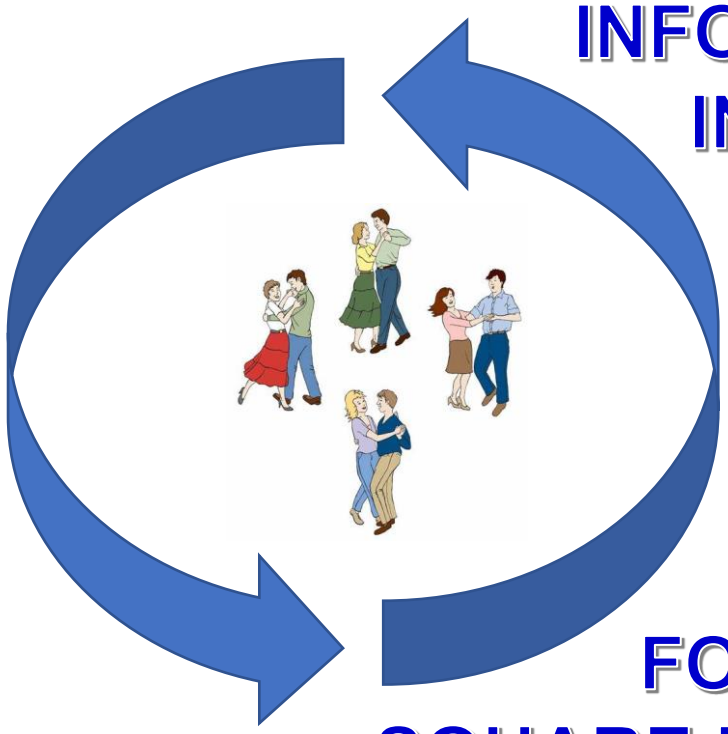
AROUND THE SQUARE



INFORMATIVE,
INTERESTING,
ENTERTAINING
&
ENLIGHTENING.

INFORMATION
FOR TODAY'S
SQUARE DANCERS

An International Magazine for dancers, callers and cuers

VOLUME 2 #7: DECEMBER 2020

Published by BARRY WONSON
(bjwonson@gmail.com)

DATES to REMEMBER

2020	Stay at Home YEAR
JUNE 22-25 2022	USA NATIONAL CONVENTION (Evansville, Indiana)

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ON THE INSIDE TRACK

WELCOME to the 7th Edition of "**AROUND THE SQUARE**"; a magazine for square dancers round dancers, cloggers and anyone else that has an interest in aspects of our great activity. Our aim is for each issue to present articles, ideas, commentary, and much more, providing Information, Education, Entertainment, and even Enlightenment.

As usual, this month we have a wide range of articles from Ed Foote (Tips for dancers), another column from Dr. Allemander, some more "questionable Quotes" more tips for the ladies from Karen Reichardt, as well as other interesting articles and comments from numerous sources.

With Christmas nearly here, I thought I would share some notes on how we celebrate Christmas here in Australia. This is based on a similar article I wrote for the November/December issue of "Behind The Mike magazine".

GENERAL THOUGHTS

Normally at this time of year we are all well and truly in holiday mode. Lots of Christmas dances and parties to attend; then a nice break over the summer (well for us down under anyway). As with everything else in 2020, the planned celebrations are all on hold in many areas of the Square Dance World. While some places are dancing, the increase in transmissions in many countries have put another hold in resumption…at least for the time being.

Due to the continuous contact in our activity, we have a very large chance of being 'super spreader' events. While the chances are small, the chance is still there. This is especially worrisome for our activity due to the age of many of our dancers.

Interestingly, other forms of dancing (social styles for the younger generation) have proved to be effective spreaders of the virus. A good example of this can be seen in Hong Kong, where social dancing is a big thing. I was not aware of the problems there until Arthur Rae (local trainee caller) messaged me "*Just as a matter of interest. PJ (Arthur's better half) listens to the Hong Kong news in Cantonese each day.*
A few weeks ago, Covid restrictions were eased, allowing dancing, which is a popular recreation activity in HK.
Since then, infections have gone through the roof, resulting in a shut down, not only of dancing, but of many businesses in HK."
There are now a very large number of cases that have been traced to dance clubs, however it is not just young people that have been infected, but ages from all generations, as some of these venues also cater for groups such as opera, ballroom as well as other styles of performances that draw people from all ages. This does go to show that large gatherings of any sort are in the "danger zone" – and we fit within that category, For those that are dancing, please be careful.

As I stated last issue "*The one thought I do have in the back of my mind though, is what happens to our activity if it is shown that this virus is transmitted via a square dance group? Imagine the damage to our overall image*."

Our local club (Red Barons) has not been dancing since March. It is doubtful we will be back before February 2021. Last week we had a get-together for dinner at a local restaurant. 24 were able to make it for dinner. Due to the restrictions still in place, it was okay for us to have the large group at two tables, however we were restricted in that we were not able to move around to chat with each other. We had to be seated at all times (except when ordering food or drinks from the bar). There was a lot of chair swapping!

Many of our local dancers are still involved in dancing via one couple dancing through Zoom hook-ups. These have proven to be a fabulous way to not only continue dancing, but to connect with a huge number of dancers all over the world.

Australian National Square Dance Convention Update.

ANNOUNCEMENT ON FUTURE NATIONAL CONVENTIONS FROM THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL SQUARE DANCE CONVENTIONS (ANSDC) BOARD Inc.

Due to the current Coronavirus pandemic, recent cancellation of two National Conventions and the uncertainty of timeframes for recovery, the ANSDC Board has been working towards a plan for Nationals over the next few years.

2021

The Darwin National was cancelled due to future uncertainty, giving dancers time to adjust their plans. There will be no National in 2021.

2022

This National was originally scheduled to be held in Adelaide. Due to a small dancer base in SA and the fact that they would rely heavily on dancers travelling and crossing borders, the committee have requested that the ANSDC Board look into alternative locations for 2022 to allow a state with a larger population of dancers to host this convention. This would allow for maximum attendance at our first convention coming out of the pandemic.

The ANSDC Board have understood and support the committee's request and have a working team investigating possible locations on the east coast and perhaps a modified format for our 2022 convention. Constant changes in COVID-19 information and health and safety of dancers is top of mind and will make planning a challenge but we are confident that a National Convention will be held in 2022.

2023

Adelaide will now host the National Convention in 2023. Updated details will be communicated as the ANSDC Board and Adelaide convention committee work through the changes

Future conventions

NT and QLD are still planning on hosting conventions in the years ahead and the ANSDC Board will advise in due course of the relevant details and dates.

All of this is reliant on trends in infection reduction, National and State regulations/restrictions, effective suppression, and vaccine development continuing in a positive direction.

Should there be a change in any of these circumstances, the ANSDC Board reserves the right to revisit the scheduling decisions based on the health and safety of dancers.

We certainly appreciate the disappointment in recent cancellations and uncertainty that clouds the future. The ANSDC Board were consulted and fully supported the decisions made by the Blue Mountains and Darwin committees in keeping our dancers safe.

The ANSDC Board acknowledges the important role that National Conventions play in the future of Square Dancing as well as the importance of keeping all dancers informed of decisions and relevant information as it comes to hand. More information will be made available as soon as plans develop for our future conventions.

If you have any questions regarding scheduling of Nationals, please direct them to:

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THINKING OF A PLACE TO GO FOR A HOLIDAY IN 2022?

COME TO THE BLUE MOUNTAINS - THE PERFECT PLACE

The NSW STATE SQUARE DANCE CONVENTION

September 30th – October 3rd

This year New South Wales was set to host the Australian National Square Dance Convention at Wentworth Falls in the magnificent Blue Mountains region. As we all know, the Covid 19 virus has had such an impact that this convention had to be cancelled.

A huge amount of planning, preparation, creation of decorations (including the building of two separate stage sets), publicity, etc., over 3 years had gone into this event.

The Committee were heartbroken to have to cancel the event, however, as so much had been done already, a unanimous decision was made to not waste what had been achieved, and to utilise all the preparatory work for a NSW State Convention in 2022. After all, most of the serious work had already been done…everything was in place already – venue, decorations, plans, etc.

The weekend selected for 2022 was the Labour Day weekend of October 1st through 3rd. This is a great time for a State Convention….weather is perfect; the Blue Mountains are even more beautiful in Springtime.

For many years there has been a regular SD weekend held in Newcastle over this long weekend, however they have graciously allowed us to use the dates in 2022.

NSW STATE SQUARE DANCE CONVENTION 2022 September 30th October– 3rd

BLUE MOUNTAINS GRAMMAR SCHOOL, WENTWORTH FALLS

Looking for a vacation in 2020 that can be built around a fabulous Square Dance Event?

Look no further – come to the Blue Mountains in NSW

I hope that you enjoy this issue….as usual all comments, ideas, articles, etc., are most welcome. Please feel free to forward ATS to anyone you think may find it useful.

Best wishes,
Barry

Who Could Ever Have Imagined This?

CHRISTMAS TIME DOWN UNDER

So, what is the most interesting thing about Christmas? Shopping, friends, relatives, decorations, and good food, right. We enjoy, we have fun, and some of us even throw a great Christmas party as well. Overall, we end up celebrating Christmas in our own way. But still there are lots of common things that we do, like; decorating our home, beautifying the Christmas tree, preparing good food, exchanging gifts, visiting friends and relatives, spending time with family, dressing up in that red and white costume, singing Jingle Bells and many more.

Though we have different ways of celebrating this festival throughout the world, probably the most unusual events at Christmas time can be observed and enjoyed in Australia. Yes, we Aussies celebrate Christmas quite differently than any other countries. So, here are some fascinating facts about our Australian Christmas.

1. Temperature in Australia:

During Christmas, winter tends to be the accepted norm for most countries. Some countries experience snowfall during Christmas, whereas in others cold waves with lower degree temperatures can be experienced. But the case is very different for Australians. We experience the exact opposite temperatures. Since Australia lies in the Southern Hemisphere; it has summer rather than winter. Yes, it's the onset of summer in Australia; the temperature may rise to 35°C (or beyond). From December through February, the summer is on us (often called the 100 days of summer), How cool it is right, when rest of the world is enjoying Christmas with a snowman and fireplaces - Australians are out visiting the beach, sunbathing, having barbeques, playing cricket, having picnics, and just enjoying being out and about. Mind you for a while this year, we were all uncertain as to whether we would actually be able to get out!!

2. Christmas Carols:

Christmas is never complete without a Christmas Carol. In wintery weather, people sing Christmas Carols by sitting around burning firewood on Christmas Eve. But for Australians, the temperature is already sunny and warm as our summer begins officially at the start of December. So, instead of firewood we prefer lighting candles and singing Christmas carols at dusk, or particularly at night when the sky is full of stars and bright lights. Some lines of traditional Christmas carols are also modified by us Aussies.

