



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.



TIME TO CHANGE? - by Editor Claudia Littlefair

I've always felt that we are lucky in Alberta to have more Mainstream clubs than Plus. This isn't the case in some other areas, such as California, where Mainstream clubs are few and far between. Often new dancers are expected to learn the Mainstream and Plus programs in one dance season! This "rush to Plus" results in dancers who are poorly taught and often quit out of frustration. There is simply too much material to cover in one season.

I think the same could be said for the Mainstream program. When Dave & I were taught 26 years ago, the Mainstream program was a two-year lesson commitment, and many new dancers quit before the end of the two years. By early 2000's, the lesson content stayed the same but the time to learn them was chiseled down to one year in hopes of retaining more dancers. We may have gotten more dancers, but it didn't solve the problem of too much material to cover in one season.

Today there is a solution being proposed that would reduce both the lesson content AND learning time, leaving more time to simply enjoy dancing what is taught, knowing that the more dancers dance, the better they become. The next two articles explain this new program called 'Social Square Dancing'. Some of you may recognize this program which was presented to us by caller Jerry Story during his 2015 "Alberta Tour". At that time the program was called 'Club 50'.

WHAT IS THE 'SOCIAL SQUARE DANCING' PROGRAM?

- Excerpt from CALLERLAB Knowledgebase

In 2016 CALLERLAB authorized the formation of the Sustainable Square Dance Committee and charged it with developing materials to support callers interested in exploring the use of the experimental lesson system called Sustainable Square Dance (SSD). Earlier versions of this system had been in use in some areas for quite some time under the name 'Club 50'.

In July, 2020 CALLERLAB announced this system and the supporting Committee were renamed **Social Square Dance (SSD)**. Only the name changed. All existing supporting materials still apply. At the same time, the CALLERLAB Board of Governors formally endorsed **the use of SSD as a recommended vehicle for a rapid restart of square dancing after the COVID pandemic subsidies.**

SSD is designed to provide a 50 call entry program that can be taught quickly, roughly 20-25 hours of instruction, and yet serve as a realistic destination program for long-term square dancers. While the idea of a shortened entry list is certainly not unique to SSD, its design differs in providing a mechanism for keeping dancers happy in the entry program for at least 2 years, and in many cases, forever.

This article collects in one place documentation and materials that support the use of the SSD system. Some were created by the CALLERLAB SSD Committee while others were created by people using the system in the field. For this material, go to: <http://callerlabknowledge.org/?p=3297&>. To access the SSD Teaching Guide go to: <http://callerlabknowledge.org/?p=1874>.

SAVE SQUARE DANCING

The Social Square Dancing Program (SSD) - by Callers Jerry Story & Deborah Carroll-Jones

For Square Dancing to ever thrive again, we have three known FACTS that must be addressed:

1. Having only ONE class each year does not work very well anymore.

INDEX

Editor: Time to Change?	1
What is SSD?	1
Save Square Dancing	1
Join SSD on FaceBook	3
Intro to One-Couple Plus Phantom Couple Square Dancing	4
Two Person (Minimal Phantoms) Square Dancing	5
Round Dancing Via Zoom	7
Lighter Side of Darkness	8
Kelly's Korner – A Double Take ...	9
Sq.Dance's History	10

2. Plain Vanilla Standard Application to EVERY Level does not work.
3. Compared to the rest of the world, American dancers are a bit sloppy.

Clubs, Dancers, Dancer Associations and Callers ALL want the same thing! **We all want this very special activity to continue, to grow and to thrive.** We are all on the same side and we must work together if we are going to bear witness to this goal. That means things as we have always known them or done them HAVE TO change.

FACT #1 - Having only ONE class a year.

If today's people are having fun they certainly do not want to wait an entire year to invite their friends! THIS MUST CHANGE!

Today's people will bring us plenty of dancers with 2 or 3 starts each year. Square Dancing has always been built strong by "friends bring friends bring friends". Our current structure makes it difficult for new dancers to excite their friends about taking lessons a whole year later. It just takes too long. SSD 50 Calls Standard Application (SA) with 2 or 3 starts each year is much more suited for success. This will reinstate our most powerful marketing tool – "friends bring friends".

FACT #2 - Plain Vanilla Standard Application to EVERY Level does not work.

