.Vowell.  
Info: Terry Chero (305) 942-1297.
- 22-24 Ropin' the River, Grand River Squares, Grand Rapids MI.  
Caller: Anne Uebelacker.  
Info: Scott Sorensen (616) 785-3042.
- 22-24 Dixie Style to Memphis, Cotton Pickin' Squares,  
Memphis TN. T.Harris, R.Townsend and GCA callers.  
Info: Ron Thomas (901) 387-1567.
- 29-31 Pass the Sea '96, Finest City Squares, San Diego CA.  
Callers: M.DeSisto, R.Nelson, A.Shore.  
Info: Scott Parker (619) 268-4249.

### APR

- 05-07 Philadelphia Freedom Fly-in, Independence Sqs. Loc:  
New Hope PA. D.Hodge, G.Matthew, A.Uebelacker.  
Info: Cindy K. (215) 842-9026.
- 05-07 Chase the Bunny, Les Carres aux Dattes d'Ottawa Hull  
Date Squares, Ottawa ON. G.Ingraham, P.Waters.  
Info: Larry White (613) 738-2078.
- 19-21 Stumptown Stomp, Capital City Squares, Guerneville  
CA. Callers: L.Letson, R.Loney.  
Info: George Fox (916) 929-8697.
- 26-28 Spring Fly-in, Squares Across the Border, Vancouver  
BC. Callers: TBA. Info: Dana Cromie (604) 733-7566.
- 26-05 Remake the Tour, a square dance adventure to  
Amsterdam and London. Caller: A.Uebelacker.  
Info: John Faulds (800) 743-3550.

### MAY

- 03-05 Pass the Ocean, Hon!, Chesapeake Squares, Rehoboth  
DE. M.DeSisto, P.Diven, E.McAtee, B.Rubright.  
Info: Kirk Hurley (410) 833-3617.
- 17-19 Wheel Through Ghost Ranch, Abiquitu NM. Callers:  
S.Bryant, K.Jensen. Info: Peli Lee (505) 989-8627.
- 24-26 Scoot Across the Border, Triangle Squares, Toronto ON  
Canada. Callers: A.Uebelacker, J.Uebelacker.  
Info: John Bailey (416) 966-9645.

Updates: James Ozanich, 1815 Urbana Way, Sacramento CA  
95833-2646, (916) 925-4242. E-Mail:  
0004120870@mcimail.com. Verify info with local contacts

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