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.

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CHATTER FROM THE CHIEF - Claudia Littlefair Same Image Problem 70 Years Later

When I was reading the book, "As I See Saw It – Bob Osgood" (see "A Glimpse of the Past" on page 5), I was surprised to read that square dancing suffered the same negative image in the 1950's as we are

facing today - almost 70 years later!

Bob Osgood wrote, "One complaint frequently voiced was about the image square dancing was getting from magazines, newspapers, and especially, from motion pictures. Square dancing of sorts was portrayed in many movies. **Most of them were Westerns, where a bunch of pioneer types would get up and, in the course of telling the story, do somebody's concept of a square dance.**

Uberta

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Many times these cinematic views involved knowledgeable individuals, real callers, or

dancers. But many times, the dancing depicted tended to irk the new dancers just coming out of class, and the callers whose responsibility it was to <u>steer clear of the old barnyard feeling</u>.

Fully aware of this, we started early in the game looking for some individuals or organizations who might depict square dancing in a favorable way, and make it available on film. We weren't too successful."

Fast forward to the early 2000's, when CALLERLAB hired Starworks to conduct a study on square dancing. The focus groups were baby boomers, primarily in their 40's and 50's. The results of the research was summarized by Starworks in the following statement, and it is this negative image that we are still up against.

"Square dancing has an image problem in the general public, particularly among those in the targeted empty nester Baby Boomer age group. This target population sees <u>square dancing as out of date, country oriented,</u> for hicks and hillbillies, using old-fashioned music and patronized by senior citizens in fluffy dresses with big hair, big belts and RV's.

"Most people say they are familiar with square dancing, but their familiarity is with traditional square dancing, not with modern western square dancing. <u>As a result, their [baby boomers] image of square dancing is strongly influenced by the</u> <u>traditional square dancing and does not reflect the realities of modern western dance</u>."

So What's Solution?

EDUCATE THE PUBLIC: Every time we put out a poster, a newspaper ad, a brochure, a leaflet we have an opportunity to educate the public about who we are, what we do, and what we look like! Many clubs have their own Facebook pages or websites. These are ideal places to show the general public who we are and what modern western square dancing is all about.

EDUCATE YOURSELF: As dancers, we should be able to explain the difference between traditional and today's square dancing (see ad on next page for more information). More importantly, be ready and prepared to describe how dance personally benefits you.

ASK THE MEDIA FOR HELP: Take some time to explain to the news reporter about the negative image that we are trying to dispel. Once they understand our problem, they can help by addressing it in their write-ups and photos. Radio ads can use something more current than the traditional hoedown music in the background. Alternatively, submit your own news articles and weave information in that supports the image we want. Get help from the experts – ask the newspaper's

design department to make up your ad. Below is an example of a draft ad copy submitted to Metro Calgary News, and the final ad as designed by their department. Note the photo shows all ages, casually dressed and smiling dancers.



So, whenever and wherever possible, give people a <u>new and unexpected image</u> of who we are. Let this image conflict with the preconceived negative image, so people can see square dancing in a different light.

Editor's Note: The following article has been edited, with permission, for length and the last 2 paragraphs have been added on by the editor to make this article 'newspaper-ready'. For the complete article, contact John Myers at <u>myers.j1947@qmail.com</u>. John & Jean Myers currently reside in Victoria, BC where John teaches square dancing at the local rec and community centres.

HOW ADULTS MEET FRIENDS - by John Myers

Kids make new friends easily. There are schools, sports, and a slew of extracurricular activities where kids can form relationships. When you are an adult, the process isn't quite so effortless. Commitments such as work and family limit free time and, unlike childhood, it can feel awkward to ask someone to be your friend. According to a 2013 study published_in the *Psychological Bulletin*, studies consistently showed that the older you get, the fewer friends you have. Life changes. Moves, career transitions, relationship changes, and different life stages bring a shift in relationships and frequently leave us drifting apart from our current collection of friends.