This takes the integrity out of the Programs and destroys the recruitment base ruining our best marketing tool "friends bring friends". Without a little variety or maybe some symmetry, it makes it way too easy to move on up and leave your friends behind even when they're really not ready to move on themselves.

Instead, how about just getting the new dancers out of teach mode and into DANCE mode for awhile? This is what we need! SSD accomplishes this goal. Without this educational threshold creates a rush to the next program. When NEW dancers are rushing to the next program the last thing on their mind is bringing in new people!!

So, how do we start to reverse our current (unintentionally) destructive trend, before it's past the point of no return, and before our clubs are completely dead?

Answer: Clubs make a two or three-year pledge to use current class resources and help create 50-Call Standard Application SSD Clubs within their existing clubs. No Plus classes until they have made SSD a success. If Monday night is the club's class night, turn it into an EVERY-Monday-night-never-stop-year-round SSD Multiple Classes/Club night. This is the Most Important Part of the every other Saturday Night Plus Club!

There IS something in it for the Plus clubs in due time. This requires PATIENCE as well as FORESIGHT! Fight the temptation to move new dancers to Plus too soon. Just Let Them DANCE!

FACT #3 - Sloppy dancers.

After making SSD successful (might take 2 or 3 years) then and only then does the club offer a ONE start each year for Plus Class. This 9 to 12 month class would include the rest of the Basic and Mainstream calls, maybe a little variety and symmetry training and of course the Plus calls.

NOW, from this point forward, EVERY YEAR thereafter, new dancers will begin tricking into Plus clubs! Retention rate will be near 100%.

Mainstream dancers will have choices. They either learn the rest of the Plus calls or be happy DANCING SSD and helping build the club strong.

The neatest thing is: these new dancers will know how to dance!!! We all know the effort it takes to keep new dancers' confidence up as they learn where and how to maneuver. By giving them MORE TIME to learn, dance and assimilate the 50 calls, they naturally become more proficient.

Part of our new wave criteria would be to EMPHASIZE Team Dancing, doing the same steps and flourishes all together. Grand Square will eventually be 32 steps once again!! We want smooth flowing, well timed choreography with no more

"stop and go" dancing. It's all about the FLOW! CALLERLAB and the new SSD Committee will be there every step of the way helping callers achieve these goals.

The greatest thing will be the high rate of retention due to this new structure. It would be entirely probable for the retention rate for existing clubs to shoot up to nearly 100%. The last great benefit is the "user friendly," positive marketing transfer we will create. Square Dancing will now be available and served in the doses today's people like it served to them, instead of in the doses that we have insisted it be served to them.

Many may be wondering if we have any proof that this new system will work in practice. It is! In little old Fairfield, Iowa - Jerry Story's home town. There are others in Wisconsin, Chicago, Western PA, Dallas Tx, as well as in several other states, who are not afraid to step out of the OLD and into the NEW, and are successfully building SSD Clubs!

It has even taken root in California - a place where 99% Plus groups exist. Ask the world famous Kip Garvey. The Jackson Claim Jumpers are really jumping. This program will help areas like California rebuild the activity the correct way for a sustainable and Social Square Dancing future.

The SSD Teaching Guide is out and has some suggested flow modules consisting of variety and symmetry. More information will be forthcoming on both these techniques. Also the SSD FAQ document will be coming soon and its full of valuable information.

Hear this interesting statistic: **after six 12 week rotations in Fairfield, they had built their SSD group to nearly 100 new dancers!** Out of this group of nearly 100, and after dancing SSD for another year, 30 chose to go on to Plus.

The 70 that did not choose to go on, but rather stay where they are for now, plan to bring their friends to the next NEW CLASS starting in just a few short weeks. It all just makes too much sense. These 70 new dancers who chose not to go on, would have been our current structure's DISCARDS! These would be the dancers who today we throw away. Ironically, this same 70% figure is very close to our average national dropout rate. **There are brighter days ahead for our wonderful activity.**

Some have mentioned that it takes 2 nights a week to make this initiative work and that they just don't have the time. We say, please re-evaluate your current situation and try again to join us. In other words: if need be, give up that one square in your A group or fold up that dying Plus club with 5 couples in it, and join our winning team. It only takes ONE night a week to operate a SSD Program. One & 1/2 or 2 hours class followed by one & 1/2 or 2 hours SSD Club Dance.

