

The



AUGUST 2005

Western Star

Western Stars Thru the Silicon Galaxy

The 22nd International Association of Gay Square Dance Clubs convention in Santa Clara on July 1-4 included almost a thousand dancers, a plethora of fantastic callers, a multitude of smiles, and tons of fun. There was an unexpected problem with the flooring during the Trail-In Dance, but it was fixed through a lot of hard work late into the night by the host club, El Camino Reelers. The Reelers spun a great theme of space oddities, including six amusing robots, created by two ECR members from trash they found, to make this a particularly memorable convention.

On Saturday morning the annual delegates meeting was held. Steve Scott and Daryl Daniels represented Western Star Dancers. Two new clubs were accepted into the IAGSDC: Oaktown 8s from Oakland and Anywhere Squares (accepted as an affiliate member) for dancers not affiliated with any other club. One club, the Minnesota Wild Roses, folded in the past year. IAGSDC has 57 full member clubs, and several affiliate and associate clubs. The organization has over \$26,000 in the bank. Reports were made by the convention committees from Anaheim (2006), Denver (2007), and Cleveland (2008). Washington, New York, and Chicago made

presentations for the 2009 convention. Washington, D.C., was selected by the majority of the clubs to host the 2009 convention over Memorial Day weekend.

On the whole, the organization is in excellent shape. There is some concern about declining membership within 10 years or so, mirroring the decline the straight square dance community has already experienced. Surveys are being studied and various options are being considered to promote our hobby and build membership.

Western Star Dancers' Steve Scott presented a proposal on behalf of the three San Francisco clubs to permit new dancers (dancers who have completed Mainstream between conventions) to register for the next convention at the lowest advertised price. We further proposed that the status of the new dancers could be designated by a club official. While we presented the proposal, no discussion was allowed. IAGSDC President John McKinstry, referred the matter to the convention planning committee, because he did not want the IAGSDC to direct the convention committees regarding registration pricing. At any event, later in the meeting the Denver Red Rocks & Purple Mountains convention committee announced that they would implement our proposed policy for their convention. This could be the start of a tradition, we can only hope.

Meanwhile, back on the dance floor, gaiety prevailed. The specialty tips were ever popular. The leather tip was so crowded that the hall had to be expanded to accommodate the overflow crowd. Reportedly the Moonshine Tip was no big thing, but Russ King encouraged others to join in next year to see some of the interesting tattoos and piercing locations.

During the opening ceremonies, long time WSD Leon Dubois was awarded a medallion for attending 20 conventions. At the banquet, several Western Stars were presented 10 year medallions: Ed Mah, Peggy Shumway, Rich Reel, and Ernest Dubois. Congratulations to all of you!

Star Thru the Silicon Galaxy was a joyous celebration, but the excitement is building for next year's visit to the Magic Kingdom and Wish Upon a Star in Anaheim.

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



(Top) David Laudon, Michael Larson, James Williams, Tony Attard, Rich Reel, Josef Prochnow, Jim Dewsnap (2nd Row) Gary Cohn, Daniel Schweitzer, Mario Torrigino, Gary Young, Freeman Stamper, Fabian Alvarado (3rd Row) Daryl Daniels, Ammon Corl, Steve Scott, Paul Gonyea, Fen Tamanaha, Grey Todd (Front) Lou Troga, Tom Tripp, Steve Scott, Merle Adams, Russ King, Randy Laroche



Partners & Friends
Welcome

RESPLENDENT
ROUSING
RICH REEL
CALLER

Reservations recommended!
Download a reservation form from our website:
www.westernstardancers.org

Tickets will likely be available on the morning of the picnic.

2005 ANGEL ISLAND PICNIC

August 20, 2005
Leave Pier 41 at 9:45 am
Bring picnic items to share
\$20 (includes ferry)

Questions? Email
sparrow@cancunvalet.com
daryldaniels@sbcglobal.net



Saturday
September 3, 2004
1 - 8 pm

Labor Day
Weekend

1035 Las Gallinas Avenue
San Rafael, CA

Kip Mackey's



Potluck!
Bring Your Own Intoxicants!
Soft Drinks Provided!

