



CHATTER FROM THE CHIEF - Claudia Littlefair

Hope you've had a chance to view Alberta Square & Round Dance Federation's newly designed website at <http://squaredance.ab.ca/>. Webmaster, Olive Zwierschke, has asked all dancers and callers to check their information for accuracy. Any changes? Please contact Olive at 780-688-2380 or email zwierschke@mcsnet.ca.

** NEW** C.S.R.D.S. PROMOTIONAL PINTEREST PAGE

The Canadian Square & Round Dance Society (C.S.R.D.S.) Marketing Committee is actively developing on-line resources for clubs to use to promote our activity. Quebec representative and committee co-chair, Rachele Cournoyer, has spent countless hours compiling an extensive, user-friendly Pinterest Page made up of 26 boards with over 1,500 pins, and counting! The boards consist of dance images, articles, videos, promotional material and general dance information. The content is continually being updated and added to. **Anyone can access these boards and use the material for their own club's promotion.**

Looking for a good video to promote square dancing? There are 34 of the very best. There is no need to spend hours looking on YouTube. Looking for some good images to use for your publicity and ads? There are 110+ pins to inspire you. There's a board on square dance promotion that groups the best posters and ideas. Want more on the health benefits of dance? Check out the "Dance Research" board. **The Committee's objective for the Pinterest Page is to be a One-Stop Shop with lots of practical information – all gathered in one on-line place!**

How It Works

A pin is usually a picture that links to a page on the web. These pins are grouped into boards, so the effect is like a bulletin board with pictures on it. You would need to become a member of Pinterest in order to see the C.S.R.D.S. page. Becoming a member is easy: go to www.pinterest.com and set up an account. This is free. Once you have your account in Pinterest, link to the C.S.R.D.S. board: <https://www.pinterest.com/canadiansquarea/>. Now you're in and ready to go. For example, if you see an image you'd like to use on a poster, click on it, click "copy image" and "paste" it on your poster.

Current List of Boards and Number of Pins

Advanced Square Dancing (3)	Great Websites (6)	Promotional Videos (34)
Callers & Music (26)	History of Square Dance (94)	Provincial Associations (36)
Clogging (47)	How To (27)	Quirky Square Dancing (20)
Contra (95 pins)	International Square Dancing (20)	Rainbow Dancing (13)
Cued Ballroom Dancing (61)	New Dancers: Starting Out (8)	Square Dance Imagery (111)
Dance Motivation Memes (123)	Newsletters (16)	Square Dance Memes (241)
Dance Research (65)	Nostalgia (176)	20 th National Convention (7)
Dancing: Children & Teens (37)	Press: Square Dance (46)	Traditional Square Dance (79)
Dancing: With Handicapped (13)	Promotion (61)	

If you have content you would like added to the boards, email Rachele: csrds.qc@gmail.com, or myself: claudia.littlefair@gmail.com.

CHURCH BULLETIN BLOOPERS

- During the absence of our pastor, we enjoyed the rare privilege of hearing a good sermon when J.F. Stubbs supplied our pulpit.
- Pastor is on vacation. Massages can be given to church secretary.
- The audience is asked to remain seated until the end of the recession.

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CHATTER CLOSE-UP

Our Dance Community is an interesting mix of people, each with a story to tell. If you know of someone you would like to see featured in this section, email claudia.littlefair@gmail.com and I would be happy to contact them.



DIANE SMATHERS, Calgary - Memories of a Teen Dancer

I was introduced to square dancing at a Ranger/Rover (scout/guide) campout at Skelton Lake when I was in High School. The Dreger family were all there and Ken Dreger did an intro to square dancing. It was a big hit resulting in follow up dances in Edmonton. I met members of the Teen Eighters at these events and joined the club that same fall. Back then the teen clubs were big (10-12 squares for weekly dances) with lots of support from square dancing parents, who chaperoned the dances. Some even allowed us to have after parties in their basements or at the Dreger's cabin along Whitemud Creek.

If you were to ask many of us, we didn't fit in to or belong to the big groups common at school. Somehow we found our way to square dancing and the square dance family. We always danced till the end of the dance and then would head out as a group to after parties with everyone invited and no one excluded. There would be a range in ages at these events but unlike in school, this wasn't an issue.

