

This newsletter provides promotion and marketing ideas, shines a light on people in our dance community, provides history and general information about our much loved activity, and highlights provincial and national events. If you wish to contribute an article, or see an event, topic, person, or club featured, contact the editor.



## CHATTER FROM THE CHIEF - Claudia Littlefair

The decline in the number of square dancers has been discussed, researched, debated, hashed out and talked over many times over many years, with the hopes that by understanding the decline, the problem can be fixed. **Even in the 1970's when square dancing was very popular, the retention rate was only 50% once dancers graduated.** Today, it's probably less than 50% returning the second year, and a further 50% decline by the third year.

**One proven way to increase our numbers, is to increase the number of people who are exposed to our activity.** Statistics show us that in every crowd, there'll be some who are willing to attend an open dance, and from that group there'll be a smaller group who are willing to sign up for lessons, and from that sub-group there'll be an even smaller group who will stay the course for several years.

For example, the Timberline Toppers in Colorado have often had new student classes numbering 30 plus students, because of their successful recruiting plan. (See next article "Growing Clubs".) Their statistics show that out of a list of 100 good prospects, 50 to 70 will attend the "chili dinner", 20 to 30 will sign up for lessons, and only 6 to 10 will be active after 6 months. **So think BIG!!** If we apply that same formula to a list of 1000 prospective dancers, this would translate to between 60 and 100 active dancers. **Exposure to our activity through demos, open dances, ongoing advertising, and signage will bring in prospective dancers.**

Most clubs do demos and advertise prior to the fall and then disappear from the public eye for the remainder of the dance season. **This time period, October to April, offers many valuable opportunities to showcase our activity.** Some ideas to consider:

- Write letters to local churches and community groups offering to host a free dance.
- Contact businesses and offer reasonably priced Christmas party entertainment.
- Get involved in community affairs like Christmas markets, farmers markets and trade shows.
- Participate in the community and make the news. For example, make monthly club food donations to the Food Bank, or put on a dance and donate proceeds to a local charity.
- Write regular updates on dance activities, and submit them to your community newsletter.
- Put up a sign every week on the day you hold dances that tells people 'we dance here'.

Keep a list of people's names and contact information who show interest, and promise them that you'll contact them in the fall. **So, think BIG - actively work on your 1000-Name Prospect List ALL YEAR LONG.**

## GROWING CLUBS, THE TIMBERLINE TOPPERS' PLAN

*Source: Excerpts from <http://timberlinetoppers.org/education2.html>*

The word is that square dancing is dying all over the country. Not here. **The Timberline Toppers have often had new student classes numbering 30 plus students.** After a few years, nearby clubs began to try the TT Plan, and they too have had success. Now clubs in other Colorado councils have begun to try the plan. On seeing a Timberline Toppers badge at a dance in Utah, a southern Colorado dancer exclaimed, "You saved our club!"

### Preparing the Soil

Existing club members must have a positive attitude toward all other dancers, especially new students — smiling, friendly, welcoming. Reminders and practice may be necessary before any new students arrive. For example:

- No pushing other dancers
- No frowning at mistakes

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- No chatter (students need to concentrate)
- No death grip on thumbs, hands, or arms. (Thumb twisters, finger crimpers, and arm pullers are usually unaware of these habits. They need to be told. If that doesn't work, try an entire dance with no touching allowed, which is actually kind of fun.)

### **Planning the "Chili Dinner"**

The basic plan involves:

- Generating a list of prospects. (Friends from other social groups, neighbors, civic groups, home-owner associations. Strangers reached by newspaper articles and posters. Yes, this step takes work.)
- Plan a party dance with a fun caller. Try to get everyone on the floor learning and dancing a few calls.
- An enticement helps convince reluctant prospects to show up. For several years we conducted a chili dinner. Unfortunately, after a few years, a large bunch of repeaters came and then left immediately after eating. So we switched to ice cream, which was far less work, but also effective.
- Invite prospects on your list with a friendly phone call, email reminder, and, best, an old-fashioned invitation. (But, leave it open to walk-ins that respond to posters or ads.)
- Greet people at the door, and welcome them. Check them off on your invitation list. (Knowing which prospects came helps in future years.)
- Serve your chili or ice cream and make sure club members mix with guests. (An hour for sign-in and eating is typical, but depends on the food and the number of guests.)
- When the caller is ready, club dancers should look for reluctant prospects and encourage them. Partner up with prospects.
- As part of the evening, a demonstration tip with club dancers can highlight the fun, flow, and variety involved. (Be careful to not intimidate prospects with anything that looks "way too complicated to learn".)
- Explain the lesson schedule and cost. Invite prospects to sign up, or, at least, think about it, and perhaps sign-up at the first lesson.
- Be prepared to get names, phone numbers, email addresses, and money.
- Thank everyone for coming.
- Smile.

**The key features are finding prospects, getting them to come, giving them a fun evening, and showing them a very friendly group.**

## **THE SQUARE DEAL**

*Source: United Square Dancers of America "Recruiting & Keeping New Dancers" 52-page Handbook*

**For the past several years we have heard stories of the decline of interest in square dancing, with various parts of the country reporting a decline in attendance and difficulty in recruiting people for classes.** Many people have said the reason for the decline is inherent in the square dance activity itself, such as too many calls, too many programs, classes too long, etc. But such criticism of the activity has always been present, even during the boom times. Following are reasons why we are in this decline and losing dancers.

- 1. The generation gap.** The majority of dancers in many areas are ages 60-65. How does your generation view square dancing? Are you a Baby Boomer, Gen X, Gen Y, Gen Z, Millennial, and what do you expect from this activity?
- 2. Convenience.** The convenience of renting movies or online entertainment to watch at home has caused a decline in a wide range of activities. Square dancing is only one. This does not mean there is something inherently wrong with square dancing. We are simply facing new competition which is currently popular.
- 3. Staying home.** According to a *Newsweek* Gallup poll, 70% of all adults say staying home is their favorite relaxation. Many people in the '60's and '70's view staying home as a trap. Now it is a refuge from the pressurized lifestyle that has become the norm.
- 4. Less leisure time.** The same poll says Americans are working six hours more per week and have ten fewer hours of leisure time per week. Again the reflection of our current lifestyle.

5. **Wide range of experiences.** People are not satisfied with only a few recreational activities. They want to experience as many things as they can. This may explain why many people complete a square dance class, then drop out. They have spent a year square dancing . . . and it's time to try something else.

Society has changed and we are up against it. We need to understand how non-dancers (and ex-dancers) view our product. **Once you have done your research, you will have an understanding of how society has changed, how what was done in the 1960's and 1970's won't work today, and what people today want and don't want.** Now you must take that knowledge (much of which you still don't really understand or believe) and compare it to what is going on in your square dance experience and figure out your next step in recruiting, then keeping, those new dancers.

**BOTTOM LINE . . . We have to run faster to stay where we are!**

## NEW MARKETING STRATEGY ATTRACTS 40 NEW DANCERS!

- by Tom Kahnert, Club Promotions, Strathroy, Ontario

The Town of Strathroy has a population base of about 8,500, located about 35 km west of London, ON. The Town is part of the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc which takes in a number of surrounding rural and smaller communities (total population base of 21,500, including Strathroy).

We have had a very successful program with 40 paid-up new dancers (ie. 5 squares), just finishing Week #4 of 8 at the time of writing this article. Each evening is a dedicated 1.5 hour program with repetition to the key calls as well as introducing new ones.

Our main promotional item was our flyer. All promotional items were professionally printed (not through Staples which uses a photo copy system).

In addition to the 8.5" X 11" flyers, we used post cards as well as business card size promotional/handout-items. We also relied upon press releases and some paid advertising to community newspapers (ie. not Big City newspapers or radio). The target market was the town of Strathroy (our Club location), and the surrounding smaller communities in SW Ontario within a one hour drive of Strathroy. Thank you, *Alberta Chatter*, for the tips, and for sharing the experiences of some Alberta Clubs.

Our marketing did not refer to "Basic Teach" or anything related to "basic calls", hence, "Introduction to Modern Square Dancing". We all know that the basic calls form the ongoing foundation of square dancing from Mainstream, Plus and higher.

