

The *Don't Stop!* San Francisco **April 2005** WESTERN STAR DANCERS *Don't Slow Down!* Western Star

Newsletter of Western Star Dancers, a contemporary American square dance club primarily serving the San Francisco LGBT community. International Association of Gay Square Dance Clubs member. Address: 584 Castro Street 480 San Francisco, CA 94114
Visit our website: www.westernstardancers.org

Scoot Back to Angel Island

Events Coordinator Grey Todd announced that the 2005 Western Star Dancers Angel Island Picnic would be held on August 20 this year. Complete details will soon follow.

Grey was able to reserve the same Hill Picnic Area that we used last year, because it is easily accessible from the ferry landing. Certain longtime members, upon hearing this, shook their heads and muttered "wimpy!" under their breaths. Way back then, the WSD Angel Island Picnic was regularly held on the opposite side of the island from the landing. Getting to the picnic site required a serious hike. Wimpy or not, our ability to hold our celebration in a central location on the island speaks much for the acceptance of a gay square dance club by the greater community. Our struggling founders deserve our thanks for that.

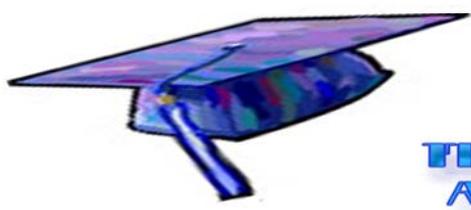
Details on ticket purchase for both the event and the Ferry ride will be provided soon via email and club announcements. For now, mark your calendars and remember that partners, friends, loved ones, liked ones, spouses, buddies, and colleagues are all welcome to join us.

Watch your mailbox for more information.



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**2005
BLUE MAINSTREAM
CLASS COMPLETION
CELEBRATION**




**THURSDAY
APRIL 21
MISSION PLAYGROUND
7:30-9:30 PM**

**Join in welcoming our new
club members**

DANCING REFRESHMENTS HUGS

PARTNERS & FRIENDS WELCOME

WYSD HERITAGE

TIPS GLEANED FROM THE ARCHIVES OF WSD TODAY
& THE WESTERN STAR

TIPS FOR BETTER DANCING by Ed Foote (from *The Western Star*, July 1983)

Dancers who follow these rules find they dance more, stand less, and in general have a more enjoyable dancing experience.

1. Take hands with those standing beside you immediately after the completion of any figure. This will help you to see the formation you are in (line, wave, etc.) to do the next call. Hands should be joined within 1/2 second after the completion of any call. Failure to join hands after a call will often result in sloppy lines or waves, which will cause the square to break down trying to do the next call.

2. Believe the caller, no matter what he says. Often dancers will stop cold if a caller tells them to do something and they do not know why he told them to do it. This results in the needless breakdown of the square. Forget worrying about "why" and just do as the caller says. No matter what the caller says, do it. If a dancer refuses to execute a given command, he has no one to blame but himself when this causes his square to break down.

3. If the caller calls a call you have never heard, do not give up and quit. In the vast majority of cases the caller will tell you how to do the call after he has said the name, especially if it is not one of the "Basic Mainstream" calls. Even if you have never heard a call, if it is not complicated, there is no reason for you not being able to do the call if the caller talks you thru it.

4. If you become completely lost:

A. Do not turn around. This will make it difficult for someone behind you to help you recover. It is much easier to guide someone into place by guiding them from the back.

B. Turn your head in all directions to see where you should go; and if someone says to turn around, then do it. Otherwise, retain your facing direction and let someone guide you into place.

C. Do not wander around. Stay put until someone either guides you into place or tells you to go to a certain point. And do not be surprised that you get this help—expect that you will get it and be ready to respond to it quickly.

If you want to help someone who is lost, try to avoid talking and instead use hand signals. A very effective method is to point to the spot they should be in. If you talk, this may cause you and others in the square to miss hearing the caller give the next call.

5. Whenever you pass thru with someone, always pass right shoulders, never left shoulders. The only exception is from a left hand wave—there you will step straight ahead.

b. In crossing trails with someone, always pass left shoulders. The person on the right will always cut in front of the person on the left, regardless of sex. Therefore, on the call 'Cross Trail Thru', after passing thru with the people in front, you will now cross trails with your partner by passing left shoulders.

7. If you are positive you have done a call correctly, do not let someone who is unsure of the call make you change your position. This will keep the square going.

8. Do not rush thru a call. Many people seem so worried they will not make it thru that they are pushing all the time. This disturbs others in the square. It is better to relax and move to the beat of the music.