Establishing a friendship takes effort and time but there are studies that say a circle of friends is biologically valuable. Researchers at Brigham Young University have concluded, *"Having too few friends [as an adult] is the equivalent mortality risk to smoking 15 cigarettes a day and is riskier than obesity"*. But for some, meeting new people can be daunting. Our own anxieties, skepticism, doubt, fear, lack of confidence or lack of initiative can hinder us. So how do you find new people to kick start a friendship? For many, the answer lies in the past. There was a time in the middle of the 20th century when almost the whole population of the Western world was devoid of a social network. More than half the population of the town, city, province and country between the ages of 18 and 35 were shipped to foreign countries and stayed there for years experiencing horrific events in their day to day life. WWII set up a social/friend void unlike any social experience before. When troops came home, they came home to solitude, plagued with memories of the horror of war. They needed to quickly return to normal. They needed to make friends. A process needed to be found that provided new contacts quickly, easily and in large numbers so that a return to a normal life would follow. Few had jobs and jobs they had were often low paying.

These enterprising young people needed to create opportunities for social cohesion that was inexpensive, fun with large numbers of people without drugs, alcohol, smoking, foul language and a place where singles, especially single ladies were safe. One of those strategies survives today: Modern Western Square Dancing.

Today's Square Dancing opens your life to new people, new acquaintances and new friends, in an ideal setting for social interaction. Square dancing is team dancing – eight people working together to carry out the dance steps that are called out by the dance instructor. It's non-competitive. Fun and laughter play a big part in the dance, helping to dispel any anxiety or apprehension a new dancer may feel. Dancers are encouraged to form new teams of eight for each set, so it's easy to meet and interact with others. People of all ages, singles and couples, with none to some experience, dance together to a variety of music, including pop, rock, easy listening, Latin, classical, old and new country. There is no fancy footwork or lead/follow partner - if you can walk and listen at the same time, you can square dance.

So, make new friends the easy way - join us. We dance at (fill in your club's information). Dress is casual, and cost is ______. Find out more at (club website) or call (contact name and phone number).

EVERY ARGUMENT ABOUT SQUARE DANCING EVER

- Source: SquareYourDance.com December 22, 2014 Post by Shaney

- I think we should change X.
- I agree.
- I disagree.
- It's because of X that we are losing dancers.
- But I like X.
- That has nothing to do with it.
- But I don't like X.
- That has nothing to do with it.
- Callerlab blah blah blah.
- Callerlab isn't blah blah blah.
- By the way, it's not a level, it's a program.

- X is fun and dancing is supposed to be fun.
- But the dancers are too old to do X.
- The problem isn't X. It's that there are too many calls to learn.
- No, it's that we push dancers too hard.
- No, it's that dancers can't dance the basics.
- No, it's that we don't advertise.
- No, it's that our videos are not good enough.
- No, it's the dress code.
- No, it's the music.

collective sigh

Here's my take. Just make a pledge to have as much fun as possible with your own club (however you define fun to be) and try some new things sometimes. And stop worrying about the sky falling. Square dancing is less popular than it used to be, but so are ballet, board games, and sewing. That's just how the world works. Focus on making it as fun as possible for yourself and your club, and have the spirit of adventure to try new things.

When my grandson, Billy, and I entered our vacation cabin, we kept the lights off until we were inside to keep from attracting pesky insects. Still, a few fireflies followed us in. Noticing them before I did, Billy whispered, "It's no use, Grandpa. Now the mosquitoes are coming after us with flashlights."

* *

A 6-year-old was asked where his grandma lived. "Oh," he said, "She lives at the airport, and whenever we want her, we just go get her. Then, when we're done having her visit, we take her back to the airport."