This is done in order to match the song with the environmental condition of that month. Take a look at this Australian Christmas Carol:

"DASHING THROUGH THE BUSH
IN A RUSTY HOLDEN UTE,
KICKING UP THE DUST,
ESKY IN THE BOOT
KELPIE BY MY SIDE
SINGING CHRISTMAS SONGS
IT'S SUMMERTIME AND I AM IN
MY SINGLET, SHIRT AND THONGS

JINGLE BELLS, JINGLE BELLS JINGLE ALL THE WAY,
CHRISTMAS IN AUSTRALIA, ON A SCORCHING SUMMERS DAY, HEY!
JINGLE BELLS, JINGLE BELLS, CHRISTMAS TIME IS BEAUT,
OH WHAT FUN IT IS TO RIDE IN A RUSTY HOLDEN UTE.

ENGINE'S GETTING HOT,
DODGE THE KANGAROOS,
SWAGGIE CLIMS ABOARD,
HE IS WELCOME TOO,
ALL THE FAMILY'S THERE,
SITTING BY THE POOL,
CHRISTMAS DAY THE AUSSIE WAY,
BY THE BARBEQUE"

You can get a good idea of how we celebrate with music at Christmas by c https://blog.yellowoctopus.com.au/aussie-christmas-songs/#aachecking this out:

For the edification of our overseas friends, translation follows – a Holden (car brand) Ute (pick-up); an Esky is a container for holding cold drinks and ice, and the boot is the trunk of a car: a Kelpie is a breed of dog; a singlet is like a T shirt but sleeveless, and thongs are footwear that are held in place by a piece of rubber between big toe and second toe.

Each year all major cities, as well as country towns present traditional "Carols By Candlelight". And most feature major stars presenting their versions of traditional (as well as 'not-so-traditional') Christmas songs. Families pack picnics, blankets and mosquito spray and spend the evening outdoors listening to music.

3. Mouth-Watering Food:

Celebration without good food (often called good tucker) is always at the top of the 'important' list. In earlier days, the traditional hot and cooked meal was served during Christmas in Australia but nowadays there is often a change in the menu. Aussies enjoy eating cold food that mainly includes cold turkey, ham, seafood like prawns and salad. Along with this; gingerbread, custard, Roast chicken are also served. Hence, the food during Christmas is sometimes served cold due to the hot weather of Australia. Some prefer doing this with a family setting up barbeques in the lawn or park whereas others enjoy it at the beach in a large gathering.

Of course, when to eat the main Christmas celebratory meal is also different in Australia. The prime festive meal is usually lunchtime on Christmas Day. The

afternoon is often spent by watching the cricket tests or tennis on television – some with larger families often gather in the backyard for a game of cricket. You will also find some of the older generation dozing in front of the television set! Usually the evening meal is made up of leftovers from lunch! (as are meals over the next few days!)

For Sue and I and our family, we usually go the traditional way, with Roast turkey, pork, chicken, and ham, along with all the trimmings – Roast potato, cauliflower, broccoli, beans, carrots, etc. To top it off we still love our Christmas pudding and custard. Mind you, I have to note that Sue has been less inclined in recent years to go the whole hog!!!

We did decide to have a barbeque for the main meal some years ago, however when I was cleaning the barbeque plates, I hurt my back and ended up sitting in the emergency ward at the hospital for most of the day…..after that, back to the old ways!

4. Swimming Suits, Shorts & Thongs (Flip Flops for our north American Friends but the other ones are there too):

Yes, amazing isn't it. Most of the population goes to the beach in our swimming suits, shorts, t-shirt, and

thongs. The beaches are full, from around the end of October through to nearly Easter. Surfing , swimming sunbaking, beach sports, - these are a natural part of our lifestyle. Red, white, and green are colours still dominate the season, just like everywhere else in the world. Hats and sunglasses are a necessity, as the sun puts out a lot of energy and we are far more aware of the damage that it can cause if care is not taken. Aussies like colour…and at this time of the year, it comes out in full bloom.

5. Boxing Day:

After a Great Christmas event, it's time for sports in Australia. Yes, Boxing Day is celebrated next day after Christmas Day. Boxing Day is also a Public Holiday. Cricket, Tennis, and various forms of racing (car, yacht, horse, and others) are in full swing from Boxing day. National and International level teams takes part in these events and some continue up to 5 days. So, if you like sport, you can go to these events but in case you are not sport

friendly, you can go out shopping for the entire year. Yes, after Christmas and right from the Boxing Day, the prices for every item gets lowered (the Boxing Day half-price sales are a major tradition with all the big retailers). But it's not just the Christmas leftover stock, it is often on very major items, that need to be moved to make way for the New Year, new model stock.

Though Christmas is celebrated differently in Australia, these changes are all made in order to adapt to the environmental conditions. This sounds a bit like Darwin's theory of adaptation. If you recall his research and findings; he mentioned that species adapt according to the environmental condition. All the above points clarify that when rest of the world is celebrating Christmas under snowfall and cold weather, we Australian's have bought some creative changes in our Christmas celebrations to adapt to the environmental surroundings.

The hot weather allows us to get up and out and about, allowing us to have a great social time during the holidays. The one activity that does have a downtime during the summer though, is square dancing, as it is too hot to dance. While many halls are air-conditioned, the very aspect of heading out in our regular square dance gear can tend to be a bit much, therefore most clubs usually break about the second week of December for around 5 or 6 weeks,

Christmas is a time of sharing…with family, with friends, and with those we meet in passing. A cheerful 'Merry Christmas' is important in creating a happy atmosphere…when shopping, when dining out…anywhere at all. Adding a touch of happiness to others in our attitude, our bearing, our greetings, brings us all closer together.

So, guys have a Great Christmas time and enjoy your Christmas holidays.

The Aussie spirit of Christmas.

beach fun
xmas
wollemi
DUNWORKIN'
holidays
Christmas
bells
cake & a cuppa
we
three
chooks
mowing
the lawn..... watch out for snakes !
Aussie BBQ
sugarcane crop
CHRISTMAS
backyard
cricket
in Australia
shepherd
watching
Sydney to Hobart
yacht race
Christmas pudding
& brandy sauce
esky
carols
by
candlelight
deck
the
hall
summer
swims
reindog
wheat harvest

FOOTE'S
Food For Thought

WORDS of WISDOM from ED FOOTE

THE 11TH COMMANDMENT

If you Google the "Ten Commandments of Square Dancing," you will find several variations, and each is well written. But all of these Commandments have one thing in common, namely: **Be considerate of others.**

Whether they talk about bathing, being kind, smiling, not having alcohol before a dance, being a good listener, or getting into squares quickly, the Commandments all boil down to one thing: Everyone is here to have **fun**, so do not do anything that keeps people from having **fun.**

But there is one Commandment that is never written and is rarely spoken, yet everyone agrees that it exists.

The 11th Commandment is: Thou shall learn the calls.

This Commandment is not written or spoken, because many people find it socially unacceptable to do so. The rationalization is: "We are here to have fun, and learning call definitions is not fun. Our real purpose is to socialize, smile, be pleasant and only learn enough in class so that we can exist in a square. If this means having to be pulled through the calls, so what, because our real purpose is to socialize, smile and be pleasant."

But where is the fun in having the square break down time after time? Where is the fun in causing seven other people to stop and square back up because one person does not know the calls? Sure, everyone is expected to laugh and joke about breakdowns, and this is fine up to a point. But what if we go past this point? What if breakdowns occur time after time because a few people do not know the calls? Are we still having fun?

When dancers do not learn the calls, they negatively impact the fun of everyone in the square.

I am **not** saying that people should be excellent dancers, able to do calls half-sashayed or left-handed. I am saying that it is logical for dancers in a square to expect that the others in the square are at least "average."

In the past year I have seen many examples of dancers who are a disaster, who should not have been allowed to

graduate and who should not be allowed on the floor of a standard average dance.

I'm being too strict you say? What about the woman who turns away from her partner on a Right and Left Thru? What about a woman who goes the wrong way on a Right and Left Grand? What about the man who wanders around when he hears "Circulate" called when he is in the centre of an ocean wave? What about the man who always tries to Courtesy Turn on a Square Thru? What about people who break down consistently on Square Thru, or who constantly turn around in place?

These are not just brief mental lapses. These are blatant examples of people who have no idea of what is going on. It will not be very long before dancers cease to laugh at this, because their FUN is being severely impacted.

Let's go back to the previously stated common theme of the Ten Commandments: **Be considerate of others,** and ask a few questions. Is it considerate to force people to pull someone through, because that person has not bothered to learn the calls? Is it considerate to others in class when someone shows up without having bothered to review what was taught the week before?

Is it considerate of others for a class dancer who has missed several lessons to just show up without ever having called the teacher to find out what has been taught on the nights that were missed? Is it considerate for a person who has graduated to just go through the motions, laughing every time he/she breaks down a square on simple calls, as described above? Are others laughing at this? Are others having fun when this occurs?

The 11th Commandment "Learn the Calls" - Part 2

This commandment is not written anywhere, but obviously it is a requirement in order to be able to square dance. It was noted that when dancers perform so poorly that they must consistently be pulled through, this refusal to learn the calls negatively impacts the **fun** of the other dancers.

Square dancing is a TEAM game. If everyone on the team is not doing his or her part, it hurts everyone on the team. Why do some people refuse to learn all the calls? There are several answers.

1. They are lazy. They just don't want to be bothered. Since people seem to accept them socially at the club no matter how poorly they dance, why bother learning the calls?
2. They do not realize how poorly they dance. They are under the delusion that they are just as good as most of the other dancers in the club.
3. They are selfish. They think only of themselves, and they have decided they do not want to learn all the calls. They never consider how their actions hurt others in the square, by causing them not to have an enjoyable dancing experience. Personally, I would be appalled if I knew that my insistence in participating in any activity was causing others not to have fun, but some people are this way.
4. The culture of the square dance activity rewards mistakes. You make a mistake, and everyone laughs and jokes. This is fine for a few times. But when this happens time and time again, you quickly get the message that no one cares if you make a mistake. So why work to learn the calls, when it seems perfectly acceptable to make mistakes?

Note: I do not blame the class instructors. Naturally, different teachers have different abilities. But I have seen too many examples of poor dancers graduating from classes taught by excellent instructors to blame the teachers. These same people will still be poor dancers two and three years later.

Question:

What is the result of this failure of dancers to learn the calls, thereby being inconsiderate of others in the square?

Answer:

Experienced dancers quit. Not right away; many dancers hang in there for years; but eventually always having to pull people through wears people down.

Dancers are expected to laugh off the mistakes of others, but when does this cease to be funny? If experienced dancers are expected to pull people through night after night, week after week, month after month -- are these people still laughing? No, they are dropping out, because this is not what they signed up for.

Dancers keep saying to me privately that they are tired of pulling people through year after year, people who make no effort to learn the calls, so they are going to drop out. But they cannot say this publicly. Why? Because it is socially unacceptable to do so.

The result is the good dancers just stop going to dances. "Gee, we haven't seen Bill and Mary lately -- I wonder what happened." When someone calls this couple, Bill and Mary say: "Oh, we've just gotten involved with other things (grandkids, volunteering, travel, bridge, just name anything)".

Translation: "*We have found other things **more fun** than square dancing."*

Bottom line. Square dancing is not rocket science. It has been proven by tens of thousands of dancers that learning the calls is not that difficult. But **learning the calls** is a fundamental part of square dancing. It does require a little effort. When people do not make this effort, because no one says this is important, the result is poor dancers.