9. If a set consists of two strong couples and two weak couples, the strong couples should be across from each other when squared up,

never adjacent. This will give each weak person a strong corner, and will provide each side of the square with strong dancers when doing figures. So if you and another couple visit a dance where the level is higher than you are used to, if you dance together be sure to square up across from each other. Likewise, if two new graduates dance in your square, be sure that you and the other strong couple square up across from each other.

10. If your square breaks down get to facing lines. Do this by squaring back up and then have the head couples slide to the right to form normal facing lines of four with each girl to the right of a man. Now watch the other squares. Often the caller will get the squares back to facing lines a couple times before finally getting to a left allemande; when he does get them to facing lines, your square can now pick up the next call and you are dancing again. You may not wind up with your original partner or corner, but you are dancing and that is the name of the game. This will not work every time, as sometimes the caller does not bring people back to facing lines before a left allemande; but it works often enough to be worth doing. In fact, some callers will intentionally bring people back to facing lines in order to pick up those who have broken down early; if you do not accept this opportunity to get back dancing, you may have a long stand until the next left allemande.

11. Try to understand the definition of the call rather than just memorizing a position. If you understand the definition, you will be able to do the call from any position; but if you have only memorized one position, you will be lost if the call is used from any other position. When a call is presented, it is often taught by telling the boys to do something and the girls to do something else. However, the definition of a call almost never involves a person's sex, but rather is written for the outsides to do something and the insides to do something else or the left-hand person does one thing and the right-hand person does something else, etc. The definition is what you want to remember, not the particular teaching set up that was used. If after a call is taught you are not sure of the correct definition, ask the caller to explain it without using the terms "boys" or "girls".

12. Please don't talk while the caller is explaining something. You lay not need the help but others may, and you don't help the square by distracting people. If a caller is walking the floor thru a call, don't get ahead of the caller's prompting even if you know what is going on. It isn't smart—rather, it is inconsiderate of fellow dancers that need this help. And if you deprive these dancers of a good understanding of the call, they lay break the square down later and you'll be standing right along with them.

13. Don't knock your club; help it by being friendly and kind to all members and guests. If you are asked to help on a committee or a job, try and do so. If everyone refused to do any work, there would not be a club.

Remember, all things considered, there are two primary reasons for squares breaking down:

I. Failure to take hands with adjacent dancers at the completion of every call to form good lines or waves.

2. Failure to listen to or believe the caller.

Maitri Hospice Hoedown

By Paul Gonyea

Maitri AIDS Hospice hosted a hoedown on Saturday, March 19 with square dancing by Western Star Dancers and Foggy City Dancers. The event was organized by Paul Gonyea.

Paul was excited with the results. "Wow! I'm ecstatically pleased with how well this afternoon went. Everyone showed up right on time, and gave the hospice residents a well-received gift of shared time, energy, and dance. Afterwards, Maitri staff remarked that the Western Star and Foggy City dancers were really nice guys and that we brought great energy and life into the place."



Rich Reel did a couple of intro calls and staff and volunteers joined in. I think we made some square dance converts -- everyone had a blast! Residents enjoyed watching us move in patterns and I suspect they were vicariously dancing with us. Even those residents who couldn't leave their beds could hear and enjoy the energy and the music.

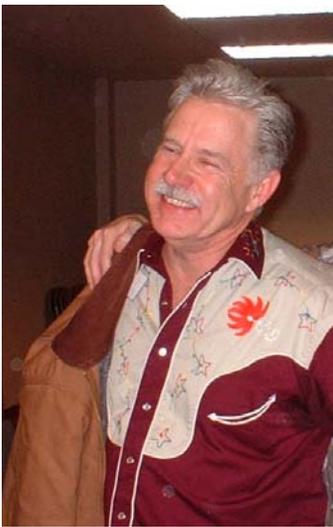
Paul gave the dancers a tour of the facility and they were extremely impressed with how wonderful and beautiful Maitri is, and the amazing compassion & warmth that permeates the place.

Maitri was founded in the early 1980's by Issan Dorsey, a former "drug-addled drag queen" who became a Zen Buddhist monk, and later, an abbot. He started the Hartford Street Zen Center in the Castro around the time that AIDS first hit San Francisco. While the city

was embroiled in heated controversy over the epidemic, Issan rolled up his sleeves, and took in and cared for a sick homeless student who had no one to turn to for help. He continued to take in more men who needed care and support, and an early form of Maitri hospice came into being and was most desperately needed. Maitri (pronounced like "my tree") is a Sanskrit word meaning "compassionate friendship". Issan died of AIDS complications himself in 1990, after successfully building Maitri into a community of caretakers and volunteers. His biography, *Street Zen*, by David Schneider, chronicles Issan's remarkable life and illustrates how one gay man created a legacy that has affected so many lives.