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WHAT'S THE SECRET? - by Barry Clasper

The CALLERLAB Square Dance KnowledgeBase (http://knowledge.callerlab.org) has a section called "Winning Ways". It is a collection of stories people have shared over the years describing their experiences with recruiting new dancers, advertising and promotion, changing their club organization, changing their teaching methods, reinvigorating flagging clubs, and many other efforts. At the time of this writing, we have 56 Winning Ways articles.



As the curator of the KnowledgeBase I have been asked many times if these stories display a common element, some magical ingredient that leads to success. The answer is YES – but you're not going to like it. You're probably hoping there is a "silver bullet" - some easy, cheap, effortless, magical thing you can do that will assure success. Well it ain't any of that. And while all the success stories have this element, its presence doesn't *guarantee* success, merely enables it.

So what is this all-important ingredient? It's WORK! Or more specifically, TEAMWORK! A group of people who build a plan, execute diligently, and persevere until it gets results. And where do such teams come from? Well, they kind of coalesce. They form around a leader; someone who inspires, persuades, cajoles, and corrals people around them into a group with purpose and drive. Sort of like the irritant that causes an oyster to form a pearl.

WAIT – before you turn the page because you don't have one of these leader-type folks handy (I heard you roll your eyes and mutter "... don't have one of them"), bear with me another paragraph or two. If you're now thinking you're doomed because you don't have Winston Churchill on your club executive, take a breath. There's still a way.

First, you need to identify the problem you need to tackle. Not usually an issue, there's lots of those: recruiting more dancers, retaining new dancers, organizing for multiple class intakes, etc. etc. So what are you going to try to make better? Then you need to identify some people who agree the problem is a priority worth working on. Then you need to brainstorm how your group might tackle the problem. This is where the KnowledgeBase can really help. The Winning Ways stories are chock full of ideas. You can mine it for ideas, and you can also check your own ideas against it to see how they might have worked for others. The KnowledgeBase has tons of other materials, too. For example, the CALLERLAB Home Office has loaded almost 800 audio recordings of convention education sessions, many of which deal with applicable topics.

A plan should emerge out of this brainstorming session: what ideas are we going to employ and how are you going to execute? Solidify the team: assign roles and tasks, set deadlines for deliverables and outcomes, work out how to track progress. Again, many Winning Ways stories include those elements. And then ... DO IT!

Do you see what I did there? YOU are Winston Churchill. You don't have to be a messiah. Just do a little thinking and planning and talking and herding. Be willing to put yourself out there a little bit.

Visit the KnowledgeBase and see how others have done it: <u>http://knowledge.callerlab.org</u> Click on Winning Ways.

About the Author

Barry lives in Toronto, Ontario with his wife Pam. They started dancing in 1973, just two weeks after the birth of their youngest son. Barry started calling in 1984 when a local C2 tape group asked for help with some things they couldn't find on teaching tapes. He figured if he was going to write material to help them, he might as well call it. Since then he has expanded in both directions and now calls from Basic through C4.

As a dancer, Barry loves choreography that is smooth and flowing yet also provides some mental stimulation and the occasional surprise. When calling, he strives to create this effect through smooth danceable choreography flavoured with a bit of unusual positioning to create a dance experience containing both physical and mental elements.

Barry changed careers in September 2007. He retired from IBM after 30 years and is now a full-time caller and able to travel more than he has in the past. He's called at weekends and conventions in 8 provinces, DC, and 26 states, as well as Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Japan, England, the Czech Republic, Taipei and Beijing. He's also a staff caller with the Academy for Advanced and Challenge Enthusiasts (AACE).

Barry is a member of CALLERLAB and the Gay Callers Association. Within CALLERLAB he is a past Chairman of the Board (2013-2015), has served on the Executive Committee (2011-2017) and has been a member of the Board of Governors since 2009. He has written articles for Zip Coder, The Call Sheet and American Square Dance Magazine.