Generally speaking today, to go through to Mainstream/Plus, requires 2 nights a week - club on one night, class on the other. SSD likes class and club on the same night, once a week. Then SSD focuses on FUN & FELLOWSHIP!

We hope your priorities lead to the CALLERLAB APPROVED Social Square Dance Initiative. Dancers now have choices! They can dance 50 calls Standard Application and never know they are not dancing Mainstream. Or, they can help the SSD program become a huge success to insure their Plus club stays alive and well.

We like options with no hurry to go to Plus! Patience is a virtue! If clubs have patience, we can use their help and they will reap the benefit.

Contact CALLERLAB at callerlab@aol.com and join the SSD Committee to keep up with this exciting new venture. The basic goal: adhere to the SSD suggestion, "**Make SSD successful before even thinking about Plus**". Simple, really, and IT WORKS by resetting the activity on a sustainable path. It's a brand new day!!

JOIN 'SOCIAL SQUARE DANCING (SSD)' ON FACEBOOK!

This group is focused on implementation of the Social Square Dancing program and all the related successes and challenges. There are over 500 members, callers and dancers, with new members joining on an on-going basis. Read what others have to say about this program and their experiences with it.

To join go to: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/319491818505954/>.



INTRO TO ONE-COUPLE PLUS PHANTOM-COUPLE SQUARE DANCING

- by Calgary & District Square & Round Dancers Association

If you're like me, you are missing our "friendship set to music", the dancing and camaraderie of our group.

I'm sure you've heard by now about Virtual Square Dancing via Zoom. It's a world wide phenomenon that's "virtually" taken off. People from all over the world are dancing to callers/cuers from all over the world in their living-rooms, kitchens, garages, basements and even on their driveways. (You do not need the same amount of room you'd need as for a real square, but you do need enough room to move around a smaller "square".)

Virtual square dancing is safe and is as close to the real thing as we can get. It keeps us in touch with our long lost friends, keeps us dancing, exercising, keeps our skills up and an added benefit is it is teaching us the new skill of dancing with a phantom couple which will undoubtedly come in handy when a live square is one or even two couples short of a full square!

INTRODUCTORY SESSIONS - If you've never danced with phantoms before, this is for YOU!

Square Dance Calgary offers three INTRO TO VIRTUAL DANCING Zoom sessions for One Couple plus One Phantom couple dancing (or One person plus 3 Phantom dancers), for dancers who have been leery about dancing via Zoom or who thought we'd be back dancing live by now, and anyone who just wants to dance again! (Zoom really is a safe way to connect!)

Instructor Lorne Smith takes it slow and easy, teaching the basics of Zoom and how to dance with a phantom couple in your box of 4. This is at the Mainstream level. These three introductory sessions are posted on the C&D website, go to:

<http://www.squaredancecalgary.com/virtual/virtual-intro/>

HOW TO JOIN ZOOM MEETINGS FOR WEEKLY DANCES



It is not necessary to have Zoom installed on your computers/devices, but it does make it simple to join "meetings". To download a free version of Zoom: <https://zoom.us/download>

Plan to join the meeting at around 6:45 pm (dancing starts at 7pm MDT), enter the event by clicking on the Zoom link below. You DO NOT need to have Zoom on your own computer to take part. You just need to click on the meeting link. Be sure to turn on audio and video in the lower left hand corner of the zoom screen. You can use your computer, iPad or smart phone. If you do not have an electronic device, you can still call in, even on a land line, to hear the caller and music. But using Zoom allows you to see others so you can check your positioning and even "pin" another couple to use as your virtual guides".

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6456194758> (meeting ID 645 619 4758).

If you wish to only call in via a phone line, call 1-587-328-1099 and use the same meeting ID 645 619 4758.

This is the same link for all dances offered by Lorne Smith and Calgary Square Dance. Lorne offers MS 7pm MDT Wednesdays, Plus 7pm MDT Thursdays and Advance/C1 6:30pm MDT Sundays. This really is a fun way to keep our skills honed and get our brains working by learning a whole new way to square dance!