Maitri has outgrown its Hartford Street facilities and is now located in a beautifully renovated building at the corner of Church and Duboce. It houses 15 residents at any point in time, and focuses on providing AIDS hospice and residential care for the most needy and destitute. Maitri is noted for using its donor contributions and funding income in very efficient and effective ways. It continues to provide superior compassionate care, even as funding cuts force Maitri to rely increasingly on the generosity of individuals.

It's great to see how square dancing can reach out to the community with much-needed energy and friendship. We added another dimension to square dancing, and gave a significant gift of fun and distraction to folks facing illness and death.



XXIII Anniversary



Eric Henerlau, caller for the WSD 23rd Anniversary Dance, was also the caller for the WSD 3rd Anniversary Dance. He has called many WSD dances over the past 20 years. His energy is excellent, and his calling is clear. His dances are fun.

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A Lucky Double Whammy

Interview by dan smith

DH: Your name is...?

DS: Daniel Schweitzer. I've been square dancing just about every week since the middle of October. I heard about square dancing from Ammon, the Arch Angel this year. It's funny but Ammon and his boyfriend are friends with this couple, Lance and James, who I also knew through my boyfriend Jeff. So it's one of these friends of friends of friends things. Ammon gave us a flyer about square dancing and made me promise, promise, promise I'd go. I got the double whammy when he got James to agree to go. I had the two of them saying, "You have to come. You have to try this out." I told them that I would go to one dance.

I missed the intro night but showed up for the first actual Class night. I had a blast. I couldn't stop laughing. I felt it was kind of corny and cheesy. I always thought of myself as a Big City boy, an Urbanite and here I'm in San Francisco doing gay square dancing. I had a good time that night. I found myself really enjoying it so I decided to go back the next week to see if I kept enjoying it.

I try to make sure I get to dance with lots of people because I like to dance with everyone. I try to always get a dance in with Matt and Daryl because they're very fun dancers. I really like dancing with Joe Iser. I think he's a fabulous dancer, he moves very well on his feet. I also enjoy dancing with Jim he's a fun dancer. It's great to dance with James not only because we're friends but also because we're sort of on the same level. That puts a little more challenge on me. When I'm dancing with an angel I feel I can rely on them to nudge me in one direction or another. With James we're looking at each other for help and guidance. That forces me to make sure that know what I'm supposed to be doing.

DH: Why didn't your boyfriend go?

DS: Square dancing is something a lot of schools teach in the 3rd or 4th grade and lots of people learn to really hate it when they're about ten. Jeff also went through that and has this aversion to square dancing. When he does finally come to watch, everyone will get to meet him and he'll get to see me show-off my skills.

DH: I can't get my boyfriend to come either.

DS: Oh, we're all widows, James's boyfriend Lance won't go dancing and Ammon's boyfriend Joel won't go dancing.

DH: Where were you born?

DS: In Broward County, where the 'hanging chad' and 'Butterfly ballots' were in the 2000 election. My parents divorced when I was 10 and Mother moved to Tampa, Florida to take law school. I guess you could say the apple doesn't fall far from the tree. Her mind is very predisposed to legal analyses and so is mine. When I was 12 we moved to San Diego. Mom and all my long time friends live there so I consider it home.

DH: Have you ever mentioned to your friends that you square dance?

DS: Yes, I think all of my friends know. I actually enjoy telling people because I like seeing their reaction. At first they laugh and think I'm joking. A lot of times it is just utter disbelief and sometimes they don't even think that there is such a thing as gay square dancing. Other times people don't know how to react

because the only way they can think to react is kind of rude and disparaging so they just stand there. They think we dance to Billy Ray Cyrus. I myself stand back, look at square dancing and think, "Yaw it is kind of hokey the way the dancing looks" but I also think it's very enjoyable.