We found that the three main avenues that attracted the new dancers included: Press Releases (supported by some paid advertising) 40%; Word-of-Mouth from our members (supported by the various promotional items) 33%; Flyers (located in chiropractors offices, post offices, grocery stores, libraries, hockey arenas and any other location where people will notice) 23%.

Our Club dances on Monday evenings at the Seniors Centre in Strathroy. **However, one key aspect of this new program is that we are holding the program at a separate location (Church Hall) and different night (Tuesday evening).**

*Our secret is now out .....*  
*Looking for something FUN to do?*

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*Interested in something that allows you to*

- Laugh
- Keep fit (easy as walking!)
- Feel good
- Enjoy a great social activity
- Meet new friends
- Relieve stress

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**WE WANT YOU!!**  
**Introduction to Modern Square Dancing**



- NO experience required
- First evening FREE!!
- Under \$6/night
- Professional Caller / Instructor
- Casual attire

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**Tuesday Evenings, 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm**  
**October 17th to December 5th, 2017**

St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church Hall  
 34 Head Street N.  
 Strathroy, ON (lots of parking)

**To pre-register Call: Tom (519)709-8665 or Jo (519)666-2026**

Strathroy Square Dance Club - SWODDA.ca



Our structure for the program in each of our promotional items was to encourage any interested people to pre-register by calling one of two people listed on the promotional items, which everyone did. We stressed 'looking for something fun to do', casual attire, stress relief, professional caller, under \$6 per night, no experience needed. **Our key message was "WE WANT YOU!!"**

Prior to the first evening, we sent out a reminder email indicating location, time, dates, etc. and confirming that the first night was free and that the \$40/person fee was to be collected in Week #2. We have used emails as a key communication format weekly to keep in touch with each new dancer, an important component which many have really appreciated.

**Our Club, similar to so many, has experienced a downtrend in members as health challenges set in over time.** Our previous every-other-year programs to attract new dancers were 'fair' at best, as we endeavoured to do "Basic Teach" for 30 minutes before our main dance evening and include a couple of basic tips. As an example, four years ago we had 5 couples join, three of whom are still here. Two years ago, we had 4 couples join, with no one staying around. As you can see, a paradigm shift in our thinking and the way we offered the program had to occur.

With the addition of the new dancers to our Club, there will be a very serious boost to our numbers in the future. **If all of the new dancers join our Club, it should grow the Club by over 50%!** However, we will take a more conservative view, given that some may not have our regular Club night free in their personal schedules at this time. Of course, we should plan on doing this "Introduction to Modern Square Dancing" again, possibly every year instead of every two years.

**Recognizing different target markets, we were able to design a marketing strategy that fit our target market area** (ie. empty nesters, people with teenaged children, people wanting to do something fun other than the usual 'bowling, curling, church group, watching TV,' etc.). And it paid off for our needs! My guess is that the main portion of the new dancers range in age from 45 to 65, with a few over that age limit.

**Given that Convention 2018 (to be held in London) will most likely have a separate room for New Dancers, we hope to encourage these new dancers to attend.** (As a matter of fact, many of our callers have encouraged everyone to visit that room as they say that everyone has a blast!)

## **A GLIMPSE OF THE PAST**

*This column features excerpts from the book "As I See Saw It –Bob Osgood", compiled and edited by Paul Moore, and reprinted by permission. Bob Osgood was a square dancer, caller, and publisher of the most widely read magazine on square dancing, Sets in Order, which changed its name to Square Dancing in 1969. He was the president of Sets In Order/American Square Dance Society which provided funding and leadership for many square dance projects. He established the Silver Spur award which was given to people who made outstanding contributions to the square dance activity and he founded the Caller's Hall of Fame. He was a charismatic leader who attracted the finest in square dancing to his causes. It was largely because of his leadership that CALLERLAB and LEGACY were formed.*

**Look for this 600+ page book on Amazon.ca (cost \$26). Would make a great CHRISTMAS PRESENT!**



**Editor's Note:** Last issue we saw how Lloyd "Pappy" Shaw took it upon himself to train callers and was instrumental in establishing caller education. He started back in the 1930's, suspended classes during WWII, and resumed in 1946. These caller classes led to the realization that classes for dancers were also needed. Up until that time, dances were "one night stand" type of dancing, with no time for learning styling and smooth dancing.