If you wish to be added to the Calgary Square Dance e-mail list for virtual dancing, please e-mail Lorne Smith at l.b.smith@shaw.ca or Barrie McCombs at bmccombs@ucalgary.ca

Links to all Calgary Square Dance Zoom dances can also be found on the Square Dance Calgary Facebook site:

<https://www.facebook.com/squaredancecalgary> then click on the "events" link.

And if you'd like to see what the rest of the world is doing, join the Virtual Square Dances group

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/VirtualSquareDances/> for links to virtual dances hosted daily for all levels from MS to C4 and even rounds!

If you have any questions or you'd like more info, please contact Lorne Smith, l.b.smith@shaw.ca Barrie McCombs, bmccomb@ucalgary.ca Dawn Gilchrist, dawn.gilchrist@shaw.ca or Brenda Ryder, budbren1@gmail.com.

Hope to see you across the screen!

TWO-PERSON (MINIMAL PHANTOMS) SQUARE DANCING

- by Bob & Dorothy Simpson and Darby Love, Nanaimo, BC

Check out our 'Dancing in the Garage' two person square dance videos on YouTube here:

<https://tinyurl.com/dancinginthegarage>

WHO WE ARE

We are three callers and cuers who live in Nanaimo, Vancouver Island, BC. Our caller/cuer run club is the WheelArounds and we have largely focused on Plus and A level dancing over the last year. Bob and Darby call, Dorothy and Darby cue. Some of you may have met us at caller schools run by Lorne Smith in the last few years. Fortunately for us, we all live together and could safely enjoy two person square dancing with a caller.



COVID-19 HITS!

In mid-March we were still riding high from our Leap Year dance which was the biggest dance of our season by far. Our club was suddenly shut down and there was no reason to practice whatsoever. **We only lasted a week before deciding that we all needed to work with our music if we had any hope of making it through the next weeks** because we were all so morose. The natural lockdown-friendly thing to do was to video Dorothy and Darby cueing rounds and post them online so people could enjoy them at home in a couple or alone. Then Bob and Darby decided that they could definitely make two person or one couple square dance sequences because there were still lots of moves that would work. **We created many volumes of 'Dancing in the Garage' on Facebook and YouTube where we would have a tip or two of squares (both patter and singing call) and two or more rounds.** For the first while we filmed nearly every day! At that time nobody had started Zoom square dances.



OUR GOALS:

- To connect with our own dancers.
- To keep up our own skills.
- To have fun and share that with other people.
- **To use minimal phantoms.**
- To remain definition-correct with the calls.
- **To build something that we could continue to do for a long time if needed.**

ADJUSTING CALLS FOR TWO-PERSON SQUARE DANCING

To get started we each made our own lists of calls that would be possible with two people, including many that are normally four person calls. The call lists include how many beats the calls normally take for easily creating singing call modules. Many of our first modules were not ones we still use now four months into this journey. There was lots of learning about flow, what calls feel good to dance with just two people, and which moves were technically fine but just no good in practice (like "recycle" and especially "recycle and sweep 1/4 more" - too disorienting). Without the natural structure and landmarks provided by the other dancers "home" and "the square" became very important -it only took a few days before we taped landmarks on our garage floor!

It was fun making the 'Dancing in the Garage' videos. We got quite the enthusiastic following of dancers and callers alike both locally and internationally. Several of the callers made suggestions of moves and sequences to try. Two person choreography gets you to use the tiny, often forgotten calls of the Basic and Mainstream programs like "Fold" and "U-tum back". Darby had lost her first class of beginners when the pandemic hit and decided to focus on Mainstream. Her favourite moves to use for two persons are "Separate" and "Cloverleaf" because they flow well and are longer moves. Bob took on the challenge of incorporating some Plus and even some A calls into his modules. His favourite element is breaking down the Plus call, "Load the Boat", to be performed by two people.

Our normal eight person square dancing relies on calls like Swing Thru, Circle Left, Allemande Left, and the Square Thru family provide no-brainer moments for dancers where they are certain to be successful. Many of our regular go-to calls don't work well with two people or are impossible. **In two person dancing, there is no "standard figure" for callers and**

dancers to fall into. All of our choreography had to be from scratch. Patter was the natural place to start playing with the new format, and we eventually ended up creating singing call modules that could also be used for patter.