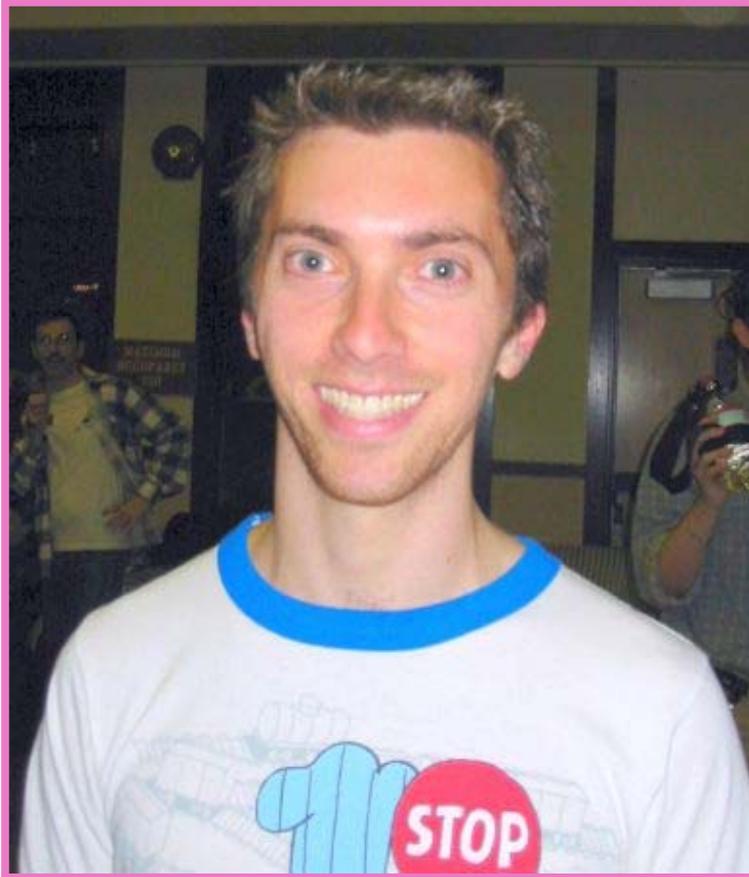
DH: What social activities do you & your boyfriend have?

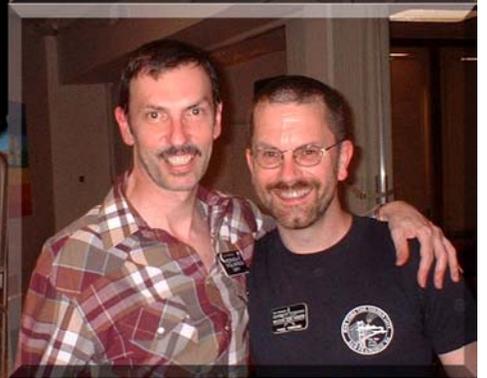
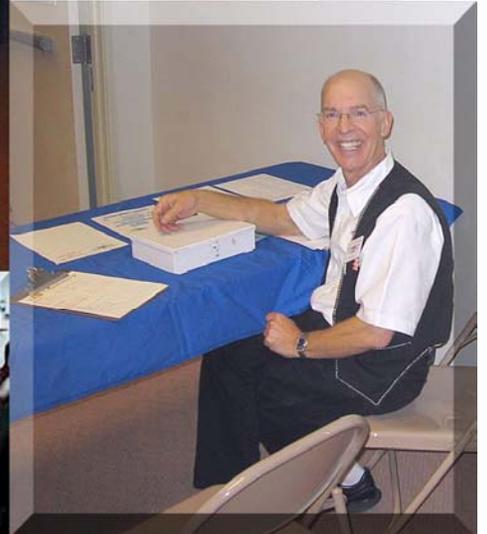
DS: We like to travel a lot. Recently we took a weekend trip to Portland and we're going to New York next month to celebrate our anniversary. We've been together over two years. We took a trip to Europe last fall and had a week in Amsterdam. I loved seeing all the different colored tulips and thought, "Wow wouldn't it be neat to start a garden in our backyard!" We brought back tulip bulbs and I found myself looking forward to going into the garden to see what color

each tulip was going to become. I thought, "Shoot if it's been this much fun with the Dutch stuff why don't I do some more flowers, so I bought seeds. Then I thought, "Hay why not plant some vegetables. Now I've got peas, tomatoes, eggplants, green peppers and broccoli.

DH: Are there any final words you'd like to add?

DS: Only that I'm having a great time square dancing and I'm so glad Ammon got me to do it. I'm really glad James talked me into going and I'm looking forward to Plus class. It starts at the end of April and I'm very excited about that. It will go through September or October. And then I'll decide what I want to do from there. I may stick with Mainstream and Plus just to solidify them before I go on to Advanced. I'm having a great time meeting people at Western Star.