RSVP
kipmackey@aol.com
415-479-4759



Two Left Feet

By Brenda Line

BETSY'S BOYS

How often does a young man actually get the opportunity to meet his idol? Dedicated fans can hope and wish, but it is only the most fortunate who actually experience the fulfillment of their life's dream. Some dancers in the convention halls thought that the Gotta Spotting was just a rumor. But the buzz quickly built momentum. "Wow! Betsy Gotta," Daniel exclaimed, "I actually saw Betsy Gotta!"

Who can guess how many late nights Daniel, James

and Ammon spent watching those Betsy DVDs in their BVDs—mesmerized by every subtle move and hanging onto every word? Did they actually spend their weekends going through the Betsy fan zines?—giggling as they combed each other's hair into trendy "Betsy Bangs?"

What chance could her greatest fans have of capturing more than a glimpse when Betsy would be calling exclusively at higher levels, far out of the reach of the newbie cult boys?



Betsy and The Gotta Girls
L-R: James, Herself, Daniel, Ammon

photo: Anne Spread



Awestruck by the charm of Her Betsyness during the Grand March, Daniel fails to notice he is being cruised big time.

But miracles do happen. Reminiscent of Mother Teresa descending into the gutters of Calcutta, Betsy performed in the Mainstream Hall for a few brief moments. But that was enough time for her to work her devoted fans into a dervishing frenzy—a virtual pilot square-cum-mosh pit.

The Gotta Groupies were allowed to pose for a gracious photo opportunity and to gush to Betsy about how they had seen all her movies. Dreams do come true and life can bestow an unexpected thrill when it is least expected. And just to set the record straight, the rumor that Daniel has a **GOTTA DANCE** tattoo in a private area is totally unsubstantiated.

Betsy Gotta's instructional DVDs are available for home study. See your archangel to borrow Betsy.



CONVENTION MEMORIES

Steve Scott

I will remember this convention fondly, because I went to Yosemite on a pre-convention tour. I hadn't been to this beautiful park in many years. I hiked to the top of Vernal Falls! On Saturday and Sunday nights I watched the fireworks from Great America with WSD members on the balcony of Grey and Ammon's room – oohs and ahhs from everyone! I'm proud that I had the opportunity to present a joint proposal by WSD, FCD, and MS at the IAGSDC delegates meeting for lowest cost convention registration fees for new Mainstream graduates.

Merle Adams

I didn't dance much at the convention, except with the Silver Foxes, a couple of times--I really enjoyed that. Chris Jensen and another famous caller, were singing dance calls such as : La da do 'Forever young', la da do. Much laughter in the squares many times. There were Silver Foxes standing around, and I and a few others, didn't have any trouble being spelled off.

I enjoyed doing a lot of service. It was nice meeting folks from all around. A nice letter of appreciation was received from Tom Steele, of the 'Reelers'.

The leather dance was kind of fun to watch. I gave my leather belt, and large chain wallet to a friend to wear, from the Oaktown 8's. We were separated and I nearly got kicked out of the room by a very large women. When I found my friend just out in the crowded hallway tee-heeing and having fun, a flash of anger flushed in my face. A good friend said to me, "Oh well dear, the worst that good have happened to you is, that you would have needed to take off your cloths (the moonshine nude dance was next. I replied, "NEVER! If you want it, you have to buy it, or you don't get nothing at all. La ta do ta da. I say, if you can't sell it, keep sittin on it"

I must say there was sort of a hunky guy at the leather dance. He had a birth mark on his lower left cheek. Yeeessss, the birthmark was very distinctive, so you scat folks, don't get excited. Yuk!

Josef and his partner from down south, and I were the first to walk over to the garage top to get the group picture taken. I finally lost Josef and I couldn't find any of my groups, so I just went ahead and stood in the front row. It's my time. My first convention in Vancouver, I didn't even know there was a group picture, and In San Diego, the heat got to me outside,