CREATING CHOREOGRAPHY FOR SINGING CALLS

We created a structured routine for ourselves and our dancers by beginning to only use singing calls with Grand Squares in the open, middle, and close. Then we made up several options for the section that we would normally put in “Allemande Left and Weave the Ring”. The “Swing and Promenade” remained the same but came a bit later than before so that we only got to sing one line of the song instead of the two lines that the eight person pattern allowed. The winning combo was “Grand Square” (with two lines of music), “Boys Run, Girls Run, U-turn Back, Swing and Promenade”, followed by one line of music.

We evolved to create other 32 beat “GO” sequences that we teach the dancers and name. The caller can then say “GO four leaf clover” instead of Sides Face Grand Square or a variation of it. Darby decided to create some 16 beat GOs to use in those “Circle Left” singing calls. She would tell the dancers to do the 3-4 moves when she just said “GO” in the singing call, sing one line, call another 32 beats of moves, then do the standard end routine of “Boys Run, Girls Run, U-turn Back, Swing and Promenade”, followed by one line of music.



LEAVING THE GARAGE FOR GREENER PASTURES

Once BC progressed in its Restart Plan, we got to see other people in smaller groups, preferably outdoors, and at a distance of 2m or more away. **We took the dancing out of the garage and into some parks.** The best locations are level, made of a smooth surface, and have shade for operating a laptop in. Our favourite locations include event shelters, ball diamonds, and driveways. While various outdoor locations are fun, they are also more work for the organizers.

BACK IN THE COMMUNITY HALL!

Fortunately, our local community hall was happy to have us back if we adhered to COVID occupancy limits, had a plan for the flow of people, and included physical distancing. While many of the elements of putting on a successful dance are still the same, others have changed for us now.

- Our group loved to share potluck snacks and say hi to everyone at an event. Now we bring our own snacks and water bottles, don't make coffee, and head outside or stay 2m apart during breaks.
- Everything is separate, sanitized, and packed in/out by the dancers.
- Darby writes down who attends instead of a guestbook so we have contact tracing capabilities without sharing a pen.
- We cannot welcome everyone to our dances and singles must find their own partner prior to the evening and come as a 'couple'.
- Dancers must RSVP.
- Our floor is segmented out with painter's tape to maintain physical distancing of our one couple squares.



We know we must comply with our province's guidelines in order to continue dancing and our group is happy to do so.

KEEPING THE DANCING FUN

How do we, as callers, make sure our dances are still fun and successful despite the loss of touch and close socializing?

- **We plan our choreography and test it out where possible.** Bob and Darby rely on written modules, though they definitely end up sight calling at times. Callers, it's unlikely that your floor of couples will all move in unison at first, and the sight of it can be disconcerting. The dancers also tend to move at different paces so a couple that was a reliable pilot for sight calling can be totally unreliable for this format or throughout the dance.

- **Look for a balance of simple/successful and challenge/figuring it out in your choreography.** The dancers are working really hard, both physically and mentally (nobody gets to be the Sides and watch the Heads do something for half of a figure).
- **Use helper words to orient your dancers and keep them successful.** Tell them they are doing well. Tell them “You’re home!” so they are totally sure. Tell them they’re dancing by definition (dancing DBD). We can all use the positive energy right now.
- **Your music choices need to be upbeat.** Look like you’re having fun and stay away from talk of death tolls or the end of square dancing as we know it. Focus on the things we can do.
- **Take breaks** and encourage them to drink and eat their own snacks. Make sure you do the same.
- **Rounds were the whole start of our idea and we haven’t lost sight of how important they are.** Half of our dance is rounds as they are a welcome change and comforting since they are the same despite the pandemic. Make sure your dancers can do them well. Take requests from your round dancers for their favourite songs.



Bob, Darby, and Dorothy all agree that this experience has made us better callers and dancers. We have engaged with choreography and calls in ways we likely never would have before, and had some vigorous discussions about definitions and concepts. **While we all miss our regular way of dancing, we are embracing the fun and challenge of working with two person/one couple dancing and are prepared to continue on like this for a year if needed.** It is a huge privilege to continue to bring the joy of dancing to our group and to ourselves during a time where we need that joy more urgently than ever.