I danced in the late-70's as a teen dancer, and continued to dance for a short time with the NAIT adult club. Life got busy and I gradually lost contact with the group. I took Biological Sciences – pollution option – at NAIT and started working for Alberta Environment. When the lab was moved to Vegreville my husband and I bought 80 acres just east of Elk Island Park. I was showing Alaskan Malamutes at that time and had horses, so we bought a couple brood mares, and then it only seemed logical to add cattle. We started our family (boy and girl) and with the farm I didn't have a lot of extra time in the summer, but did curl in the winter. When our youngest was starting grade one we moved to the west side of Elk Island Park and I took a position with Norwest Labs in Edmonton while the children finished school at Ardrossan.

When my children joined both horse and beef 4H I reconnected with some members of the Teen Eighters club and through them joined the local saddle club. I started going on weeklong wagon rides as an outrider and then trips to the mountains, which some of the old gang were already part of. Murray Few, a caller from Edmonton and member of the saddle club, would do some calling at our summer BBQ's and winter dances, so I would get a little square dancing in.

In the mid-90's, I attended my first Teen Eighters reunion which was held at Dave & Vicky Lawrence's barn loft by South Cooking Lake. I realized how much I missed dancing. After a couple more reunions at the Lawrences, they were moved to Colchester Hall and then back to the Holiday Ranch where the first reunion was held in 1981. Now the Teen Eighters reunions are held every second year.

After I divorced, I moved to Calgary in 2005 but stayed connected with the saddle club. I continued to participate in summer week long mountain rides and going to the square dance reunions. In 2010 I attended a reunion with a group of us from Calgary. After that, it didn't take any persuading for us to all jump in with both feet, join a club and start attending the dances in Calgary and area. The following year we eagerly joined plus lessons. I'm now taking Advanced lessons and enjoy learning more moves. I have also been involved with the Cue Steps round dancing and enjoy it as well.

Special highlights for me:

- Going to Holiday Ranch for a New Year's Eve dance as a teen dancer, and the hall being absolutely packed.
- Going to Wandering Squares and having some of the parent/adults come over to our camp to visit.
- Trips to Penticton Peach Festival and dancing in the water during the day and every tip at the night dances. This was back when the dance was outdoors and plywood covered the entire infield and we still had to dance on the grass as the floor was full.
- The number of squares on the floor was fantastic for the dances whether they were teen dances or the adult dances.

- Filling the floor at Ross Sheppard High School for the Toy Dance or Teen Eighthers Dance-In (where our posters actually included the after party).
- We didn't care if it was a teen dance or adult dance, we went to them all.

The Teen Eighthers were a great group of kids to hang out with and I loved the dancing. We grew close and many of us are still close to this day, which is something most people can't say about their childhood friends. A high number of us married from within the group and a much higher ratio of those marriages are still together compared to the general public. I think that says a lot for our activity. Now that I'm back into dancing I enjoy the people and the square dance community is still a compelling draw. I'm glad to see it becoming more accepting of singles, which we need if square dancing is going to survive. I love camping and when you can dance as well that's a pretty good weekend in my books.

QUESTIONS THAT HAUNT ME

- How important does a person have to be before they are considered assassinated instead of just murdered?
- Why does a round pizza come in a square box?
- What disease did cured ham actually have?
- How is it that we put man on the moon before we figured out it would be a good idea to put wheels on luggage?
- Why are you IN a movie, but you're on TV?
- Why do toasters always have a setting that burns the toast to a crisp, which no decent human being would eat?
- Why does Goofy stand erect while Pluto remains on all fours? They're both dogs.
- Do the 'Alphabet' song and 'Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star' have the same tune?
- Why did you try singing the two songs above?
- Why, why, why do we press harder on a remote control when we know the batteries are going dead?
- Why does someone believe you when you say there are four billion stars, but check when we say the paint is wet?



STRUGGLING UP THE CLIFF - THE CHALLENGE OF BECOMING A CALLER - Opinion by Tom Gray, Leduc

Claudia invited me to submit an article on the process of learning to call. The result is based on personal experience, discussion with other new callers in caller schools, and posts on the Facebook groups Callers in Training and Newbie callers.