## **THE FIRST SQUARE DANCE CLASSES**

A bell must have rung simultaneously in the minds of those callers who attended (Colorado Springs 1947 callers' school). We all wanted to share with our dancers the experience we had in Colorado Springs. In the way we'd been operating over the years, we had developed little or no continuity. With brand new members entering our groups each time we met, there had been no opportunity to "fine tune" the dancers, making it necessary to start all over at the beginning each time. While it was obviously not practical to round up a group of individuals in our home areas and work with them as we had worked eight hours a day for six consecutive days in Colorado, **we could recruit a group of potential dancers, meet with them 2 or 3 hours once a week, and develop the whole class, without interruption, into a group that danced well together.** In this way they would be able to enjoy the same satisfying experience their callers had experienced.

In September, 1947, I tried an experiment of teaching a class, just to see if it would work. I selected a number of dancers from my Griffith Park group and invited them to try out a six week session in which we would learn timing and posture and grace. I charged \$5.00 per person for the entire set of six classes, payable in advance. The class was closed to new dancers after the first night so we did not have to reteach anything.

As I had learned from my experimental classes six weeks was plenty of time to teach people to move automatically to the calls and in time to the music. There was also time to work on styling and graceful dancing. I could also introduce some couple dances, such as the schottische and varsouvianna. In these classes, we tried to do the things we had learned from Pappy, teaching people how to dance first.

Publicity for the first class consisted of an advertisement in the local little throw away papers here in Beverly Hills. The location for the class was the Beverly Hills High School gymnasium. The class was scheduled to begin at 7:00, so I planned to arrive at 6:00 to make sure the gymnasium was set up for dancing. Also, we used live music since there were few records available that were suitable for square dancing. As I recall I had a three-piece band for these classes. I was amazed to see a line of people that went around the building and down the steps and the sidewalk to the street. All of the people were dressed for square dancing: The ladies in brightly colored long dresses and the men in the typical blue jeans with the cuffs rolled up, checkered shirt, and cowboy boots. There were no shops to buy dance costumes in so the girls improvised or made their own costumes.



Dewey G. Mears Photograph Archive  
Square Dancing in Austin, Texas 1948

The newspapers carried stories about it [square dancing], Hollywood was including it in the movies and classes were starting up all over our area. My alma mater, Beverly Hills High School, not wishing to be left out, added it to its adult education program and took me on as the caller/teacher.

Classes were a going thing all over Los Angeles area, and around the country, and the square dance activity was growing beyond our wildest imaginations.

The increase in the number of square dancers led to an increase of the number of callers in the area. Each caller wanted to teach his own class and thereby start a club. The number of clubs mushroomed and joined the associations which helped with the organizing of clubs and sponsored large festivals every month.

***“If You’re Ever in Japan, Look Us Up”***

Local Calgarians, Larry & Margaret Kapler, were holidaying in Japan, and thought it would be fun to attend a square dance. Pure luck that they found this 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Party – 100 squares with well-known American callers Tony Oxendine and Jerry Story!

\* \* \* \* \*

- Why is it that whenever you attempt to catch something that’s falling off the table you always manage to knock something else over?
- Is there ever a day that sofas are not on sale?
- How do those dead bugs get into those enclosed light fixtures?
- Why is it that no plastic bag will open from the end on your first try?