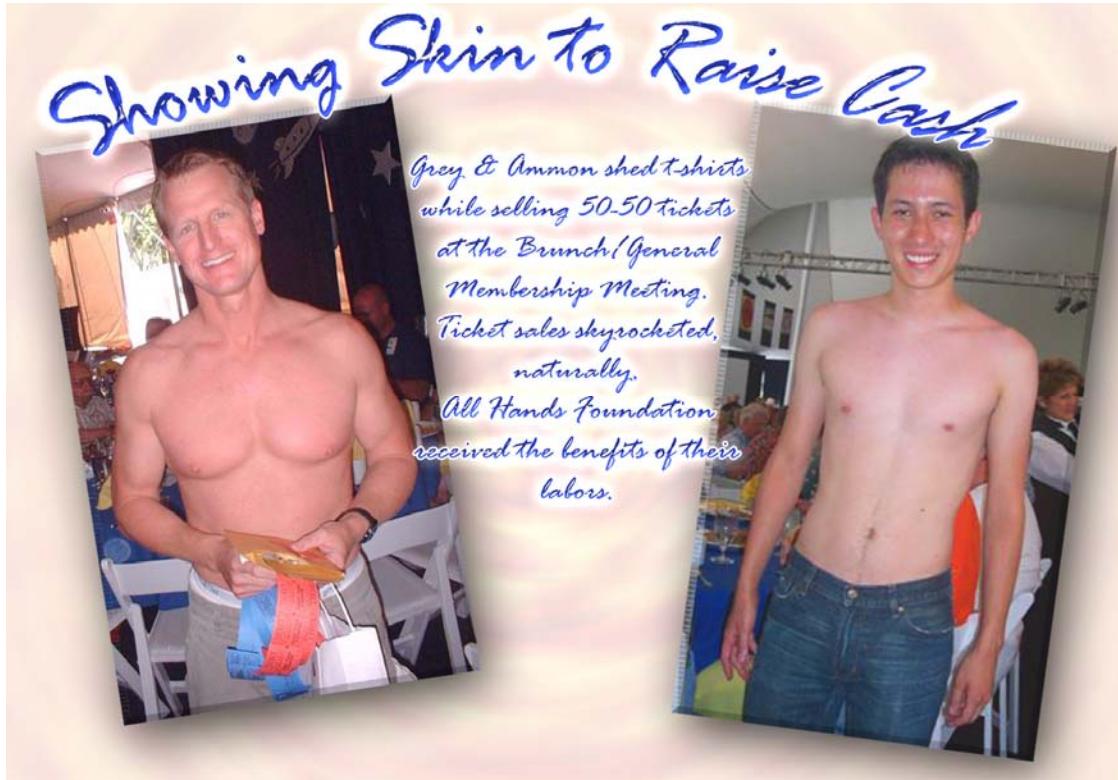
and I had to leave before the group picture. I didn't make it to Arizona. So now you all have a remembrance of Grandma Minnie Merle, right in the front row.

So many stories and so little time, just like sooooo many men and....

PS. Thank you to all the guys who made it to my room and kept me company for the fireworks. The 'Uzz and awes' coming from my room, nearly got us all arrested:-)

Ammon Corl

I had a blast at "Star Thru the Silicon Galaxy," my first convention! It was so amazing to see over a thousand LGBT square dancers dancing in unison after the Grand March. I especially liked the "Take



No Prisoners" Plus tips called by Andy Shore - he made it so you really had to think about each call and not just dance on "auto-pilot." I also very much enjoyed the energetic calling by Michael Kellogg and Bronc - I will definitely be sure to attend their dances in the future. Although I didn't dance in the "Leather Tip," I was very impressed by the turnout - perhaps someday in the future if I ever own a leather outfit I'll participate! (Hint hint, leather makes a great gift!) I got to meet lots of great dancers from all over the world, including square dancing legend Betsy Gotta and dancers around my age from Texas and Alabama. I have lots of great photos for the scrapbook and look forward to dancing at the next convention in Anaheim!

Russ King

Okay, here are a few favorite Convention memories, arranged day-by-day:

FRIDAY: Group hug with Robin Alpenglow and Ed Conley during the Trail-In Dance. When I archangeled the WSD class that graduated in March '87, Robin was my second-in-command (she moved to Sacramento shortly



thereafter, danced and taught with Capitol City, and now lives in Madison, Wisconsin, where she dances regularly with the straight community), and Ed Conley was one of that class's star students (he later became a caller for awhile, and co-founded the Diablo Dancers); lots of square dance history in our little threesome, but these mini-reunions are one of the things Convention is all about...

SATURDAY: Being hypnotized by my psychedelic fan as we assembled for the Grand March. (As the saying goes, It's never too late to have a happy childhood.)

SUNDAY: Finally being relaxed enough to do the Moonshine Tip, and discovering for myself what several friends had already told me--it's really no big deal. (And no, folks, I'm not going to share information about who has tattoos or jewelry in unexpected places. It's like Las Vegas--what you see inside stays inside; do it yourself next year if you're curious.)