Why become a caller? In my case, it looked like fun, a challenge, something new, something I thought I might be good at because I enjoy teaching. I had noted the camaraderie among callers and wanted to be part of that. Some have admired a particular caller. Others have had to take over when a club suddenly needed a caller and no one else was available (or willing). Occasionally, someone is persuaded to give it a try at a "goof night" and find that they enjoy it. However you get started up the cliff, climbing requires a considerable investment in money, time, and effort.

THEY WEAR A LOT OF HATS. (Besides being callers, they are teachers, listeners, counselors, chaperones, emcees, referees, mechanics, politicians, promoters, artists, etc.) -Corben Geiss

Cost of Equipment and Music

Learning to call can be costly. I've spent some \$3000 or more on equipment and music -- and I'm just getting started. Even used equipment can be expensive. And after your main purchase of a sound system (amp and speakers), there are the extras -- microphones \$100+ each, Hilton mic cable \$110 US, ADC sound cards, misc. patch cords etc. gear case \$80+, wireless mic \$500+ etc. With all this gear, clearly a caller also doubles as a sound technician. Care and maintenance of equipment also factors in.

Music is a second major outlay in money and time. New records and MP3 files run about \$7 USD plus S/H, plus time spent in selecting, reviewing, and ordering. Callers typically have hundreds of songs; do the math. Old records are \$1 or free, but going thru them and listening is time-consuming. Listen to the called side adds more time. Learning what's good for your singing voice, style, and personality takes time; listening to new music and deciding if it suits you takes even more time. Converting vinyl to digital takes 5 to 15 minutes per song (transfer plus cleanup). It all adds up.

Memberships and dues also add up -- CALLERLAB membership \$105 USD/yr; SoCan membership \$67.20 CAD/yr; other professional organizations - about \$60+/yr - depends on what you join. Caller Schools run \$500 or more each, a little less for workshops; add travel and accommodation. Add in mileage, wear and tear on vehicle and time away from spouse and family.

"Many years ago when I first started calling, an experienced caller told me to NEVER listen to the called side. I forget his reasons but I ignored the advice. I want to hear how the song starts. I want to hear how the song is handled. I want to hear the timing. There are so many songs with which I am unfamiliar, I need to hear the song sung through."

-- Nick & MaryAnne Turner, BC

Learning to Speak/Sing -- Vocal skills

Good diction is a plus - you need clear enunciation. You also need to learn precise delivery in time to the music, and how to set the sound system to best enhance your voice. Speech lessons come in handy (for example, I did two years of Toastmasters to learn public speaking skills). While "a half-decent singing voice" is generally considered to be of value, of greater benefit is having a sense of rhythm and a sense of timing. Singing lessons can help (many callers sing or have sung in community and church choirs; many take private lessons). However, it's my observation that the best callers are excellent performers (if not excellent singers).

Overheard after I did a guest tip: Dancer 1 - "He's a good singer." Dancer 2 - "Yes, but a good singer is not necessarily a good caller, and a good caller is not necessarily a good singer."

Time Commitment -- Practice, Practice, Practice

Dancers probably do not realize how much time and work goes into learning to call. Working out or checking choreography, rehearsing, and practicing with dolls and calling software takes hours each week. Initially, it took me 6 hours to prep for a two-hour gig (such as a wedding dance or church group), because I want to give them both their money's worth and my very best effort. *Fortunately, it takes less time now, and I've had some great times calling those "one night stands". Besides, they're the only way I make money calling!* I have spent hundreds of hours practicing in my garage, my basement, my office, my car -- practicing singing calls, timing on patten etc. And this time is largely wasted because it's done without live dancers. You get a live square, you call something you've practiced for hours, the dancers do something you don't expect (but maybe could have, with more experience), and ... now what? You can't practice for that unless you've got dancers to practice with.