## 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.*



*Dee and her husband squared danced for three years, from 1969 to 1971. At that time she had full sight. In 1975, Dee lost sight in her left eye, and by 1989 her vision was gone. While coping with blindness, and trying to reorganize her life, Dee's husband was diagnosed with cancer. Ten months later he died in October, 1991. A friend suggested that she try square dancing again, and in 1995, with the encouragement of caller Sam Stead, she joined Calgary's Swinging Singles club. Dee has been dancing ever since. She dances by visualizing the calls and positions, and appreciates some gentle guidance for no-hand calls such as weave the ring. Simply tap her hand as you pass her by. Read more about Dee in past Alberta Chatter Issue #2015-6, where she is featured in 'Chatter Close-up'.*

House cleaning, it goes on and on and on - but this chore is a necessity and always gets done eventually. It was a bit of a challenge in my household at first and a major adjustment for all of us. It became quite obvious one time when I happened to be cleaning in the bathroom. I couldn't remember where I had set something down and asked someone in the family to come to my aid. The first thing I heard was, "Where are you?" I hollered back, "In the bathroom." My husband came to my rescue and commented, "Well, it's no wonder you can't find anything in here, you don't have any lights on!" All was silent, then I responded with, "Lights? Who needs lights? It might help you but it doesn't do much for me!", and we both started laughing. That was the beginning of my lesson in paying closer attention to my regular routine.

After a number of years, I decided to hire a cleaning lady once a month so she could clean up whatever I missed. She was excellent in her profession and I never had to be anywhere around. Due to health problems she had to retire and I started to look for another. It took a few months but there were two ladies starting up a new part time business. These were two very pleasant ladies to have around and did an excellent job, in fact maybe too good. They were cleaning up the kitchen and I happened to go by when I overheard one say, "I can't get these spots off this stove." My ears perked up and I quickly asked what spots they were trying to remove. After their explanation I just said, "No! Don't take those off; they're Braille dots to mark the temperature of the burners!" Too late! Most of them were gone. One of the ladies got transferred to Chicago so they shut down the business. They told me they would never forget the time they spent cleaning my house, it was a new experience for them. Not only that, it was a new experience for me too. That was the last time I had someone come in for house cleaning. I now do it myself and what gets missed is usually caught down the road sometime.

A few months ago my daughter came over for a visit. After about half an hour she commented, "You cleaned house today?" I replied, "Yes, why do you ask?" "Well, your picture on the end table is lying sideways and not only that, your magnetized cow on the fridge is upside down and all four feet are reaching for the sky." Oops- something else to be aware of. It never ends. The unexpected is just lurking around the corner.

Another time I was sweeping the floor when the doorbell rang. Without setting the broom down I went to see who it was, without using the intercom since my friend was supposed to be coming over for a visit. I opened the door and all I heard was "Oh, did you just fly in or are you just flying out?" I looked at my broom and looked back at her and started to laugh. "Come on in, I'm not flying anywhere anytime soon. It's time for a coffee."

I still think I have the cleanest house in town. I haven't seen a speck of dust around here in years!

### *Through The Eyes Of A New Dancer*

**Truly, it's all about the people.** Nothing nicer than a smiling face, a good laugh, with a hand extended out to me. It's enjoyment - from remembering your left from your right, to listening carefully to the calls - it is all a great way to socialize. Where can one really go to be gathered in a circle, to hold hands and say "hello", and then just dance away our everyday thoughts? There is a fellowship within the circle that you discover, along with learning the calls. **Thank you for your patience, thank you for sharing your wisdom of dance, and, oh yes, thank you for calling - you make the dance!**



## 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](mailto:claudia.littlefair@gmail.com) and I would be happy to contact them.*



### **MARILYN SCHAFFER, Calgary**

**What? Square dancing? You must be out of your mind!!!** I have never danced much in my entire life! Yes, I was one of those who was raised with the teaching that if you danced, you would go straight to hell! Sooo – no dancing! No make-up! No movies! My parents were extremely religious, old-school Christians, as well as being very strict Norwegians! Now, don't get me wrong. I loved my family, my upbringing and even the "rules" didn't bother me.

**I was born in Medicine Hat and adopted at 5 days old.** At school, the kids teased me saying, "Nanana booboo, you're adopted, you're adopted!" I didn't know what that meant, so when I went home that day I asked my Mom what adopted meant. She asked me why I wanted to know. Because the kids at school said that I am adopted. So, my Mom sat me down and told me this wonderful story of how they came to "adopt" me. Dad worked for the CPR, and they were living in a box car that was converted to a home (trailer) close to the station. Of course, no indoor plumbing, electricity, heating, etc. They had already adopted my older brother 2 1/2 years earlier. They felt that they did not have room for a baby now. (When they got me, they put me in a dresser drawer.) However, my Mom said that she knew that God wanted them to have this baby girl, so she prayed and asked Him to bring me back into their life, if He truly wanted them to have me. And guess what – HE did - because here I am today! When my Mom told me this story, I was very happy! Nothing could be better than being picked by God! Right? I have never experienced feelings of abandonment or rejection. Just love!