Until we name the 11th Commandment, print it, say it out loud, and make it equally as important as all the other Commandments, nothing will change.

Until we give equal weight to the 11th Commandment, the big emphasis will remain at recruiting new dancers in the front door, while experienced dancers leave quietly out the back door. Some will cry out: "too many calls," lessons are too long" -- the list goes on and on. But the name of the game in square dancing is "**knowing the calls**". To ignore this puts the entire activity at peril.

THE POOR BEGINNER

Author unknown

Have you ever watched a beginner's eye,
Gaze at you with envy as you danced by?

He thinks you're great, and you think so too,
But why don't you ask him to dance with You?

No, you whirl by again with your head held aloof,
Can't ask him to dance 'cause he might just goof.

You never goofed when once in his spot,
You were the best in the last beginner's lot.

You asked him to join, after all what could you lose,
Did you really want him just to pay his dues?

The night's almost over, and he still has not stirred,
From watching you his eyes are blurred.

It's now time for talking, and coffee and cake,
Now you can ask him to come over and partake.

He can't goof you up when he's eating his lunch,
So now he's a member, and one of the bunch.

You tell him "Good Night, be sure to come back";
You surely have talent, but surely no tact.

So let's all give the beginner a really good chance,
And help him to learn so he can advance.

Make him know you are happy because he is here,
OUR BEGINNERS TODAY, ARE OUR DANCERS NEXT YEAR.

LAMENT OF A SQUARE DANCER

Author Unknown

Some time ago we paid our dough, And gathered at the hall,
Some were brave and some were shy, But determined one and all.

We came to learn to square dance, it's quite the thing today,
Good exercise and lots of fun, With new friends along the way.

Our teacher, Jack, a nice young man, Urged us up into a ring,
He made it seem so easy, And we soon got in the swing.

He led us through each basic step, How patiently he cued us,
And now and then he hid a smile, As from the stage he viewed us.

The weeks went by and soon there came, The time to graduate,
With diplomas and a fancy badge, And a dance to celebrate.

Our caller had told us long ago, That after graduation,
We'd be able to dance and hold our own, In any situation.

So out we went to try our luck, We travelled near AND far,
We showed them all that we were proud, To be a "Blazing Star"

But what was this?, These other guys called things we could not do,
It seems that every now and the, they come up with something new.

We had to learn *Tracks 1* AND *2*, And also *3* AND *4*,
A *Teacup Chain*, and *Galaxies*, *Checkmate* and dozens more,

Where will it end? Who knows, me friend, It's too late now to back out,
We've all become entangled in, A horrible thing called *Pass Out*.

We usually go the wrong way round, And end up out of breath,
We could even lose our caller - He could laugh himself to death!

THE REAL HISTORY OF YELLOW ROCK

At or around the late Mid 1800's – through to the early 1900's, during the time of the numerous "gold rushes" in the western United States, when someone struck "yellow rock" it meant gold and riches. It was a time of jubilant celebration, often with everyone adjacent to the land parcel of claim tenure suddenly benefiting from location of the strike. This was a joyous occasion as many "rushers" were just living from day to day. Such a strike often meant a life of luxury to the lucky rusher, and this was a reason to really celebrate.

Prospect claims were generally laid out in a fixed size offset checkerboard pattern so that each claim had four equal side claims and 4 corner claims. These parcels were clearly marked or staked in order for the claims' ownership to be without dispute and the ownership for these claims were filed with both local and State Government in order for their validity to be easily established.

Land Parcels located on streams and rivers were the prize claims. Surveyors and prospectors alike respected the Checkerboard pattern in marking the land tenures with identifiable pickets which is where "Staking a claim" comes from. These staked land claims crossed the rivers either vertically or horizontally so that the miners could maximise the profits.

When a strike was hit, the 2 long border claims usually profited, but the corner claims were generally outside of the water line and only on the periphery. Traditionally, "Strike Celebrations" usually included a dance to honour the partner claims and pairing, but also to recognise the corner claims that just missed out and include them in the joy and festivities. Usually a token was given to the corner claim owners so that they could stake the next claim along a creek or river with the assay department and have better luck next time. This was known as giving a "yellow rock" to the corner and celebrating with a hug and a drink. The term yellow rock became known as the celebratory hug with someone other than a partner claimant.

The most common form of community celebration dancing at that time was the form known as 'square' or 'barn' dancing. This form of dancing had been brought from the eastern states by emigrants traversing the plains on the great wagon trains heading west. Of course it was only a matter of time until the term 'yellow rock' was added to the general routines in dances as a celebratory measure at the conclusion of those dance routines. Dance prompters of the day incorporated the term to mean give someone (other than your partner) a hug. It has been recorded that at some such dances, the 'yellow rock' not only realized a celebratory embrace, but also the presentation of a small token nugget usually from single men to single woman to "stake the next dance".

Now of course, if you got this far and have done your research; you will know right off that I just made all that up. No one really knows the origin of the term "YELLOWROCK" - but hey, this is as good a story as any!!!!

From Mel Wilkerson & Barry Wonson

GOOD THINGS ABOUT SQUARE DANCING

ENCOURAGING NEW DANCERS TO JOIN

By Betsy and Roy Gotta

These are the keynote addresses delivered by Betsy and Roy at the 2018 Northern New Jersey Square Dance Association's (NNJSDA) D.R.E.A.M. (Dancers Recruiting Educating and Motivating) 2018 seminar.

We are involved in a great activity – Square Dancing! We must be involved, or you would not be here listening to this speech and I would not be making the speech. Our question is how can we involve others?

Each of us needs to be an ambassador for our activity. Now some of you are becoming uncomfortable, thinking, "I am not good at talking to strangers," or "I am not good at selling things or convincing people to try things." I am not talking about knocking on doors like a religious group; I am talking about just being aware of opportunities to talk about our activities. We all have square dance t-shirts or polo shirts, but where do we wear them? Do we wear our square dance t-shirts to a dance event or do we wear them to a baseball game?

If we wear our square dance t-shirt to a ball game or a movie, we are publicizing our activity, just by having a visible mention of square dancing. It also can help members of the public to understand that people who square dance are "regular" people, not a category.

One of the barriers to convincing people to try square dancing is their **preconceptions about the activity**. They **know** that:

1. We always dance to country music,
2. We have to wear those funny outfits, and
3. We are all from rural areas in the West or Midwest.

You and I know that square dancers are regular people who have held a variety of jobs, have different levels of education and enjoy other "normal" pastimes in addition to square dancing. Recently, clubs have relaxed dress codes and different callers use a variety of music. **The public however; has not yet modified their preconceptions.** For example, a few years ago, I was hired to call a beginner square dance party for a group of college students from overseas. Since I was working with younger people, I picked a variety of music, using some rock, some modern pop, some country etc. At the end of the dance, the group leader told me that for future bookings, I needed to use more country music to give the students a "real" square dance experience. He disregarded my

explanations that real squares dancers dance to a variety of music.

Some years ago, a member of an NNJSDA club wrote a human interest story about square dancing. He quoted square dancers about how they much they enjoyed square dancing. Each quote included the dancers name, age and occupation. There was a good cross-section of dancers quoted. That fall several clubs in the Northern NJ area had more people come to classes to try the square dancing activity then in past years. I believe that the article changed the perceptions of square dancers from a bunch of like-minded blue collar people pretending to be hillbillies to a varied group of individuals enjoying a stimulating hobby. These new dancers found someone that seemed like them who square danced, so they felt that they might enjoy square dancing.

We may not be able to change the public's perceptions about square dancing immediately, but we can try. When we talk about our activity we can emphasize how well square dancing meets many human needs.

The other night on the news there was a story about how many people today feel lonely and isolated even though they stay connected on Social Networks. Square dancing fills the need for face to face social connection. We need to meet together to enjoy the dancing.

This news story prompted me to check online for what people needed to have good health. One website listed the following basic human needs: Need to give and receive attention; Need to heed the mind/body connection; Need for purpose and goals; Need for community and making a contribution; Need for challenge and creativity; Need for a sense of intimacy; Need for a sense of control; and a Need for status. Let's consider how square dancing meets many of those needs.

Since dancers function on groups of 8, people can give and receive attention and feel like they have a sense of community. Since many clubs often donate to charity, the need to make a contribution is satisfied. Learning the calls involved in the programs can satisfy the need for purpose and goals. **Unfortunately, many dancers have attached status to what Program/Level they have achieved instead of how well they execute the calls.**

Square dancing also provides mild aerobic exercise – music plays at 124 to 126 beats per minute which means the dancers who walk with the beats can be walking 2.5 miles per hour. Have you checked your fit-bit before and after a dance? Those of us who

dance on a regular basis are fitter than when we started due to the regular

walking. New class members are often tired before the angels, because the new class members are not yet used to all of the walking that takes place during a dance.

Square dancing and the learning of calls provide mental stimulation and use the puzzle solving functions of the brain. One of the things that people find when they are square dancing is that they must concentrate and focus on the caller's commands. This means that for the length of the tip, the dancers can forget the other problems and concerns that are in their life. I do not mean to say that all tension is relieved, because many new dancers can stress about remembering the calls and how to do them. However, the regular tensions of their lives are forgotten for a while.

If you post on social media, do you mention how much fun you had at the square dance you attended last night? If you have non-square dancing Facebook friends, they will hear about your activity. Mention that the caller used music by Bruno Mars (if you know about such music) or the pirate – themed decorations and/or clothing worn by the dancers. Such a post may help change the stereotypic expectations of non- square dancing friends. At the very least, you are communicating to others about how you love this activity (and you didn't have to knock on a strangers' door).

Now, if you talk about all the information about square dancing that I have mentioned in this speech, you will either bore potential dancers to death or make them run screaming from the conversation.

The strategy is that if you happen to mention that you square dance and a person responds with mild interest, make one point about how square dancing fills a need in your life. Later like the presentation being given here, Roy and Mike will have a whole session about how to talk up square dancing. For dancers and callers in everyday life, make one point and if it generates interest, you will have time to introduce the activity and talk it up. Your passion will keep them interested and hopefully it may become theirs.

My point is that we need to let the general public know what square dancing is today and how much we enjoy the people and the activity. If nobody talks about square dancing, nobody will change their minds about trying square dancing.

Betsy Gotta April 2018

CALLERS ARE HUMAN TOO..

How long ago was it that you had a real bad day?

- You were at work and nothing seemed to go right.
- You left work and had to fight the traffic all the way home.
- You were late getting home, only to find that the washing machine has overflowed all over the laundry floor and that your dinner had dried up in the oven because you were late.

Believe it or not; these things also happen to callers, and when they do, the results can be disastrous.