"As a new caller, I am finding that there is a lot (and I mean a lot!) of prep time that goes into calling a class night. By prep time I mean hours spent during the week working on easy singing call figures, selecting what calls and how to teach them, etc." - Denise Carbonell, USA

Technique, Delivery & Performance

Some newbies can step up to a mic and deliver a dynamite dance (Brad Slepicka for example, who wowed with his debut at age 14) but most of us learn more slowly. Proper use of calls, what's correct and when to use them, plus timing, flow, dancer movement for good choreography, all come bit by bit. We learn technical aspects of formation, arrangement, sequence, relationship, quadrants, symmetry; when to "stack" calls and when not to; how to resolve a square (get everybody back home or to an Allemande Left). Entire caller schools are devoted to the theory and practice of calling.

When you step onstage, it helps to be an extrovert, a bit of a show off. If you're not, it's a steeper uphill climb. The top callers are also excellent entertainers, who deliver with style and personality. "Have fun – enjoy life and smile when you call. You can hear the smile on the microphone." - advice from Mel Wilkerson, Australia. Easy for you to say, Mel!

Public speaking is a breeze compared to calling. I'm always nervous for my single tip. My first few times up at the mic, my shirt was soaked with perspiration! It has become a little easier over the years, but still happens occasionally. With one tip at a time, I have no chance to get over my nervousness and start enjoying being up there. I get only one shot at it. There's no second chance.

Mastery of Memory

Starting to call at 20 must in many ways be easier than starting at 60. My mind was sharper at twenty! Certainly my memory was better back then. I'm finding it difficult to memorize material, in part because of the difference being onstage makes. Somehow holding a mic wipes the memory clean! Apparently, this is a well-known phenomenon. I CAN memorize songs or choreo that I've called on stage over and over. With only one tip here and there, progress has been slow.

"My mind still goes blank when I get up in front of everybody." - Mark Hart, Apple Valley, California

Learning to Teach

To teach anything, you need an understanding of the material, knowledge of how learning takes place, and a great deal of patience and persistence. The newbie caller also has to overcome dancer attitude. "These new callers don't know how to teach. You can't let them loose on new dancers, they'll ruin them." (These are actual comments made by dancers who somehow forget that every one of their favorite callers was a beginner "back when"). Another common situation is being ambushed -- the Club caller says, "I want you to teach XXX tonight." No chance to prepare or review. Caller thinks he's being a good mentor and coach for throwing the newbie into the deep end. Forgets he's been doing it for decades and can probably do it in his sleep... but the new caller might need some prep time.

The best way to learn a subject is to teach a class in it. You don't have to be an expert -- you just have to know more than your students, and keep two jumps ahead. "For thousands of years, people have known that the best way to understand a concept is to explain it to someone else." While we teach, we learn,' said the Roman philosopher Seneca."

- Annie Murphy Paul, [The Protégé Effect](#).

Support from Local Clubs

Many beginners feel that clubs could better support new callers. "We give the new caller one tip a week" is a common format. Consider this: how long would it take you to learn to square dance if you were allowed to *dance* only one tip a week? Oh, and how do you think a new caller feels when there are four squares in the hall and only one square (or fewer) get up for the newbie's tip? The best way to encourage a new caller is to *get up and dance*.

"When I started about 8 years ago, I went to a callers school but because I was only getting about one tip a week I was frustrated because I wanted to get better but couldn't." - Patrick Gene Matthews, Cedar City, Utah

Clubs are also reluctant to hire beginners. My own club has twice passed me over when looking for a replacement. Each time, they said I lacked experience, which is true, but they were unwilling to give me the opportunity to gain the experience I need. Nobody seemed to see the irony of that.

James Herpin, from Fort Charles, Louisiana, reports, "I also have been trying to get started in calling. I have been calling about 6 or 7 years but have received few offers from local clubs, including the club I used to belong to. They hired a caller from 80 miles away who charges \$50 more than I did."

In areas with lots of excellent, experienced callers, clubs seem never to hire a new caller to do a guest spot or demo, either. Inevitably, they will pass over a newbie for a more experienced caller. You can't blame the clubs for that: they want the best they can get. In such areas, it can be almost impossible for new callers to get a toehold, and the cliff begins to look insurmountable.