MONDAY: Having Ruby from Seattle (in one of her usual wonderful outfits) and Rick from Chicago, two of the friendliest and most charming people imaginable, in my last square of the day Monday afternoon, and getting to see them hug hips with each other during an hour-glass circulate.

OVER THE WEEKEND: I also became aware that we have some straight couples who are attending the IAGSDC Convention every year instead of Nationals (some are already half-way to getting their ten-year medallions!), because we're more fun to dance with, better dancers in general, and (most important to the women) don't have a dress code. Thanks to a very pleasant woman from Baltimore named Linda, I now know more than I want to about what it's like to attempt a brief comfort break in sweaty crinolines, but at least I've had my consciousness raised on the subject. Now if our straight

allies can only band together, take on their leadership, and get that silly dress code brought into the 21st Century...

On to Anaheim!

James Williams

The convention boosted my enthusiasm for square dancing tremendously. The dancing was both fun and confidence-building. But what meant the most to me was that the more experienced dancers from our club danced with us newbies most of the time. I'm thankful for the friendships I've made (and strengthened--Daniel & Ammon) through square dancing.



Finding Country in the City

Interview by dan smith

D: Your name is?

J: James Williams. I'm from 'Leb'nun', Tennessee. It's a small town about 35 miles from Nashville.

D: Oh, you mean Lebanon?

J: Yes like the country. But if you've lived there you say 'Leb'nun'. I grew up there, out in the country actually. My family had been farmers and still had a lot of land when I grew up. I went to college in Nashville, so not very far from home.

D: What kind of college?

J: A Southern Baptist private college. I majored in mathematics.

D: Are you from a Baptist background?

J: Yes I am but I'm not actively attending church. I've moved on. I had a lot of Southern Baptist fundamentalism crammed down my throat in the first 21 years of my life so it's probably enough to last me the rest of my life. (Chuckles)

D: Why mathematics?

J: Oh, I found it mentally challenging. After college I went to Carnegie Mellon in Pittsburgh and got my MBA in Finance.

D: Do you have a lover, boyfriend?

J: Yes Lance and I have been together for 12 years. We have a tale that we always tell our parents and professionals about how we met but the truth is we met at The Phoenix, the old bar that is now part of Walgreen's. It was a place that neither of us had been to but we were each taken in that night by friends...and we met. And so I guess it can happen that way.

D: Does Lance square dance?

J: He's very supportive of me but he's not interested himself. Lance has come to class a couple of nights to watch and he came to our anniversary party. We have a good network of friends. We're always going to dinner parties or hosting them. He and I like to dance so we occasionally go to the Badlands and other places to dance. We also both like to hike and have a common interest in photography. We travel quiet a bit and have been quit a few unusual places. We spent a month in Egypt and three weeks in Australia, been throughout Eastern Europe most recently Romania and Croatia. We've been to Paris and London a few times. We take a lot of pictures and have enlargements of them on the walls of our home

D: How did you find out about square dancing?

J: I'm a friend of Ammon and his partner Joel. When Ammon told me he square danced I couldn't help but laugh. Being from Tennessee I'm very familiar with square dancing although I did only a bit in school. I could not see Ammon, the sophisticated young urban guy going to UCSF, doing square dancing. But he talked about it so positively the first year that he was in the club that I'm thinking, "I really want to do this because I love dancing, I love country music." Now of course I realize it's not all country music that we dance to. It sounded like something I would really enjoy and I had the time so...that's fine, "Try it."

I was very pleased at how friendly and outgoing the people were. Obviously it's very intimidating when you go to an organization and you're walking in from the outside. But knowing Ammon and also our friend Daniel who started at the same time as me made it much easier. The fact is that everyone is so friendly. You walk in and immediately start holding hands and hugging people. You can't help but get to know them and feel good.

D: Have you gone anywhere other than Western Star?

J: No but on one of my many trips to Tennessee I plan on dancing at the gay square dance club that must exist in Nashville.

D: Are you taking the Plus class?

J: Yes I've worked hard so far and I'm not stopping now. In fact Daniel and I want to be ready for the convention, if at all possible. (They were.) What really decided it for me was our anniversary dance. I had so much fun it made me realize why I was doing square dance. After that night I knew I wanted to go to convention.