Just imagine that you are a caller with such a day:

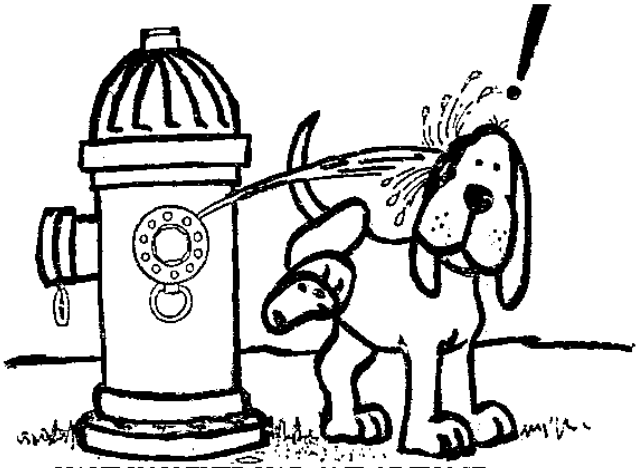
- The half hour that you had planned for reviewing your program for the night has gone.
- You have to gulp down your meal and once again fight the traffic in order to get to the dance on time.
- Your blood pressure has increased and your concentration (so necessary to call a dance) has short-circuited.
- You have mental flashbacks all night about the events of the day which makes it impossible to perform normally.

Now, the question is, how do the dancers react? As a dancer, do you consider that he/she has had a bad day, which everyone is entitled to once in a while? Do you think as the majority of the dancers do, which is thus: if it is the first time you have danced to this caller then he/she is just a poor caller and you report this to everyone you know. If it is your favourite caller, the dancers think that he/she is slipping, not doing their homework, or just trying to get by on reputation. The majority of people are not very forgiving.

One more example: Suppose you have a splitting headache. You no doubt stay home. Not if you are a caller. The show must go on. You cannot announce from the stage that you are sick. You must do the best that you can and be as pleasant as possible, not matter how bad that you are feeling.

Yes, callers are human too.

The above article was originally presented in a Colorado State Magazine in the 1980's. The author was not given.



HAVE YOU EVER HAD ONE OF THOSE DAYS WHEN NOTHING WENT RIGHT!

Walk, Stretch or Dance? Dancing May Be Best for the Brain By GRETCHEN REYNOLDS March 29th, 2017

Presented by JIM MAYO

Credit Michael Nagle for The New York Times

NEW YORK TIMES 3 April, 2017

Could learning to dance the minuet or fandango help to protect our brains from aging?

A new study that compared the neurological effects of country dancing with those of walking and other activities suggests that there may be something unique about learning a social dance. The demands it places on the mind and body could make it unusually potent at slowing some of the changes inside our skulls that seem otherwise inevitable with aging.

Neuroscientists, and those in middle age or beyond, know that brains alter and slow as we grow older. Processing speed, which is a measure of how rapidly our brains can absorb, assess and respond to new information, seems to be particularly hard hit. Most people who are older than about 40 perform worse on tests of processing speed than those who are younger, with the effects accelerating as the decades pass.

Scientists suspect that this decline is due in large part to a concomitant fraying of our brain's white matter,

which is its wiring. White matter consists of specialized cells and their offshoots that pass messages between neurons and from one part of the brain to another. In young brains, these messages whip from neuron to neuron with boggling speed. But in older people, brain scans show, the white matter can be skimpier and less efficient. Messages stutter and slow.

Whether this age-related decline in white matter is inexorable, however, or might instead be changeable, has been unclear.

So for the new study, which was published this month in "Frontiers in Aging Neuroscience", researchers from the University of Illinois in Urbana and other schools decided to look at the effects of several different types of exercise on the wiring and the function of older people's brains.

They began by recruiting 174 healthy people in their 60s and 70s with no signs of cognitive impairment. Most were sedentary, although some occasionally exercised.

Then they invited the men and women to a university lab for tests of their aerobic fitness and mental capacities, including processing speed and a brain scan with a sophisticated M.R.I. machine.

Finally, the researchers randomly divided the volunteers into several groups. One began a supervised program of brisk walking for an hour three times a week. Another started a regimen of supervised gentle stretching and balance training three times a week.

The last group was assigned to learn to dance. These men and women showed up to a studio three times a week for an hour and practiced increasingly intricate country-dance choreography, with the group shaping itself into fluid lines and squares and each person moving from partner to partner.

After six months, the volunteers returned to the lab to repeat the tests and the brain scans from the study's start.

The differences now proved to be both promising and worrisome.

By and large, everyone's brain showed some signs of what the scientists termed "degeneration" of the white matter. The changes were subtle, involving slight thinning of the size and number of connections between neurons.

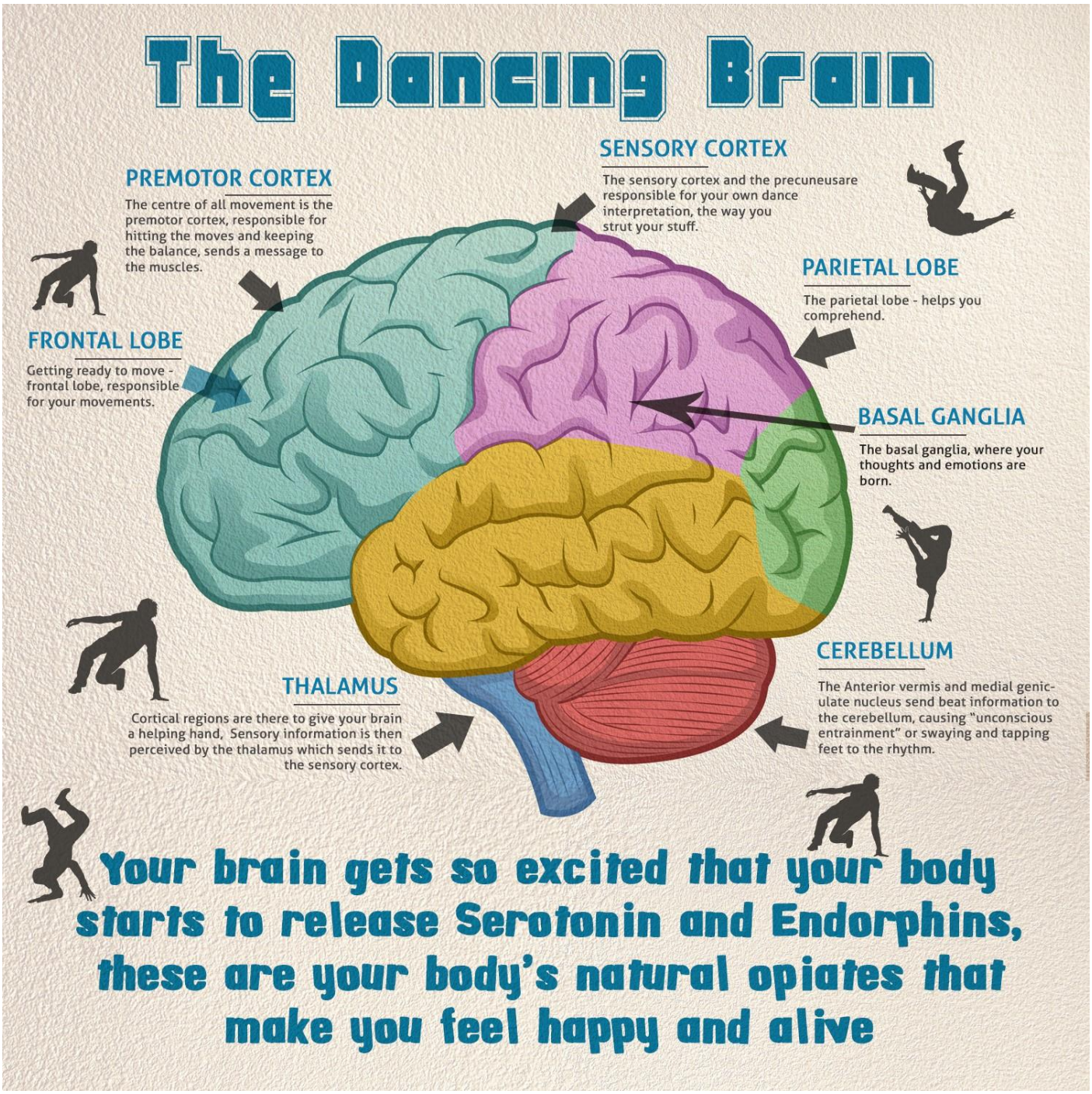
But the effects were surprisingly widespread throughout people's brains, given that only six months had elapsed since the first scans, said Agnieszka Burzynska, the study's lead author and a professor of human development and neuroscience at Colorado State University in Fort Collins. (She was previously a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Illinois.)

The degeneration was especially noticeable in the oldest volunteers and those who had been the most sedentary before joining the study. However, one group showed an actual improvement in the health of some of the white matter in their brains, compared to six months before. **The dancers now had denser white matter in their fornix, a part of the brain involved with processing speed and memory**

It seems likely that the cognitive demands of the dancing, which required people to learn and master new choreography throughout the six months of the study, affected the biochemistry of the brain tissue in the fornix, Dr. Burzynska said, prompting increases in the thickness and quantity of the wiring there.

Interestingly, none of the changes in the volunteers' white matter were obviously reflected in their cognitive performance. Almost everyone performed better now on thinking tests than at the study's start, including tests of their processing speed, even if their white matter was skimpier.

These results indicate that there could be a time lag between when the brain changes structurally and when we start having trouble thinking and remembering, Dr. Burzynska said.



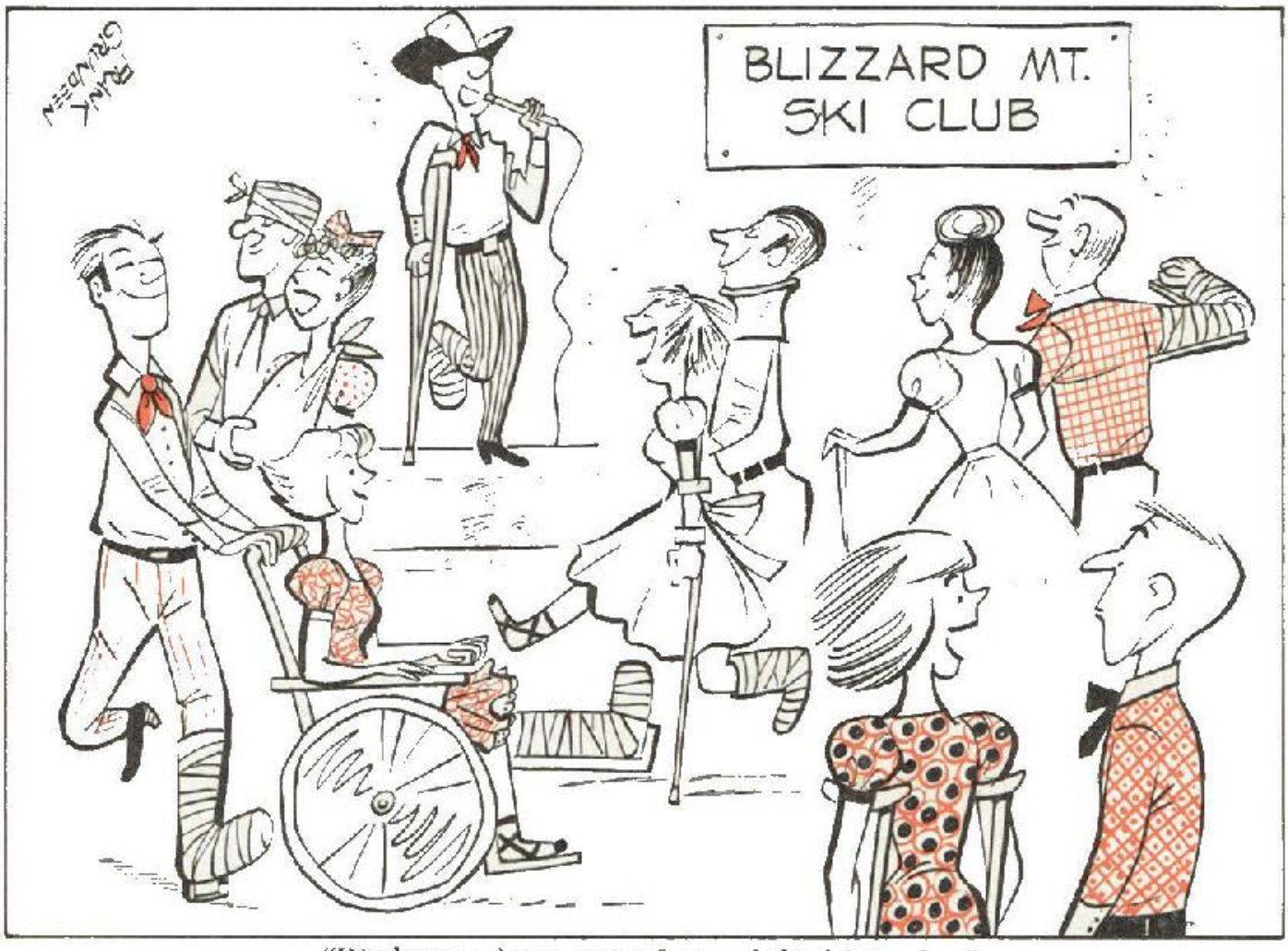
But, more encouraging, she said, they also suggest that engaging in “any activities involving moving and socializing,” as each of these group programs did, might perk up mental abilities in aging brains.