"The point being that if you don't help those starting out, they may not be there when you need them." - John Anthony, Havertown, Pennsylvania

View From the Clifftop

Not sure what it looks like; I'm not there yet. A glimpse came in Yuma when someone came by after my tip and said, "I really enjoyed your calling, and I want you to come and call at USA West in Helena this summer." Repeat business, word of mouth referrals, and great one-night-stands also provide a glimpse of success. A new caller clings to these peeks at the vast horizon of calling.

THE LIGHTER SIDE OF DARKNESS - by Dee Jackins

Dee is an avid square and round dancer, and enjoys writing. She shares the lighter side of some of her experiences, challenges and near disasters as a sight impaired person.

When I moved into this Over 55 Plus Park back in 1993, I had no concept of this area so I contacted the CNIB and requested a rep from the Mobility Training Program to come and help me get oriented in my new surroundings. It took a few visits but I finally accomplished this little feat. There was no problem during the summer months and usually in the winter someone would always be there to assist me.

One time in the late winter months, my neighbors invited me over for supper. They offered to come and get me but they only live across the street so I thought I could make it on my own. When I got to the edge of the driveway I lined myself up to go directly across the street and walk about four steps to the left and there I would find their driveway. As I started across I realized the road was very icy and rough, treading very carefully I continued on. Should never of done it, the driveway was nowhere to be found, so after a 180 degree turn, I headed back for my own driveway to start over again. What a mistake! I could not find a driveway anywhere.

So here I was, lost with 15 pounds of frozen back ribs (we'd split a case of ribs), a bottle of wine, shoes, purse and my cane in the other hand. No boots, no gloves and my hands were getting mighty cold. Setting down these items was out of the question, I never would have found them again. After summing up the situation, the only solution to this predicament was to walk at a definite angle until I hit a driveway. It seemed to take forever but I finally achieved it, followed it up to the garage door and walked along it until I found a step to a front entrance. The only thing crossing my mind at this time was, "please be home". A lady answered the door and called me by my name. "Thank goodness your home, I'm lost!" I was five houses down from where I was going! She walked me to the correct unit. After this experience, we made arrangements so I wouldn't repeat this in the future.

It was only a few years later they had me over on Christmas Eve. They came over to pick me up which made it easier but when it came time to come home, I told them not to bother walking with me. The new plan was to give me 5 minutes to get home and I would phone them to let them know I had arrived safely.

It was a beautiful evening, a few inches of snow had fallen and as I headed home I looked up towards the sky and for some unknown reason this Christmas song went through my head, "Grandma Got Run Over By A Reindeer". I certainly didn't "see" any reindeer and carried on my merry way.

Everything turned out perfect with no mishaps. Next morning they came over to pick me up for church. She commented that there were a lot of squiggly marks all over her driveway and that my driveway looked the same. She said, "I don't know what kind of animal could have made all those marks!" I just smiled and said, "That was no animal. That was me swinging my cane as far as I could reach to find the snow banks along the driveway." It worked! That's the main thing. No matter what happens, there is always a lesson to be learned.

*I have a little GPS, it sits there in my car.
A GPS is a driver's friend, it tells you where you are.
I have a little GPS, I've had it all my life.
It's better than the normal ones, because it is my wife.*

*It gives me full instructions, especially how to drive.
"It's sixty miles an hour", it says, "You're doing sixty-five."
It tells me when to stop and start, and when to use the brake,
And tells me that it's never ever, safe to overtake.*

*It tells me when a light is red, and when it goes to green.
It seems to know instinctively, just when to intervene.
It sees the vehicles in front, and all those to the rear.
And taking this into account, it specifies "Too near".*

*I'm sure no other driver, has so helpful a device.
For when we leave and lock the car, it still gives me advice.
It fills me up with counselling, each journey's pretty fraught.
So why don't I exchange it, and get a quieter sort?*

*Ah well, you see, it cleans the house, makes sure I'm
properly fed.
It washes all my shirts and things, and keeps me warm in bed!
Despite all these advantages,
and my tendency to scoff,
I only wish that now and then,
I could turn the darn thing
off!*



ALBERTA DANCE CONVENTION, EDMONTON
September 2 - 4, 2017



COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIR - Gary & Eileen Smith

Theme Nights

The convention committee now consists of 16 dedicated volunteers, and meets once a month to prepare for the September long weekend in 2017. We will be seeking additional volunteers as the convention gets closer. It's great the way dancers always seem to pitch in and help.