FOR MORE INFO

Please contact us if you are interested in learning more! We can be reached at wheelarounds2017@gmail.com, 778-268-0122, or on Facebook. Check out <https://tinyurl.com/darbydance> for a behind the scenes look at choreography with Darby. You can find the ‘Dancing in the Garage’ series on YouTube via this simplified link: <https://tinyurl.com/dancinginthegarage> (make sure you keep scrolling - there are lots of videos including our friend Dwight Fry’s outdoor rounds!)

ROUND DANCING CONTINUES THANKS TO ZOOM!

- by Cuer Mary & Bruce Nelson of Fun Steps, Edmonton & Cue Steps, Calgary

With the early closedown of dance clubs due to Covid, we were challenged by some of our dancers to come up with something where they could still dance. **After a few practice test runs, we were able to come up with “Zoom Dancing”.** People are joining in a zoom meeting, clearing furniture out of rooms and dancing for an hour with us. We have people from across Canada and the United States joining us for these sessions as well as some from Australia and Japan. There are people getting together (2 or 4 couples) dancing on driveways, garden decks, living rooms, dining rooms, kitchens, some even have space in the basements. **It has been an amazing experience for Bruce & I to see what people are doing in order to enjoy dancing during this time.**



We have been uploading the dance recordings to YouTube. **If you subscribe to Bruce’s Channel then whenever he gets dances uploaded, you would be notified.** YouTube Link: “Zoom Round Dancers with Mary and Bruce Nelson, Mary is cuing.” Zoom Dances, Phase II, III, & IV:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLFQ0jiULuhRtu8aV7HKV3Kuuou5HhoL0h>

For the Zoom Dances we are currently doing here is a listing of the dates that are booked under the existing login links.

- **PHASE II – Friday’s –7:30pm, August 7, 21, 28, September 4, 11, 18**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82126498953?pwd=QTJ1L01ESC9vWmlCZXNUNysZVlp5Zz09>

Meeting ID: 821 2649 8953 Phone: 587 328 1099

- **PHASE III – Monday’s – 7:30pm, August 10, 24, 31, September 7, 14, 21**
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84428048307?pwd=UUIrK2lGMHVHVETvTFIQM3RwZTYvdz09>
Meeting ID: 844 2804 8307 Phone: 587 328 1099
- **PHASE IV – Tuesday’s – 7:30pm, August 11, 25, September 1, 8, 15, 22**
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86296645598?pwd=Sk92bzBSRFZXM1RZS2dCVWpaOGZjUT09>
Meeting ID: 862 9664 5598 Phone: 587 328 1099

We have been asked about the possibility of doing Teaches using Zoom starting near the end of September and we are looking at our options for this. Please feel free to get in touch with us if this is something that you would like to do.

If you are planning your Dancing Plans for the summer of 2021, here are some dates to keep in mind.

- Check out this site for weekend dance dates: <https://www.holidayranch.ca/>. Bruce & I will be doing a Phase III/IV Weekend Dance June 4, 5, 6, 2021.
- 52nd Alberta Convention, Bruce & I are the Round Dance Chair Couple for the weekend programming. <http://www.communitydance.net/convention2020.html>

If you or someone you know is interested in Cueing & Teaching Round Dancing, the Square & Round Dance Instructors Association of Alberta is sponsoring a RD Cue/Instructing School, IN May, 2021, led by Bruce & I along with Peter & Stella Tennant from Vernon BC . If you go to: <https://csrds.ca/> under Leaders, Training, there is the information/Registration Package for the school.

**Virtual Hugs to all, Mary & Bruce Nelson
Choreographed Ballroom Dance Cuer/Instructors**

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. See issue #2015-6 for her complete story under "Chatter Close-up".

Dee and her husband square danced from 1969 to 1971. In 1975, she lost sight in her left eye, and by 1989 her vision was completely gone. While trying to cope with her blindness, Dee's husband was diagnosed with cancer. He died 10 months later in October, 1991. A friend suggested that she try square dancing again, and in 1995 she joined Calgary's singles club. Dee has been dancing ever since. She dances by visualizing the calls and positions, and with the gentle guidance of dancers' hands for no-hand calls such as weave the ring.

Strange and unpredictable circumstances are usually a part of everyday life. One time my friend and I were attending a celebration at one of the local Legion functions. We made our way out to the restroom to wash our hands before they served the meal. Now, when you think about it, "what can go wrong here while doing this everyday procedure?" Most of the time I start by searching for the water spout to put my fingers directly underneath before turning on the tap. Not a good plan this time! With all these automatic plumbing devices I got a sudden blast of cold water directly into my face. That nearly caused a whiplash but we were too busy laughing to notice. Another lesson learned, one of many.