**My first experience with the teachings surrounding dancing came when I was in Grade 4.** The girls in my class were doing a drill to "My Sweet Little Alice Blue Gown" for the Christmas Concert. My teacher had to convince Mom and Dad that it was not a dance, but a drill; much like a marching drill, so they agreed to let me be in it. I loved it!

I graduated from High School, went to the University of Calgary and got my Bachelor of Education degree. There I met the man who would later become my husband. He did not like dancing due to a very bad back. Still no dancing in my life! We were divorced 23 years later and I thought that now I could go to clubs and dance! Yay! Which is what I did! However, that kind of dancing was easy – not really dancing with a partner, but each person doing their own thing. I did not know how to waltz, so I would shy away from any invites to waltz!

**I have done many things in my life – school teacher, carpet sales, owner of a flooring store, women's counsellor in a large church in BC, and Director of both a women's and men's drug and alcohol rehabilitation centres.** When I retired, my daughter decided that it would be a good idea to put me on an "on-line dating service", because it was time for me to stop working so hard and have some fun in my life. Through this experience, I met Dale, and we seemed to hit it off! After dating for 6 months, we were at Heritage Park, Calgary one Sunday, and went into the Red Barn to see what was happening there. We did not know them at the time, but dancers Barrie & Carole were playing with the Prairie Mountain Fiddlers. They were getting people up to take part in some of the dances. Dale and I joined in and it was fun! Later as we were going through some of the other stores and houses at the park, a couple (Don & Dawn) came up to us and said that they had seen us at the Red Barn, and asked if we might be interested in square dancing. I explained that I had very little experience dancing, and Dale was in the same boat. This couple explained that the first 2 dances were free, and that we could just come and try it out to see if we liked it. Dale and I have single friends, and we needed couple friends, so we decided to give it a go!

**When we came to the Dots & Dashers Club, everyone made us feel very welcome!** When we messed up a square, (as we often did), they made us feel that it was no big deal, and that the important thing was that we were having fun! Which we were! When we heard that we would be learning 68 moves in our first year, I told Dale that I would never learn them all. We persevered though and graduated in 2016. When we learned that there would not be many dances from the end of April until dancing started up again in September, Dale and I decided to attend as many dances as possible from Red

Deer south, so that we would not forget these 68 moves over the summer. We are very happy with our entire "square dancing" experience. We have met so many great people, been to so many places in Alberta, and danced to many different callers (which has been a learning experience as well!). I know that both Dale and I say a "BIG THANK YOU" to the square dancing community for all of the care and support that you have shown to both of us. We will "dance on"!

## ALBERTA'S 50<sup>TH</sup> CONVENTION, LACOMBE 2018 - ALBERTA STRIKES GOLD! *Meet the Convention Committee*



### **GENERAL CHAIR and PROGRAMMING-SQUARES: Norman & Loretta Demeule**

Norman & Loretta started square dancing in 1975 in Fort Saskatchewan, and Norm started calling the following year. He became a club caller in 1978 for the first time in Bon Accord. In addition to an active and busy calling career, Norman & Loretta have served for many years in our provincial and national organizations. They served as General Chair Couple for six Alberta Conventions, Program Chair for several, and have attended and been on the program for all but two, of every Alberta Convention since 1979.



### **VICE-CHAIR: Wayne & Helen Lowthar**

Wayne started square dancing in high school in the early '50's, even entering some competitions. He helped to start the Camrose club in 1981 and held every executive position there is in the club. He worked on many Provincial Conventions, and joined Alberta Federation in the mid '90's.