We plan to continue the popular theme nights for Convention 2017. The themes selected are 'Hippy 60s' for Saturday evening, and 'Western' for Sunday evening. These were selected in part, to feature music related to these themes. We are planning a Sunday evening appreciation after party, with foods in consideration of the 'Western' theme.



Dressing in theme attire is completely optional! If you are more comfortable wearing your square dance clothes, you are more than welcome to do so. There are many dancers who enjoy the challenge of planning, and wearing something a little different. Whether you are in theme costume, or not, you can enjoy the creativity of others, have a laugh, take a few pictures... The goal is to create a party atmosphere (think Halloween party!). We will keep you updated on convention happenings.

Venue Details

The Community Dance Festival 2017 will be held at the Central Lions Seniors Rec Centre located at: 11113 113 St NW, Edmonton, AB T5G 0E9, phone: (780) 496-7369. This is a beautiful building boasting the following comforts allowing dancers to enjoy a fun filled weekend:

- Air Conditioning
- Wood Flooring
- Cafeteria
- Free parking
- Restrooms
- Walking distance to Hotel and RV site
- Close to all amenities
- 5 minutes from Downtown Edmonton

Rates

BEFORE June 30, 2017:
 Adults \$65
 Youth (under 17 years) \$50.
 AFTER June 30, 2017:
 Adults \$85
 Youth (under 17 years) \$70.

For Registration Form go to:
www.communitydance.org.

CUE it up the QEI

Alberta Square & Round Dance Federation
49th Annual Convention 2017

September 2nd - 4th, Edmonton, Alberta

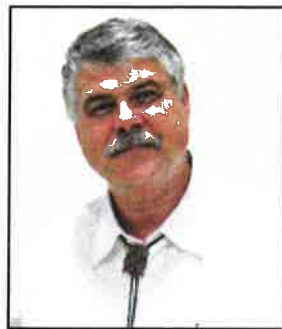
Join us as Edmonton plays host for a fun filled weekend of family entertainment. From dancing and learning, to social gatherings and local attractions. This weekend is one you won't want to miss. Join the fun!
 Register online today!
www.cuecommunitydance.org

**ALBERTA JAMBOREE, FORT SASKATCHEWAN
August 25 - 28, 2017**

Callers & Cuers



Jerry Jestin
Yuma, AZ



Ray Brendzy
Burnaby, BC



Gary Winter
Sherwood Park, AB



Ron & Donna Baba
Medicine Hat, AB

Venue Details

Dow Centennial Centre, 8700 – 84 Street, Fort Saskatchewan, Alberta. Comfort Inn & Suites is within walking distance of the Dow Centre, and has agreed to set aside 50 rooms for Jamboree dancers until July 24, 2017. 120 Towncrest Road, Fort Saskatchewan, phone 780-998-4000. Free RV Dry Camping on site.

Rates & Program

- Trail-In Dance, Friday, August 25: \$5 with full weekend, otherwise \$10/person. Pay at the door.
- Full Weekend Rate BEFORE June 30, 2017: \$50/person; AFTER June 30, 2017: \$60/person.
- Day Registration: \$30/person.
- Evening Sessions: \$15/person.
- All Workshops and Dances are at the level of the Hall.
- Mainstream, Plus and Rounds throughout the day, and some A1 and A2 sessions.
- Free caller and cuer workshops.



**CONVENTION
2018**



**20th Canadian National
Square & Round Dance Convention
London, ON Canada
July 19, 20, 21, 2018**

Square Dancing - Basic to C2, all under one roof.
Also available – Round Dancing Phase II to VI,
Contras, Lines, Seminars, and more.

Registration Information

Convention 2018
c/o Lee Cox
12 Anne Marie Cres.
Kincardine, ON N2Z 2M9
Phone – 519-396-7228

Email :
convention2018@squaredance.ca
Website :
www.squaredance.ca/2018

Make The Scene In 2018