“The message is that we should try not to be sedentary,” she said. “The people who came into our study already exercising showed the least decline” in white matter health, she points out, and those who took up dancing showed white-matter gains.

Of course, this study was relatively short-term. Dr. Burzynska hopes in the future to study the brains of people engaging in different types of exercise over the course of several years.

But for now, she says the data provide another rationale for moving — and perhaps also learning to contra dance and sashay.

The on-line address for the full report of the research is: http://journal.frontiersin.org/article/10.3389/fnagi.2017.00059/full



“We have a dance every first and third Saturday.”

THE LEGEND OF THE CHRISTMAS TREE ANGEL

One year, Santa was very cross. Although the morning went pleasantly and a visit from the Christmas Angel was welcomed at the north pole. The angel volunteered to go and select a tree for the evening and left early in the morning. Then it all changed. Now it was Christmas Eve and NOTHING was going right.

Mrs. Claus had burned all the cookies.

The elves were complaining about not getting paid for the overtime they had worked making toys, and were threatening to go on strike. The reindeer had been drinking eggnog all afternoon.

To make matters worse, a few of the other elves had taken the sleigh out for a spin earlier in the day and had crashed it into a tree.

Santa was furious. "I can't believe it! I've got to deliver millions of presents all over the world in just a few hours, and all of my reindeer are drunk, the elves are walking out, and I don't even have a Christmas tree! I sent that stupid little angel out HOURS ago to find a tree and she isn't even back yet! What am I going to do?"

Just then, the little angel opened the front door and stepped in from the snowy night, dragging a Christmas tree. The angel said with a big smile, "Yo, fat man! Where do you want me to stick the tree this year?"

And thus, now you know why the Christmas angel sits atop the tree and how the tradition of angels atop the Christmas trees came to pass...

Puzzle Page

What's in a Name?

By Carol Mason

The answer for each clue is a male name (or diminutive thereof).

e.g. A legal document would be WILL.

1. One shilling .....
2. Used for lifting .....
3. Leaves do it in a breeze .....
4. Sculpture, painting etc .....
5. Candid .....
6. A vehicle for carrying .....
7. A precipice .....
8. A shaft of light .....
9. To gradually fade out .....
10. At most doors .....
11. Holds small change .....
12. Permit, allocation .....
13. Cassius .....
14. W.C. .....
15. Invoice .....
16. Scratch or rub .....
17. Callers' tool .....
18. Poke fun at .....
19. Helen was there .....

20	Academic (Oxford etc)	.....
21	Glib delivery	.....
22	Scottish valley	.....
23	(Scottish) to know	.....
24	Lifts freight (shipping)	.....
25	Top-up	.....
26	Tricked you!!	.....
27	Light-fingered action	.....
28	Reduce (as in moon)	.....
29	Toss, or throw	.....
30	Steadies a pole	.....

If you need to…you can find the answers on page 43.

Each Christmas, Carol presents a special Puzzle for the dancers at Red Barons three different groups. She always manages to come up with some real doozies! She hands everyone the sheet with the puzzle during the dance. Everyone has until suppertime (around 9.30pm) to fill in their answers. The answers are given out while we are enjoying our suppertime snacks. Carol has been doing this for many years, and it is greatly appreciated by everyone.

VALE

GRAEME KIRKWOOD

Graeme Kirkwood started dancing with us about 11 years ago. He decided that he wanted to call not too long afterwards. His background was in music and voice…he played the pipe organ for a number of local churches and was also a trained singer (he studied at Wollongong Conservatorium of Music). He had a beautiful tenor voice.

His passion for calling grew over the years, and he ended up with over 2000 pieces of music. He bought a lot of tracks on mp3 from many of the current square dance music producers. He discovered, after going through my very large collection of about 4000 singing calls and 1500 hoedowns, that many of the ones he wanted were no longer available. He then started to contact callers and owners of the original music he was after…he ended up with more than 600 45's and CD's.

He loved music, and loved to sing and call. I remember the first singing call he did at our Monday Red Barons group was "Hallelujah". His rendition gave everyone goosebumps…it was that emotional. It was requested dozens of times over the years.

He retired from work some years ago and that gave him more opportunity to practice. He bought a Yakstack, a number of Hilton microphone leads, new laptop, minidisc player (because I still used one for recording all my dances), new EV microphones (the great flat-top version made in USA). He was dedicated. He attended all the callers education weekends presented here in Wollongong. His choreographic understanding and delivery in hoedowns was moving along nicely. He had an incredibly good nature which came across to everyone.

Graeme had a fall a few years ago and broke a number of bones (hip and others). It was discovered that he had multiple Myeloma, an insidious form of cancer that affects the bone marrow: *"Myeloma is a type of blood cancer that develops from plasma cells in the bone marrow. Myeloma is often called multiple myeloma because most people (90%) have multiple bone lesions at the time it is diagnosed. Plasma cells are a type of white blood cell found in the bone marrow. They are part of the immune system and help fight infection. When cancerous, these abnormal plasma cells spread throughout the bone marrow so that there is not enough space to make enough normal blood cells. Bone marrow is found in multiple areas of the body including the spine, skull, shoulders, ribs and pelvis. The survival rate over a 5 year period is 51%"*

He has been hospitalized a number of times since the original discovery. In 2020 he was in hospital continuously since March. He passed away on November 16th, He was only 62.

Graeme was a truly wonderful person. He had an amazing sense of humour…he never stopped making jokes and was still coming up with new ones when we saw him the week before he passed away. He was the type of person that automatically brightened a room when he entered. He loved life, and square dancing was a true passion for him.

He was a great friend and was loved by all. Our daughters thought the world of him and loved his wonderful sense of humour. I have never seen him without a smile on his face.

He will be fondly remembered.

SQUARE DANCING IS NEVER HAVING TO WORRY ABOUT...

....having friends and sweethearts....

....searching for a partner....

...visiting a psychiatrist...

....being part of the "group"....

...frequent medical checkups....

....lack of special events....

...being lonely...

...making friends...

...sleeping at night...

...being an outcast....

....going places....

....getting recognized....

...taking a bow...

FOR THOSE WHO REMEMBER POUNDS & OUNCES

A couple of years ago Tony Instone from New Zealand sent me this interesting piece of trivia and I thought it was worth passing on to everyone.

- Which is heavier, an Ounce of feathers or an Ounce of gold?
- What is heavier, a Pound of feathers or a Pound of gunpowder?

Of course, the answer would seem to be pretty obvious, a pound is a pound is a pound, BUT, Tony offers this:

Tony writes: Here are the weights in question.

For question 1, what is heavier, an ounce of feathers or an ounce of gold.

One Ounce of Feathers 28.349 gm

One Ounce of Gold 31.104 gm

The Gold is heavier.

For question 2, what is heavier, a pound of feathers or a pound of gun powder.

- One Pound of Feathers, 453.59 gm
- One Pound of Gun Powder 373.24 gm

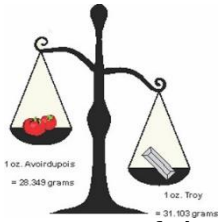
Clearly, the feathers are heavier.

Did I hear someone say *nonsense*?

The answer lies in the system of units used for the different items.

Generally, the Avoirdupois System was used, and is the system everyone was familiar with some time last century.

However, for precious metals (Being Gold, Silver Palladium and Platinum) and also for some reason, Gunpowder, the Troy system is used.



- One Avoirdupois Ounce = 28.349 gm
- One Troy Ounce = 31.104 gm

(I have no idea why Gun Powder comes under Troy. It may be because of the availability of the very sensitive scales used for measuring small amounts of gold.)

But this is not the end. As we know, there are 16 oz in a pound, but this is true only in the Avoirdupois system. In the Troy system there are only 12 oz. Hence the rather odd answers above.

Ok, that is interesting useless information, but; **Is It Relevant Today**?

The answer to this is - very relevant (to some)

Nearly all countries have long dropped the Avoirdupois System. It is only backward third world countries like the USA which still use it. However, ALL countries currently use the Troy system, and will continue to do so for a very very long time. All pricing of the precious metals uses the Troy System.

Many people like to diversify their investment portfolio, and include precious metals. Gold is often sold as one ounce coins, but silver is often sold as 1 kg bars (Just look on various on-line sites). To know the value of a bar, you must convert from kilograms to ounces. If you use the wrong system, you will get a wrong result. There is a lot of scope for sharp dealing for the unwary.

Lets look at what we would have to pay if we got it wrong.

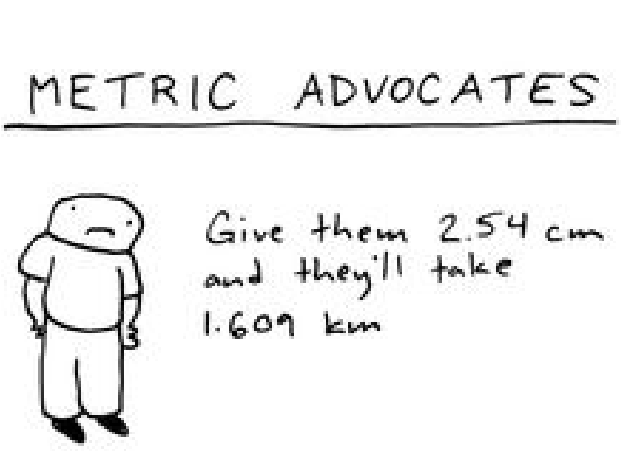
We buy 1 kg of silver off Trade-me from a shady dealer.