A GLIMPSE OF THE PAST

This column features excerpts from the book **"As I See Saw It –Bob Osgood"**, reprinted with permission from the author and square dance caller, Paul Moore. This book is also a complete history of Modern Western Square Dance (MWSD). Jim Mayo, First Chairman of CALLERLAB, provided the following review comments: "This is truly the only book about the whole of MWSD and it is certainly the most complete (and accurate) book that will ever be written about this huge activity." Paul had access to all of the material that crossed Bob Osgood's desk at Sets in Order / American Square Dance Society. This book tells, in a very readable style, the story of Bob Osgood and his role in Square Dancing from the late 1940s through 2003. This is the story of MWSD as told by the man who was there and made it happen. We believe every caller and dancer should read this book to know what happened during the boom era, the creation of CALLERLAB, the start and growth of the National Square Dance Convention, and more. For additional information, please contact Paul Moore at paulmoore@wildblue.net or look for this 600+ page book on Amazon.ca (\$26).

Editor's Note: Last issue we saw how the first square classes evolved from open dances to formal lessons where styling and smooth dancing could be taught along with the square dance calls (1947). Six week-long lessons spread like wild-fire, with more and more clubs starting up and more and more callers stepping up to learn the craft.

A SQUARE DANCE MAGAZINE IS BORN

At this time our ideas for a square dance magazine were really jelling. Two of the local dancer associations showed enthusiasm for the idea, and people volunteered to help with circulation and distribution. We thought now this would be really great if 'Pappy' [Shaw] and his dancers [Cheyenne Mountain Dancers] could make an appearance in Los Angeles and we could come out with our first issue of the magazine simultaneously. With luck on our side, 'Pappy' said he could make the Fall 1948 tour with the kids to the West Coast.

In this new magazine, I planned to publish new calls and figures, successful ideas about forming and running a club, and such other news of square dancing that was of general interest. The magazine was to report such news of the clubs as would interest other clubs – an entertainment novelty applicable elsewhere, an innovation in publicity, or a clever invitation. It was to be a how-to-do it magazine. Party ideas were especially important because the dancers get together for fun and friendship and they are always ready for a party.

I talked to Charley Dillinger, the printer and graphic artist who printed the Squirt magazine [the soda company where both Bob Osgood and Charley worked]. Since he already was on the payroll at the Squirt Company and he had shown interest in printing a square dance magazine, it was logical to start with him. **Charley and I did a mockup for a national magazine**

which we called 'Sets In Order' (SIO) because that was the call that every caller used to get the squares up on the floor to dance.

It was at this time in the planning stages for the magazine when Frank Grundeen, the cartoonist [and new square dancer] I had just discovered, entered the scene. When the first issue of SIO came out in November 1948, its back cover displayed the first [of 444] of the Grundeen cartoons that would be a highlight of the magazine for the next thirty-seven years. The world of Grundeen, outside of square dancing included daily syndicated Donald Duck cartoon comic strips for the Walt Disney Corporation.

At the beginning of 1948 everything was going great guns. We had the dates for Shaw and the kids to come out; we hired the Hollywood High

GRUNDEEN'S WORLD of SQUARE DANCING REGINNERS CLASS TONITE

"Could you please slowly walk thru that Bow to Your Corner thing."

School auditorium, which I think holds around two thousand for Thursday night, and the gymnasiums at Hollywood High School (the large gym holds about 200 people) for workshops on Friday night, all day Saturday, and Sunday morning. Then we booked Monday at Pasedena Civic Auditorium which holds about 3000 – all tickets for the two main shows were sold out. There was so much demand for tickets to the workshops, everybody wanted to go, that it turned out it was either the President and his partner or Vice President and his partner of each of the existing clubs were all that were given tickets. That was all the tickets there were.

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Not only did the audiences love the show, but so did the press:

"...No ordinary kids these, for they are the Cheyenne Mountain Dancers. And the voice of the caller? That belongs to Dr. Lloyd Shaw. Square dancing, for many years, locked up in small barns, hidden in the confines of private homes, occasionally slipped into (and just as swiftly slipped out of) a "popular" dance, has once again come into its own. Much of the credit for its overwhelming success belongs to these Cheyenne kids and their beloved 'Pappy'. ..."