Helen started dancing in Olds in 1996, moved to Nanaimo in 1997 and came back to Alberta in 1999. She has been dancing with the Camrose club ever since. She also has held many positions at the club level, is involved with Federation, and worked in many Provincial Conventions. In addition, she is editor of Alberta Central's Cloverleaf publication.

Together Wayne and Helen are active in other organizations including their local United Church board, and traveling all over Alberta promoting square dancing.



### **REGISTRATION: Olive & Allan Zwierschke**

As of 2012, Allan & Olive have both been square dancing for 50 years and Allan is beginning his 42<sup>nd</sup> year of calling. They have been very active at the club level, but have only been able to take in Provincial Conventions in recent years. They have, however, been registered for all the National Conventions to date and are looking forward to carrying on that tradition.

Allan and Olive enjoy traveling and RV-ing and Olive is a quilter, who also spends many hours with her computer and iPad. Olive is the web administrator for the Alberta Federation website.



### **SECRETARY: Glen & Audrey Eliasson**

Audrey & Glen started folk dancing with Glen's mother when they were knee high to a grasshopper, started Round Dancing in 1975 and Square Dancing in 1976 both with Clem and Doris Nadon. Glen was hired by the Spinning Sets Squares to cue rounds between tips in 1988. They started their own round dance club, The Kensington Strollers in 1990. Glen was hired to call for the Whirlaways in 1994 where he continued until they folded nineteen years later. Audrey and Glen have attended every A.S.R.D.F. convention (outside of two years due to illness) since 1990 and were on the provincial convention program cueing and teaching starting in 1991. They have been Round Dance Coordinators for many A.R.D.F. conventions and for the Canadian National in 1996.



### **TREASURER: Al & Loretta Turton**

Al & Loretta started square dancing in 1977 in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Allan was attending university at the time and they needed one weekly night out. They have been dancing continuously since that then. In 1979 they moved to Stettler and over the years, have joined a number of dance clubs. They have served on executive positions with the Central Alberta Dance Association and at the Alberta Federation level. They have attended provincial conventions since 1979 and have been involved in a good number of them as part of the convention committee. They also attended a



few national conventions, and international conventions held alternatively in western Canada & US. One of the highlights of their dancing career was participating in the opening ceremonies of the 1988 Winter Olympics, Calgary.



**PROGRAMMING – ROUNDS: Mary & Ron Milton**

Ron & Mary have been round and square dancing for 22 years, and cueing for 19. They enjoy teaching rounds and have travelled to many different places because of dance. This is their 6<sup>th</sup> Convention Committee.

Both Ron and Mary worked in the hospital industry and are now retired. Mary loves to read books of all kinds, and card making. Ron keeps busy with his wine kits.



**PROMOTION PUBLICITY & NEWSLETTER: Margaret & Ron Faas**

Ron & Margaret started dancing in 1969 north of Cochrane. In 1972 they moved to Wainwright and dancing was put on hold as they raised their three boys. They returned to dance in 1993 in Edgerton, and when that club folded in 2012 they joined both the Lloydminster and Brownfield clubs.

They have been President at the Club and Zone level several times, and Goodwill Ambassador at the Federation level. They are also the Editor of the Federation "SQUARE"ing A "ROUND" Alberta booklet. They have attended all the Conventions since 1997 and have served in many different capacities at eight of them, including General Chair Couple at Wainwright in 2011. They are proud recipients of the Alberta Rose award.

They enjoy RV-ing and doing things with their family and friends. Volunteering at the Senior Lodge in Wainwright and their local United Church keeps them busy as well.



**FACILITIES/SUPPORT SERVICES: Allan & Norma Serra**

Allan & Norma were married December 8, 1984 and started square dance lessons in January 1985. By July 1986 they were ready to attend their first convention - a combined Canadian National and Alberta Provincial held in Calgary. Over the years they have attended 30 Alberta Provincials and 14 Canadian Nationals. Allan & Norma have been members of Wandering Squares since 1987 and Treasurer since 1990. The fun activities with so many dancer friends keep Allan & Norma square and round dancing hopefully for many years to come.