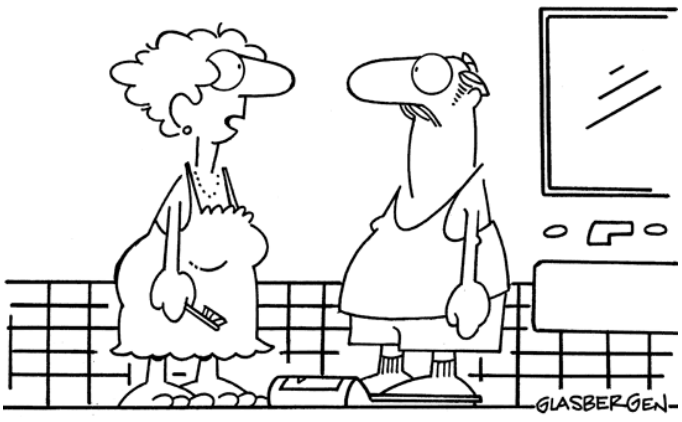
- 1Kg = 35.275 oz (Avoirdupois)
- 1Kg = 32.150 oz (Troy)

At today's price for silver of AUD 20.24 / oz (Troy), if a seller tried to sell it using the Avoirdupois conversion, we would be out of pocket by $63.25

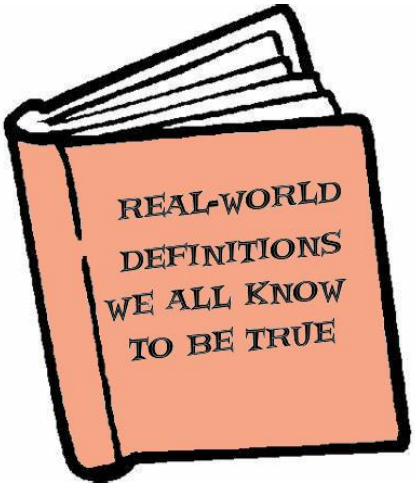
Very interesting!!!

We, the ATS staff, would like to say that there is a tie with this article such as, taking shortcuts on teaching square dance moves by Avoirdupois (full program) Square Dancing Vs Troy (rush through from standard position only) Square Dancing, but in reality, this article really has nothing to do with square dancing. The best thing about really interesting trivia such as the above, is that it may get you a free drink at the bar!





"If you consider the wind-chill factor, adjust for inflation, and score on a curve, I only weigh 98 pounds!"



Continuing on from last issue, here are some more definitions from the real world that are surprisingly accurate.

- ***abasement:*** Where the furnace is located.
- ***abdicate:*** to give up all hope of ever having a flat stomach.
- ***acronym:*** the name of a tumbler.
- ***acupuncture:*** a jab well done.
- ***aftermath:*** relaxation period after algebra class
- ***adult:*** a person who has stopped growing at both ends and is now growing in the middle.
- ***arbitrator:*** a cook that leaves Arby's to go and work at McDonald's.
- ***avoidable:*** what a bullfighter tries to do.
- ***bacteria:*** back door of the cafeteria
- ***barbeque:*** she bought the groceries, washed the lettuce, chopped the tomatoes, diced the onions, marinated the meat, and cleaned everything up – for the dinner he made for his friends.
- ***barium:*** what doctors recommend when their patients die.
- ***balderdash:*** A rapidly receding hairline.
- ***Beauty Parlour:*** a place where women curl up and dye.
- ***benign:*** what you be after you be eight
- ***bide:*** past tense of buy
- ***biology:*** the scientific study of the number two.
- ***Blonde Jokes:*** jokes short enough for men to understand.
- ***burglarize:*** what a crook sees with.
- ***caesarean section:*** high rent area in Rome.
- ***cannibal:*** someone who is fed up with people.
- ***cantaloupe***: someone who has to get married in a church
- ***carnation***: a country where every citizen owns an automobile.
- ***catacomb***: what a feline uses to straighten its hair.
- ***cat scan:*** the search for kitty.
- ***cauterize:*** made eye contact with her

SMOOTHNESS & DANCE MECHANICS

By Jim Mayo

The following article by Jim Mayo was prepared by Jim Mayo in November 2012 as part of a series on CALLERLAB VIEWPOINTS.

THIS IS DANCING

Square dancing should be dancing. It is not just "getting through" the figures. The movement calls for a shuffling step. When we walk, the heel hits first. When we dance, the ball of the foot is the first to touch the floor. It's also important to think about how we look. Stand tall. Be proud of how you look when you dance.

Square dancing is also something that we do with other people. It's not a "solo" activity. The interaction between us is sometimes called “counter dancing”. When we turn, we should counterbalance each other. A swing is not two people walking around each other. The swingers should become a single unit. Some have described the interaction as "giving weight." The same is true of hand or arm turns like Allemande Left and Swing Thru.

Another aspect of counter dancing is the way we move to make dancing easier for others in the square. Actions like Separate Around One require the "inactive" people to move also. In a run, the "runn**ee**" moves into the space the "runn**er**" came out of and on Ladies Chain, the men should move to their right and start the turn before the ladies get to them.

COURTESY

We hope that courtesy is not yet dead in square dancing. If you want to dance with someone, ask them. Don't stand in a square and yell or gesture to them. It's best if you go together as a couple to fill squares and it's not polite to pass a square that needs a couple so that you can dance with your friends in another square. If you must save a place for a couple that is late getting onto the floor, at least fill that place by separating a couple to put one person in the position you are saving. If you don't want to dance this tip, leave the room if that's at all possible, so that you don't seem to be refusing to dance with the people who are in the square that needs a couple.

Sometimes it is necessary to leave a square - never because you don't want to dance with these people - but you might get sick. If possible, get someone from the sidelines to fill in for you and, certainly, explain to the folks you left as soon as possible. It's also nice to applaud the caller's performance and the pleasure of dancing in your square. THEN, thank those who shared this tip with you - including the partners.

Some dancers seem to enjoy gimmicks like extra spins and twirls. These are not usually a problem - unless you have new

or fragile dancers or folks you don't know in your square. Be careful that your enthusiasm doesn't spoil the dancing for others. Sometimes your eagerness to help others leads you to yank, shove or yell at someone - **DON'T**. The best way to help is to dance your part of the action absolutely correctly with NO unusual styling.

TIMING

One aspect of square dancing is not under your control. Callers call it "Timing." The best timing happens when you know what the calls mean and the caller delivers the call JUST before you need to hear it. When the call comes too late, you have to stop for a beat or two between each action. That gets tiring. When the calls come too soon, you have a tendency to rush to keep up. The dancing then becomes scrambling. Sometimes, when the dance pattern is unusual, you need a little more lead time to figure out what you're supposed to do.

All square dance music is based on 8-beat phrases. Your action fits the music best when the caller lets you start each action on the first beat of one of those phrases. Because our actions are not all 8-steps long, you can't get the first beat every time. That would interfere with good timing. But there are a couple of calls where you SHOULD always have the first beat. These are Grand Square and an Alamo Balance.

ACCEPTED STYLES

There are a few "accepted standards" of styling in square dancing. Sometimes these are so often ignored that they may not seem so "accepted" but it's good to know what they are anyway. Most important is that grabbing and tight hand grips are never right.

In a Promenade, the men should have palms up and the women palms down. In arm turns, the forearm hold does not mean “grab the elbow.” The palm should be flat against the other person's forearm with the elbows bent to encourage counter dancing.

In Ocean Waves, in many areas, a forearm hold is usual. The CALLERLAB recommended style for Waves is hands up at (her) shoulder height, palm to palm. In Canada and most areas outside the U.S. everyone uses the recommended styling for ocean wave actions (including Swing Thru and Spin the Top.

The recommended style for Stars is the "Palm Star" with all elbows bent to touch hands with the fingers pointing up. The exception is a Thar when everyone holds the wrist of the person in front of them (called the “Pack Saddle” hold.)

CONSIDERATION FOR OTHERS

There are a few calls in square dancing that have become sloppy in execution. Most often the action of the men causes the women to do something uncomfortable. They've done this so much that they often don't even notice. From the stage, every time I call Star Thru, I see most of the women duck to avoid getting a man's elbow in the face. Guys, keep the elbow high - and, if she's too tall, don't insist on keeping the hands joined.

Another of those troublesome calls is Ferris Wheel. The men usually head directly at each other dragging the women behind them. When Don Beck created this call he described it by saying the In-facing couples move straight ahead until they have formed a Two-Faced line in the centre. Then they do a Wheel and Deal.

A similar problem occurs in Recycle which was intended to be a Hinge, Fold and Follow action. Often, these days, it seems to be “women reach across and get dragged by the men around the corner” -- Small wonder that so many women find this an uncomfortable call.

ACCURACY

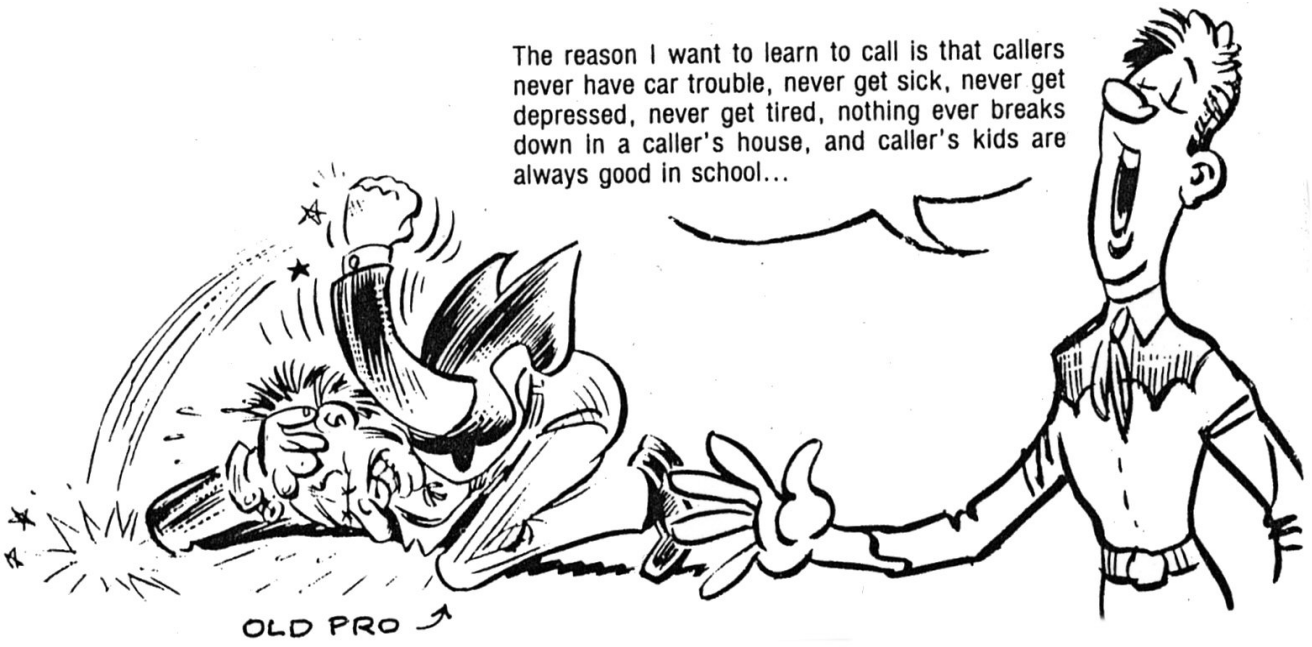
My final point is to encourage accuracy in your dancing. This is particularly important in the Basic actions like Runs, Trades and Circulates. A large share of dancing errors occur with these fundamental actions - even among dancers in the Advanced programs.