SIO included a program of the Cheyenne Mountain Dancers' first performance, making that first issue a valuable keepsake; as a result, at the performances and during the weeks to follow, we picked up several thousand subscribers – enough to continue. So the magazine was born. But there are some major changes in square dancing and in SIO to come.

To view all 444 issues of the Sets In Order (SIO) magazine go to: <u>http://newsquaremusic.com/sioindex.html</u>.



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 <u>claudia.littlefair@gmail.com</u> and I would be happy to contact them.

ALAN & MARION HINCH, Calgary



We were looking for something to do, and I gave Alan a choice: ballroom or square dancing. He chose square dancing and we joined the Highland Swingers in 1990. We also learned round dancing during our time with them after graduating from the square dance class. Art McMullen used to show us a new step every few weeks during our regular square dance nights. We danced for about 5 years and then my health stopped me from being able to dance.

Knee surgery fixed most of my problems enough so that I could dance again, so we started squares and rounds in the fall of 2016. Last summer we attended Fort Saskatchewan's Jamboree. It was our first weekend event. Meeting new people is probably the best part of dancing and of course, the exercise while having fun.

Prior to retiring, Alan worked in the oil industry as a consultant and I was a secretary as well as a blackjack and roulette dealer. Now that we are retired, oil painting on porcelain is my favorite thing to do and is becoming one for Alan as well. I took up painting about 20 years ago and have been doing it ever since. We have a studio in our basement where there is a lot of white china which we have picked up over the years. Probably more than we will ever paint. It's a bit like being a quilter with lots of fabric!

We have been to Montreal, Ottawa, Vancouver and Winnipeg in Canada as well as several cities in the USA and a couple of trips to Australia for their painting conventions. We have plans to go to Ontario this summer for a porcelain school and then attend another seminar while there. Next year we plan to go to Australia for their show on the Gold Coast.

Samples of Marion's Handiwork



and Alan's Handiwork



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'.**

Variations of questions have arisen on how blind individuals operate in this sighted world. I would like to explain some of the aids available to make life less complicated. Over the years, I have been asked many times how I manage to identify articles or colors, money, etc. There are so many aids in just about every aspect of life, it would be difficult to explain them all.

Most frequently heard is, "How do you know what dollar bill you have?" Unless you take time to examine these bills you wouldn't notice the Braille cells on the upper left hand corner. Now I have to admit, I've never inquired if the cell is on the upper left corner or is it at the bottom right corner of the bill. A \$5 has one Braille cell, which consists of six dots in a vertical form with three dots on each side. The \$10 has two cells, the \$20 has three cells, the \$50 has four cells and the \$100 has the first cell and the fourth cell. I still haven't seen a \$1000 - were there any new ones printed? An easy way to identify these bills once they're in your wallet is to fold a \$5 in half, the \$10 is folded length wise, a \$20 is left flat and the \$50 is folded in half but set behind the \$20's. In the coin section - the penny had a smooth edge and also an octagon shaped edge before they were no longer in circulation. The nickel has a smooth edge, the dime has ridges and is smaller, and the quarter has ridges but is larger. Your Loonie has the octagon edge and the Toonie has both smooth and ridges alternating. The Bank of Canada makes money readers available to the Blind but since the new plastic money was printed the reader I have now speaks French – I wonder what is going on here??? Guess I'll have to find the solution in the near future. Cheques are still available and they have raised lines so we know where to write the info but the only difficulty here is that there is no way of knowing if the ink is flowing in the pen. I've been notified a few times that my cheque is blank or that only half of the written part is readable. The worst of all is when for some reason I wrote everything on the same line. How in the world did I manage that!!!?"