**PARKING: Norman & Evelyn Start**

Evelyn and Norm Start live in Lacombe and were members of the Lacombe Parkland Promenaders. They served as Secretary for Convention 2000 in Olds, Treasurer in 2010 in Rocky Mountain House and Treasurer & Facilities in 2013 and 2015 in Lacombe.

Besides dancing, Norm enjoys curling, watching sports, reading and lawn care. Evelyn enjoys reading, photography, and scrapbooking.

**To register for the ALBERTA CONVENTION, September 1 -3, 2018, Lacombe  
and for the Convention Newsletter and all updates: [www.squaredance.ab.ca](http://www.squaredance.ab.ca)**



**CANADIAN NATIONAL SQUARE & ROUND DANCE CONVENTION**  
*"Make the Scene in 2018!", London, Ontario*

**LET'S TALK MODERN SQUARE DANCE! – by Linda Charlton.**

**It is fun, social and it is community.** We think modern square dance is really one of the most engaging forms of athletics in modern society!

We have enjoyed this activity for years. **My husband has been calling modern square dance for almost as long as we've been dancing, too.** There were tons of meetings and activities that required us to do things separately early in our marriage but then entered a chance to learn modern square dance. Well that was just the activity we needed to do things together, to meet people, to move to music and to dance our busyness away!



*Tom & Linda Charlton*

We value modern square dancing, too, as it's an activity for everyone. Anyone who loves music and meeting people, who enjoys learning new skills and sharing an activity together with others – this is modern square dancing. We had a career as dairy farmers and still made it a priority to go to local square dances. Yet the cows called every day so we didn't experience something of a grander national and international scale until our South Western Ontario Square & Round Dance Association (SWOSDA) hosted the 2008 Canadian National Convention. We joined a group of hard working, energetic and amazing people to volunteer and prepare to welcome the world to London ON. This was an experience we will never forget, nor take for granted. It was exceptional to not only host, but to meet people from around the world in London – we all danced the same moves and we all experienced new patterns, music and leaders who gave us the time of our dancing lives. **We were hooked on Nationals.**

Two years later we packed up our 5th wheel RV and headed east that summer. It was our time to travel to the Canadian National Convention in Halifax. The anticipation of a 2<sup>nd</sup> international dance in 2010 started right back in London in 2008!

We were grateful to attend the exciting 2016 Convention in Regina, Saskatchewan; our 3<sup>rd</sup> National. Now the excitement builds as we prepare with a tremendously talented group of people to host the 2018 Convention back in London ON, right back at the beautiful London Convention Centre.

After these experiences we can guarantee that from the first evening to the final event of these 3-day conventions, there is great dancing, laughing, playing, enjoying music, singing and making friends; and sometimes these new friends will be from places that you will only have dreamed of visiting one day.

Imagine solving a puzzle on the fly! It's a little bit like that at convention. You are in a square with seven other people whom you've possibly never met before and within a room of 800 other dancers. The caller has everyone weaving and moving about in surprisingly beautiful patterns. You learn very quickly that the Convention dance leaders are there to make you winners; and they do!

**A National Convention brings opportunity to share a love of music and the challenge of working together, all for a common purpose – to have fun, to relax and to move with confidence and energy;** energized to keep you coming back for dance after dance after dance! The square & round dance movement is truly a community. We were late to the National Convention scene but really it's never too late to get started.

As hosts of the 2018 20th Canadian National, SWOSDA looks forward to welcoming dancers for the first time, or back to, this exciting event. We are inviting dancers to come explore our beautiful South Western Ontario. Three easy goals for July 19 – 21, 2018: dancing, exploring and making new friends, all through the 20th Canadian National Convention. Let's all "Make the Scene in 2018". The following is a link to the complete outline for this very special event; "take a little peek" and "promenade all the way around" to London next summer. <http://www.squaredance.ca/2018/>

## 20<sup>th</sup> CONVENTION 2018



20<sup>th</sup> 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  
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12 Anne Marie Cres.  
Kincardine, ON N2Z 2M9  
Phone – 519-396-7228

Email :  
[convention2018@squaredance.ca](mailto:convention2018@squaredance.ca)  
Website :  
[www.squaredance.ca/2018](http://www.squaredance.ca/2018)

**Make The Scene In 2018**