March 19, 2005



Thanks to Gary Cohn, Jim Dewsnap, & Daryl Daniels for the photos

Dance Calendar

DIABLO DANCERS
Class/Club Night
Tuesdays
TGIF Dance/Potluck
3rd Friday
1700 Oak Park Boulevard
Pleasant Hill

El Carnino Reelers
Class Night
Wednesday
6:30-9:30 PM
St. Andrew's Methodist
4111 Alma Street
Palo Alto

FOGGY CITY DANCERS
SAN FRANCISCO • CALIFORNIA

MIDNIGHT SQUARES
SAN FRANCISCO

Oaktown 8s

Class Night
Tuesdays
Club Night
2nd & 4th Thursday
Friends School
117 Diamond Street

Class Sunday Afternoons
Friends School
117 Diamond Street
Club Night
A - 2nd & 4th Wednesday
Mission Playground
C - 1st & 3rd Thursday
Friends School

Class Night
Wednesday 7-9:30 PM
Montclair Women's Cultural Arts Club
1650 Mountain Boulevard
Oakland

Dancing with Local Clubs

April 1-3	Philadelphia Freedom Fly-in XIII—Grand Swing Thru the Woods Independence Squares, Lake Harmony, PA. Callers: M. DeSisto, K. Jensen, T. Miller See website for details.
April 1-3	Pass the Sea XII Finest City Squares, San Diego. Callers: T. Crawford, M. Dee, A. Shore See website for details.
April 2 7-10 pm	Coming Out Dance Oaktown 8s Darren Gallina caller. M/P/A* \$10 Leona Lodge, 4444 Mountain Boulevard, Oakland
April 8-10	PACE Saturday – C1 Oak Park Center, 1700 Oak Park Boulevard, Pleasant Hill
April 14-17	Pass Thru the Alamo – ACW's Quinceanera Alamo City Wranglers, San Antonio, TX. Callers: B. Eyler See website for details.
April 16 7-10 pm	California Twirl into Spring Dance with Silent Auction Foggy City Dancers Anne Uebelacker caller. M/P/A* \$8/\$10 Ebenezer Lutheran Church 678 Portola Drive, San Francisco
April 20 7:30-9:30 pm	Club Night Ron Masker caller Mission Playground
April 21 7:30-9:30 pm	Blue Mainstream Class Completion Party Mission Playground
April 23 7:30-10:30 pm	Walk & Dodge into Spring El Camino Reelers Pat Carnathan caller. P/A/C1* St. Andrew's Methodist Church, 4111 Alma Street, Palo Alto
April 24 4-6 pm	Spring Dance Midnight Squares Rob French caller. C2/C3A Friends School, 117 Diamond Street, San Francisco
April 28 7:30-9:30 pm	Free Introduction to Plus Mission Playground
April 29- May 1	Pass the Ocean, Hon! Chesapeake Squares, Baltimore, MD. Callers: D. Carroll-Jones, D. Hodge, M. Jacobs See website for details.
April 29- May 1	Peel Off in Palm Springs IX (for men) CCBC Resort, Cathedral City, CA Caller: D. Gallina. See website for details.
May 5 7:30-9:30 pm	Blue Plus Class Begins Mission Playground
May 13-25	PACE Barry Clasper caller Saturday – C1 Oak Park Center, 1700 Oak Park Boulevard, Pleasant Hill
May 18 7:30-9:30 pm	Club Night Allan Hurst caller Mission Playground
May 20-22	Stumptown Stomp Capital City Squares Pat Carnathan & Joe Saltel callers. M/P/A/C1* Veteran's Hall, Guerneville, CA Info: George ((16) 929-8697
May 27-29	Scot Across the Border—Queen Victoria's Secret Garden Triangle Squares, Toronto, Ontario. Callers: T. Crawford, N. Martellacci. See website for details.

For the latest dance information, check www.bayareadancecalendar.org and www.iagsdc.org

Submit!

Photos
Drawings
Artwork
Articles
Cartoons

THE WESTERN STAR wants
your submissions

Contact Daryl
daryl@daniels@sbcglobal.net



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FOLLOW YOUR NEIGHBOR & SPREAD!
CIRCULATE, FLIP & CUT DIAMONDS!
EXPLODE! EXTEND! PEEL OFF!



Mission Playground

(19th Street between Valencia & Guerrero)

7:30 - 9:30 pm

FREE

Intro to Plus
April 28

Class Begins
May 5



2005
CLASS
PLUS

New Students

\$65

Repeat Students*

\$40

*within the last 3 years

Instructor

Rich

Reel



Western Star Dancers
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