- In every line, touch hands (and that includes Ocean Waves.)
- On the call Run, only the runner changes facing direction. The "runnee" just moves sideways into the vacated spot.

- In Trades, both people turn around - and change places.
- In any Circulate, the people facing in walk straight ahead with no turn. Those facing out will always make a turn to face in.
- Three-quarter turns are tough. Practice being very precise. Try turning half and a quarter more. Another technique is to count walls - as long as the hall isn't circular. Three good-sized steps will usually work, too. Find something that works for you and then try to be accurate every time.
- One-quarter turns are tough too. Many people turn too far on Hinges. Try taking just one small step. It's better to turn too little than too much for one-quarter turns.

DANCE WITH PRIDE

Square dancing is a wonderful recreation. At its best it provides both physical and mental exercise and all in the company of some of the nicest people you will ever meet. Please do your part to make it the best it can be.



Ask Dr. Allemander

by Glenn Ickler with some additions by Barry Wonson

***DEAR Dr. ALLEMANDER**: I have been trying to think of some square-dance-related Christmas gifts to buy for my square-dance-related friends. Can you give me some hints so I can finish my shopping before it becomes so crowded that all I can do is walk and dodge.*

A. LaMo, Style, NSW

DEAR A;

There are many items one may purchase to gladden the hearts of square dancers at this happy time of the year, so **zoom** right down to the nearest shopping mall, **wheel around** into a parking space and **pass to the centre** of the store of your choice.

For the children on your list, how about a nice **see-saw** or maybe a **swing**? Or you could buy them **passes** to the amusement park where they could ride the **ferris wheel**. The water **slide** is always a good bet, but be careful they don't **slip** over. If you bought each one of them a **top, they could spin it, fan it or peel it**; whichever they chose. Make sure that you take off the price **tag**.

Adult women might like **a ladies chain** made of gold. If your square-dance-related friend is a carpenter, a **grand square** would be a welcome gift. He could then build something in which to **box a gnat**.

Diamonds are always nice to **circulate** and the recipient of such a **diamond** may **flip out**. The person that gets a toy train would like a **track, too**. For a novelty gift, buy your favourite square dancer a tiny little broom with which he or she could **sweep ¼**. Then **scootback** home and **coordinate** the rest of the Christmas wrapping and ribbon. If you accidentally buy an unwanted gift, the recipient could always **swap** it **around** or even **trade** it for something else.

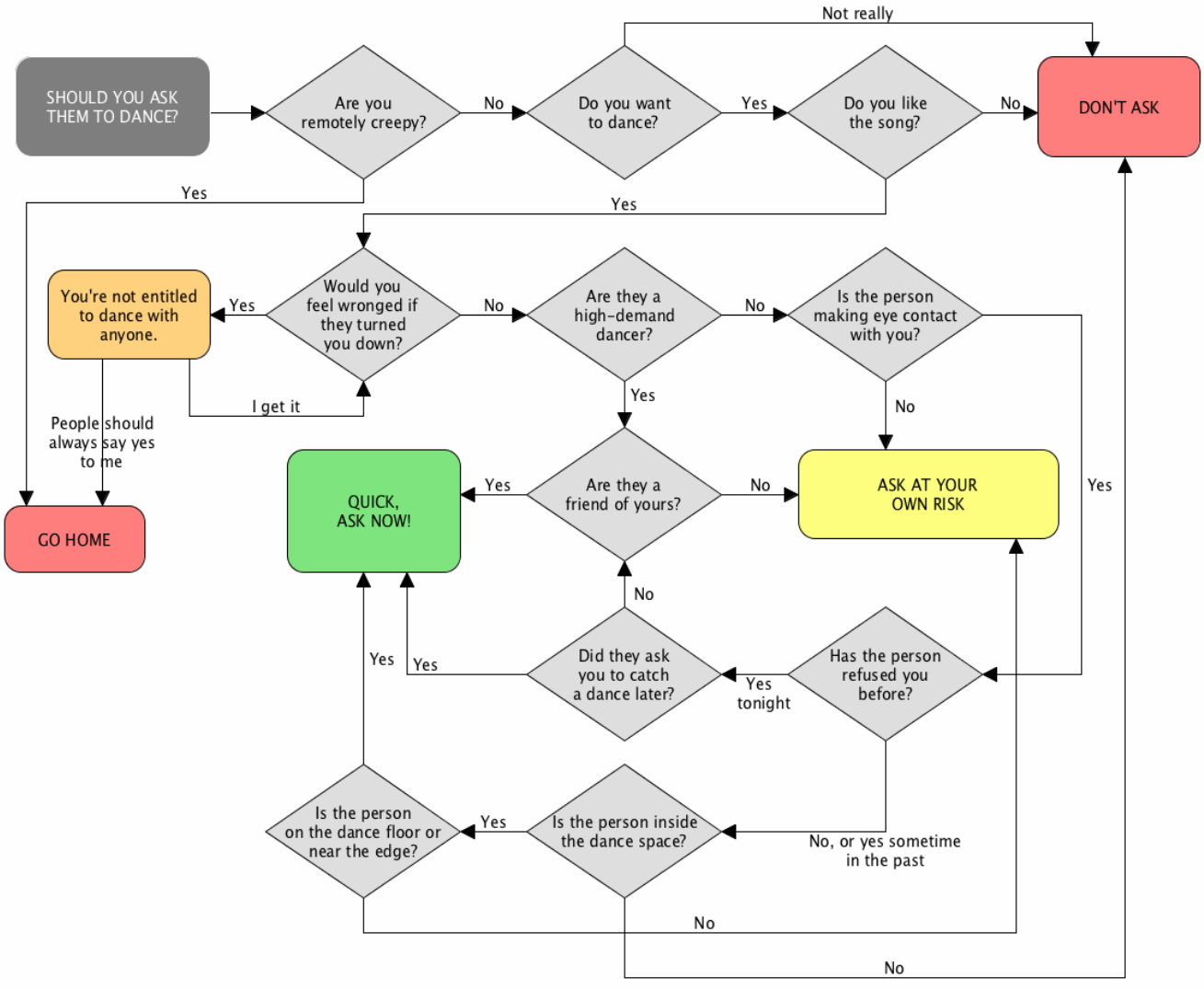
You also might buy them some new swimmers, so when they go to the beach, past the **promenade** path, **walking and dodging** all the others who are out and about, they can **peel off** their clothes and show off their new trunks. They may not even want to get them wet and **pass the ocean** altogether rather than doing a **dive thru** the first **ocean wave**.

Don't forget to share your **cast off** clothes with others this holiday season. **Recycle** them by dropping off at the local charity shop.

*(Dr. A.L. (lefty) Allemander gives advice to the dancelorn in this space on a regular basis, including Christmas. As a courtesy turn, he suggests leaving a **roll** for Santa)*

TIME FOR A LAUGH

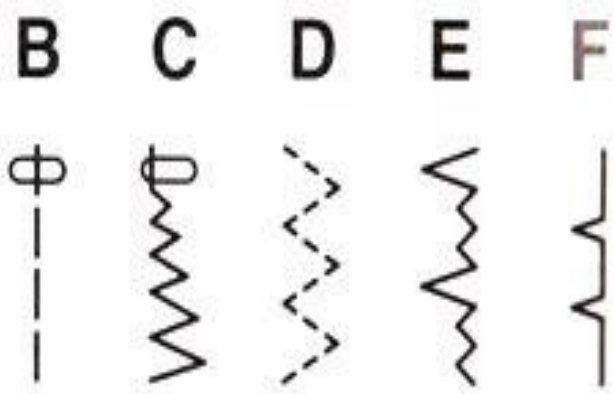
- What did Adam say on the day before Christmas? It's Christmas, Eve!
- What is the difference between snowmen and snow-women? Snowballs.
- Why did they ask the turkey to join the band? He had the drum sticks.
- Why does Santa Claus go down the chimney? Because it soots him
- What do you call people who are afraid of Santa Claus? Claustrophobic
- Why does Santa have 3 gardens? So he can ho-ho-ho.
- What do snowmen eat for breakfast? Snowflakes
- What do you call a chicken at the North Pole? Lost.
- What would you get if you ate the Christmas decorations? Tinselitis.
- I love when candy canes are in mint condition.
- Christmas tree trend started because people thought it would spruce things up a bit.
- Why don't reindeer go to public school? Because they are elf taught.



Get CREATIVE with KAREN REICHARDT

BLINDHEM FOOT

This is a foot that most people have but never learn to use. Tailors use this stitch. It looks professional, doesn't pucker and does not come out like a hand sewn hem. As with all other techniques, it takes a little practice. Take a couple of scraps and try this foot.



1. Finish the edge of the hem. My favorite finish is the triple zig zag "D" on the widest setting. This stitch does not cause the edge to bunch up like the regular zag zag can. This edge can also be serged or any other stitch of your choice.
2. Fold the hem up the desired amount. Glass headed pins allow the hem to be pressed at this point. Pressing will ease back any stretch that has occurred along the finished edge.

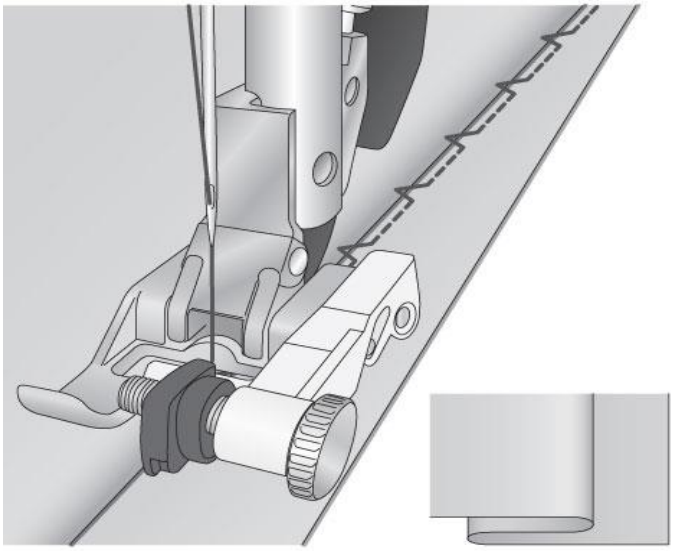
3. Set the machine on the longest straight stitch "B", for basting. Sew all around the hem one half inch from the finished edge of the hem. Use a contrasting thread so that it can be easily pulled out later.
4. Position the garment, hem down and fold the garment back to the straight stitching, making sure the hem edge protrudes one half inch. This will be the inside of the garment.
5. Position the fabric so the red edge guide runs along the fold. The blind hem foot for your machine may look different, like the white guide one. While sewing keep the fabric fold tight against the guide.
6. Set the machine on the hem stitch"F".