There are many ways of identifying colors whether it's clothing or any objects with a flat surface. Dyno Tape can be Brailled and stuck to the labels or sewing tape can be sewn on. The Pen Friend has sticky-backed discs which you can record on then paste it to the garment. It goes through many cycles of washings. This can also be used to mark CD's, books, appliances, etc. When the nib of this pen is put on this disc, it will read out loud what you have recorded. When I Braille canned goods with commercial magnets I put it on the top of the can. It works well most of the time, but sometimes the magnet falls off if the can tips, in which case the can is left unopened. It definitely saves many unplanned meals.

Computers have been around for a long time now and it's a wonderful tool for the blind. We have a program called "Jaws" and it serves its name very well. It natters on forever until you hit the control key. Whatever key is touched on the keyboard, Jaws will speak it whether it's a letter or word. It can be adjusted to your preference. One of the main purposes of a computer in my case was to assist me in reading my own mail. Whatever is scanned on the scanner will appear on the screen, and as long as it's a computer print, newspaper or typed, it will read the document. Sometimes it reads way too much that is not necessary (that's where it gets very irritating), but we can't have it all. Handwriting is not compatible, nor is large or bold print or images. As the years went by with training here and there, I managed to do more. There is so much available to help us but I'm lagging so far behind. Maybe this year I'll take a look at iPhones and tablets to try and catch up. Touch should be easier than key strokes. Whenever someone else is using my computer, I just sit back and observe their reactions and comments regarding the speed and sounds of the computerized voice. For some reason it really annoys them. Wonder why nobody likes to hear him speak? I'm listening to him every day and, yes,

sometimes he drives me around the bend too, so I hit the magic 'control' key, which brings instant silence, "Ahhhh". On the positive side, it works wonders. Not only that, he's such a sweet guy - his name is Husky Harry. What more do you need?



ALBERTA'S 50TH DANCE CONVENTION 2018, LACOMBE Trail-In Dance: Friday, August 31 Convention: Saturday to Monday, September 1 - 3

Now that the Holiday Season has passed so quickly once again, we can start to make plans for the New Year. We hope that your plans for 2018 will include attending the **50th Annual ASRDF Convention in Lacombe** on the Labour Day weekend in September.

Please register early to qualiy for **Early Bird Prizes**, one draw for registrations received by February 28, and another one for registrations received by May 31. (And yes, if you have already registered, or register before February 28, **your name will be entered in BOTH draws**.) The first draw will be made at the ASRDF Executive Meeting on March 18 and the winner notified by phone/mail.

Prize #1 Christmas Table Runner – approximately 43 cm x 152 cm (17" x 60"), machine made by Olive Zwierschke. **Prize #2** – details to come at a later date.



To register for the ALBERTA CONVENTION, September 1 -3, 2018, Lacombe and for the Convention Newsletter and all updates: <u>www.squaredance.ab.ca</u>

After putting her grandchildren to bed, a grandmother changed into old slacks and a droopy blouse and proceeded to wash her hair. As she heard the children getting more and more rambunctious, her patience grew thin. Finally, she threw a towel around her head and stormed into their room, putting them back to bed with stern warnings. As she left the room, she heard the three-year-old say with a trembling voice, "Who was THAT?"

My young grandson called the other day to wish me Happy Birthday. He asked me how old I was, and I told him, "72". My grandson was quiet for a moment, and then he asked, "Did you start at one?"



Lots to do in London during the convention!



Covent Garden Market



Boler Mountain Treetop Adventure Park



Museum London





Banting House National Historic Site of Canada



Fanshawe Pioneer Village

Labatt Brewery



20th National Square & Round Dance Convention 2018 July 19, 20, 21, 2018 London, Ontario



More Attractions and Day Trip Ideas!



Home County Music & Art Festival July 20-22, 2018



East Park



Kustermans Berry Farms

Day Trip Options



Grand Bend





Port Stanley

Visit our website for more London information: www.londontourism.ca



And be sure to visit the conference website: www.squaredance.ca/2018/