D: Have you told your friends that you square dance?

J: Yes and friends and family are not surprised because everyone knows that I'm so into country music. But everyone is surprised that there is such a thing as a gay square dance club in San Francisco. So I tell them that there are several and their history.

It's always a fun thing to tell people. Their reactions are basically positive. If I can tell my coworkers that I'm going to the Dolly Parsons concert with a ticket I bought through the Dolly Parson's fan club then I'm certainly not embarrassed to say I'm square dancing.

D: How have the angels helped you?

J: People have very different dancing styles, so when I'm feeling unsure about my knowledge of the moves I like to dance with people like Steve because he's very helpful without confusing me. I also like to dance with Matt because he's fun and confident and he makes me...

D: He looks like a square dancer too.

J: He does look like one! My biggest struggle has been to catch-up and memorize these dozens and dozens of new moves because I missed several classes in a row. When you're 40 years old your mind doesn't pick up new things and remember them as quickly as Daniel's 26-year-old mind. Sometimes I'm very frustrated with my steps but I'm committed to learning and I've been to every class that I could.

One of my biggest disappointments is that there's not enough time to get to know the other people because you're generally always dancing or they're making announcements and then class is over and we all leave. I want to have time to talk to people. I really look forward to the Angel Island outing in August. That will be a great day to have a more relaxed time with everyone.







<p>DIABLO DANCERS</p> <p>Class/Club Night Tuesdays TGIF Dance/Potluck 3rd Friday 1700 Oak Park Boulevard Pleasant Hill</p>	<p>El Camino Reelers</p> <p>Class Night Wednesday 6:30-9:30 PM St. Andrew's Methodist 4111 Alma Street Palo Alto</p>	<p>FOGGY CITY DANCERS SAN FRANCISCO • CALIFORNIA</p>	<p>Class Night Tuesdays Forest Hill Christian Church 250 Laguna Honda Boulevard</p>
<h2>Dancing with Local Clubs</h2>		<p>Class Sunday Afternoons Jon Sims Center 1519 Mission Street</p>	
<p>MIDNIGHT SQUARES</p>		<p>Oaktown 8s</p> <p>Class Night Wednesday 7-9:30 PM Montclair Women's Cultural Arts Club 1650 Mountain Boulevard Oakland</p>	

August 6
7:30-10:30 pm

August 17
7:30-9:30 pm

August 20
9:45 am

September 2-5

September 9-11

September 10
7-10 pm

September 15-18

September 21

September 24
7:30-10:30 pm

September 23-24

Star Across Summer El Camino Reelers. Howard Richman caller. Plus/Advanced/MS* \$8/10. St. Andrew's Methodist Church, 4111 Alma Street, Palo Alto. IAGSDC Banner Dance

Club Night Peggy Shumway caller. Mission Playground

Angel Island Picnic Rich Reel caller. Meet at Pier 41.

The Great Chicago Crossfire XVI: Operation Crossfire—An ER Experience Chitown Squares, Chicago. S. Bryant, K. Jensen, M. Kellogg, J. Oldfield callers. www.iagsdc.org/chitownsquares/html/GCCF2005.html

PACE Anne Uebelacker caller. Saturday C1 Oak Park Center, 1700 Oak Park Boulevard, Pleasant Hill.

Harvest Dance Foggy City Dancers & Midnight Squares. Mike Desisto & Anne Uebelacker callers. MS/Plus/A/C. Unitarian Center, 1167 Franklin Street, San Francisco

Mountain Mix Rocky Mountain Rainbeaus, Denver. M. Kellogg, B. Miller, C. Robertson, A. Uebelacker callers. www.rainboeaus.org/mountain mix/index.html

Club Night Ron Masker caller. Mission Playground

Leather & Lace Darren Gallina caller. MS/Plus/A* \$8/10. Ebenezer Lutheran Church, 678 Portola Drive, San Francisco

Harvest Ball Ottawa, Ontario. S. Bryant, D. Moger callers. www.iagsdc.org/ottawa/



Silent Auction

With

September 24, 2005
7:30 - 10:30 pm
St. John's Lutheran Church
678 Potrero Drive
San Francisco
MS
PLUS
A
Ball
MEMBERS &
GUESTS 10

Lace AND Leather



Western Star Dancers
584 Castro Street #480
San Francisco, CA 94132