This is where the practice is necessary. The needle will take three straight stitches and then zig over to the left. That zig should just barely catch the fold. Use the stitch length, width control and the position of the guide to adjust the stitch.

Check the front of the garment to see what the stitch looks like. If the stitch punctures are very visible on the front, try moving the edge guide to the left, with the knurled adjusting knob. Just a little adjustment and try again.

Thinner fabrics need a very tiny bite. Thicker fabrics need a bigger bite. When the hem is complete, pull out the basting stitching and press again.

The advantages of using the blind hem foot on the machine verses hand hemming are;



1. Faster - Once the stitch is set correctly, you can speed down the hem.
2. Reduce puckering - Hand stitches tend to pucker because most stitchers draw the thread too tight. If there is puckering with the blind hem foot, reduce the upper thread tension a little and increase the stitch length.
3. Stronger hem - If one part of the hem stitching is broken, the hem won't completely pull out like it can with hand stitching.
4. More flexible - The little zigs add stretch to the stitching so it is less likely to pop than hand stitching. The other blind hem stitch "E" is designed to be used on very stretchy fabrics.

While working at a sewing machine shop, my job was to teach all of the different feet and accessories for the machines. It really opened my eyes to the idea of the right tool for the job. Making my stitching more accurate, faster and more creative was the result.

If you ever have any questions, or comments please contact Karen at the address at the end of the next section.

Karen has had a tough time over the last couple of months, as she had a serious ocular migraine that did not allow her to even see the computer well enough to type. She advises that she is now back to normal and again typing away madly! She sent this next piece in after she felt she had recovered enough to get back to the computer once again – Barry

THE BEGINNING & THE END

This month’s second topic is about starting and stopping stitching.

The latest machines with extra large stitching hole in the needle plate are wonderful, because they allow those really beautiful fancy stitches to be made. The latest machines are horrible because the extra large stitching hole in the needle plate allows the fabric to be pushed into the machine and eaten.

The reasons that fabric is are eaten by the machine are (1) The needle - It is dull, so the tip grabs fabric instead of passing cleanly through. It is the wrong type/size for the fabric. Great grandmother only had one type of needle, because she had only one type of fabric woven, cotton, linen or wool. 'Lycra' was't a word. (2) The technique - Using the correct tools and adjustments for fabric. There is more than one way to do anything in stitching. Different tricks are needed at different times and fabrics.

At the beginning - Start stitching about a half an inch inward from the edge of the fabric. Take three stitches forward, lift the presser foot up and pul the fabric forward until the needle is in the correct position over the seam. The three stitches hold the thread tails so when you sew forward, they can't pull out of the fabric. The stitching does not have to start at the absolute last thread of the fabric. If that seam is to be crossed with another, it can be up to a quarter inch in from the edges. This gives the feed dogs and presser foot more to hold.

At the end - Stop stitching about a quarter inch from the edge, lift the presser foot, pull the fabric back about a half inch (to loosen the thread) then pull the edge of the fabric forward. Position the needle over the stitching line and the previous stitching and stitch off. While this may seem like a lot of work, I find that it can be faster than reversing and then sewing forward. I use the knee-lever to raise and lower the presser foot, so both hands stay directly on the fabric and in control. The knee-lift allows the presser foot to be lifted just a little ways instead of the complete up or down of some electronic machines. By stitching forward and off the fabric is less likely to be eaten by the needle plate.

In sewing factories, the workers don't back stitch, because it takes too much time and interrupts their flow. Many industrial machines can't reverse. If a worker wants to secure the end of a seam she hold the fabric back so the needle makes a few tiny stitches in one spot like a lock stitch. Don't try this with knits, because the edge will stretch. The built in lock stitch on newer machines works well to start or end as seam without bulk. Some stitcher feel they must sew back and forth several times to secure the seam. This is unnecessary, creates bulk and makes it impossible to take out to make adjustments.

Paper can keep the fabric from diving into the needle plate. Tissue paper is recommended, but I grab what is handy. Take about a two inch square of paper , place it half under the edge of the fabric. Start sewing on paper and stitch right over on to the fabric. If you are going to back stitch at the other end add a piece of paper there also. The paper will just rip off and any fuzzy bits will come out in the wash. Strips of paper can also be used when sewing on vinyl, sequins or other unusual fabrics. Paper strips on the seam lines, top or bottom or both, can help the fabric feed smoothly.

The last trick is a 'spider'. Take a mall piece of fabric and fold it into four layers. Start sewing on the square, when you get to the edge butt the sewing project right up tight against the fabric square and keep sewing. The square gives the feed dogs something to hang onto and pull the project under the presser foot. When the square comes out from under the presser foot, trim it off. Then position it so you can sew off of the project and on to the square. After it has been used for a while the square will have a lot of long hairy spider legs.

No tip or technique works every time. Experiment and enjoy the challenge. - Fear no fabric!
Chief Seattle
For any more information, email Karen at SquareDanceSewing@icloud.com

PUZZLE PAGE ANSWERS for "What's in a Name?"

The answer for each clue is a male name (or diminutive thereof).

1.	One shilling	*Bob*
2.	Used for lifting	*Jack*
3.	Leaves do it in a breeze	*Russell*
4.	Sculpture, painting etc	*Art*
5.	Candid	*Frank*
6.	A vehicle for carrying	*Laurie (or Van)*
7.	A precipice	*Cliff*
8.	A shaft of light	*Ray*
9.	To gradually fade out	*Peter*
10	At most doors	*Matt*
11	Holds small change	*Perce*
12	Permit, allocation	*Grant*
13	Cassius	*Clay*
14	W.C.	*John (or Lew)*
15	Invoice	*Bill*
16	Scratch or rub	*Mark*
17	Callers' tool	*Mike*
18	Poke fun at	*Josh*
19	Helen was there	*Troy*
20	Academic (Oxford etc)	*Don*
21	Glib delivery	*Pat*
22	Scottish valley	*Glenn*
23	(Scottish) to know	*Ken*
24	Lifts freight (shipping)	*Dereck*
25	Top-up, or replenish	*Phil*
26	Tricked you!!	*Con*
27	Light-fingered action	*Nick (or Rob)*
28	Reduce (as in moon)	*Wayne*
29	Toss, or throw	*Chuck*
30	Steadies a pole	*Guy*

QUOTABLE QUOTES (well, sort of)

More words of wisdom that have been attributed to some of our well-known Australian and overseas leaders in square and round dancing circles (these all come from extremely reliable sources whose honesty and integrity is above reproach).

Trust me; I was a used car salesman).

- "The only risk of failure is promotion" – ***Barry Wonson***
- "It seems that in today's world, the main job of management is to make it difficult for people to work" – ***Mel Wilkerson***
- ""A memorandum is written not to inform the reader but to protect the writer" – ***Kip Garvey***
- "Most projects that I start begin slowly and then just taper off " – ***Wade Driver***
- "Most of us believe in the adage 'no news is good news'….it seems that the modern media thinks that good news is not news" – ***Jaden Frigo***
- "Money can't buy you happiness, but it does bring a more pleasant form of misery" – ***Karen Reichardt***
- "I was in a debate with a group of callers a few weeks ago…drawing on my command and knowledge of the English language, I said nothing" – ***Glenn Ickler***
- "All I ask is for the chance to prove that money can not `make me happy" – ***Paul Bristow***
- "Contraceptives should be used on every conceivable occasion – ***Kevin Kelly***
- "The best piece of safety equipment in a car is a rear view mirror with a cop in it " – ***Jerry Story***
- "To err is human, but to really screw things up you need a computer"- ***Elmer Sheffield Jr***
- "I think that the days of the digital watch are numbered "- ***Bob Shiver***
- "One of the most important aspects in life is to gain a reputation for unreliability….that way no-one asks you to do anything"- ***Tony Oxendine***
- "God cannot change the past, only historians can do that "- ***Roy Gotta***
- " Computers can never replace human stupidity" – ***Ed Foote***

Editor's Final Words....

At Least For Now

Well, that completes the seventh issue of ATS. I hope that you have been able to find items, articles, and some humour to give you a bit of a lift during this very trying time. I guess we are all in the same mind at the moment, each with the same questions and concerns – When will we all be able to enjoy our favourite activity once again?

For most of us in New South Wales, we are hoping to be back dancing again in the New Year. February would be the usual re-opening of clubs after the summer break, and that is most likely when we will all be able to be up and running. There are a couple of clubs that have had limited re-opening under the new regulations for social contact, however the majority have taken the position, that while we do come under a 'sports/dance' umbrella in regard to the regulations, the actuality of the amount of contact is just not really understood by the relative health department. Those of us who have had multiple contacts with the health agency are well aware of the fact that they really have no idea of how we intermingle when dancing. When asked if we would be allowed to have a progressive barn dance at a regular club, we were advised in no uncertain terms that it would not be allowed. Of course in a regular night of square dancing, the close contact is far greater than in a progressive barn dance.

The regulations state (in relation to dancing at weddings but are extrapolated to other types):

Only these 20 people can be on the dance floor at any one time. There can be no rotation of different people.

There is also in place a regulation in regard to singing (we do come under that role)

(singers must be) 5 metres from all other people including the audience and conductor

Unless these regulations are observed, any group that is dancing IS breaching the law, and subject to fines. Should any checks be made on groups dancing, having a covid-safety plan most likely will not cover all aspects as noted above. Given the above regulations, our activity, while regarded as a form of dance, does NOT come under the allowances for re-opening.

2020 has been a bit of a disastrous year for us all. For us, the various state governments and the federal government have done a great job in removing most of the transmission. New cases have basically been from returned travellers and are in quarantine for 14 days. Border closures and lockdowns, while harsh, have been the most effective tool in combatting the spread. Countries that have not followed these guidelines have all had massive increases in transmissions. We really feel for dancers who are living in these areas.

Well, Christmas is just a few weeks away now. Sue and I are heading off to Queensland next week for a visit with our daughter Alessa. We have not been able to visit for just under a year. We applied for our border pass last week (one each for Sue and I), and we are allowed to visit Queensland for two weeks. Border checks are still in place, and we do expect to be delayed in crossing the border.

The worst part of being in Queensland for me is the heat. Currently it is Saturday

28th November. 12.30pm and temperature inside is 32 degrees (95F). Outside it is 37 (106) – summer begins next week and it will start to get warm. In Queensland temperatures on the Gold Coast today are much warmer than down here (600 miles south). Sue loves the heat…I am the opposite!

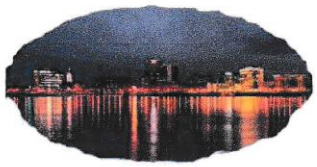
I hope Alessa's new place has air conditioning!!

Best wishes to everyone for the Christmas/New Year season….

stay safe

Barry

Join Us Down By The River



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