The white cane is very much respected, no matter when or where. Doors are held open, bags or parcels carried out to the vehicle, etc. Lately a friend has been using a walking cane so between the two of us we sure do get some double takes, strange looks along with joking comments. "Well, you two sure make a good pair!" I could hear the humor in their voice probably wondering what kind of accident took place. We just kept strolling on, smiling to ourselves, imagining what kind of picture we portrayed.

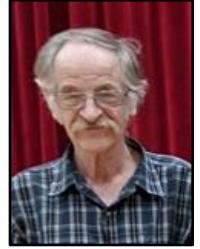
With this Covid distancing in effect, whenever we were in a line-up to get into a store or building, whoever was in charge of crowd control usually came to escort us right to the front door. Now that is good service but not really necessary. On the other hand, the results brought about warm smiles from our hosts which was very much appreciated. With this Covid continuing now for so many months, one of Red Skelton's recommendations from a few decades ago really applies today. Any of the men out there who are tired of boredom and maybe loneliness is taking over, there is a solution. With razor in hand, shave one leg till preferably smooth and when it's time to retire, you'll think you're sleeping with the most beautiful girl in the world. Give it a try! Who knows...

KELLY'S KORNER - by Kelly Thompson

Kelly started square dancing in 2016 after being coerced by his sister. He admits that he would have never walked into the club on his own. He has since found a whole new way of looking at life, a community of new friends and personal confidence that didn't exist before.

A DOUBLE TAKE

Has anyone ever wondered why square dancing is good for you, or what an ALDL is? We all know square dancing is good for you and for the most part don't wonder why that is, and although we don't actually have one, an ALDL is an Assembly Line Data Link. It is that little plug under the dash your mechanic plugs his diagnostic tool into to access the computer memory in order to fix the engine in your car. Newer systems use an onboard diagnostic system which is simply a different way. If we were a car, maybe we would have the same kind of thing for diagnostic purposes as sometimes we do need to be diagnosed.



At times in the past, I have checked the information through the ALDL to find everything within normal parameters yet the engine running as though it wants out from under the hood. It seems things can be happening the computer may not know about.

As I was going to a job one day I backed my truck up to the shop door to load some tools, and as I did that, the engine started running rough, then quit. I started the engine again and it did it again. I tried to figure things out and as it got progressively worse, it seemed to quit when any light was turned on, brakes applied or wipers turned on. It certainly acted as though the computer had failed. I didn't check the ALDL, but I suspect it would possibly have shown the information to be normal.

Since I had another identical truck in the yard for parts, I figured to change the computer wasn't a big problem. Before I did that though I figured I would try something not many mechanics would think to do. I took a single booster cable connected it to the negative battery post and the other end to the engine. Nothing changed. I then connected one end of the booster cable to a solid place on the body of the truck but again, nothing changed. It is when I connected one end to the body, the other end to the engine that the problem seemed to be fixed. I went to the old truck, took off a small ground strap, changed the one on my truck and we were both suddenly a lot happier. The ground strap on my truck came off in three pieces.

You may ask what this means with regard to square dancing. Simply put, for about two hours at square dancing the brain and the body are connected quite a bit better than your onboard diagnostic system would indicate as compared to normal, and the only thing better is that third hour we sometimes get with the pot luck. For that period of time the human condition is operating above normal.

Your mechanic might say something like "pay me now or pay me later" but your square dancing doctor would likely say something a bit different; "Take two square dancers but call me ahead of time so I can put on my eye shadow and makeup". Or she might say, "I love your truck". Take two, it is a double take.

What is the moral of this story? That is misspelled it should be morale--- keep it up!

- **LAW OF GRAVITY:** Any tool, nut, bolt, screw, when dropped will roll to the least accessible corner.
- **LAW OF PROBABILITY:** The probability of being watched is directly proportional to the stupidity of your act.
- **VARIATION LAW:** If you change lines, the one you were in will always move faster than the one you are in now.
- **LAW OF THE BATH:** When the body is fully immersed in water, the telephone rings.
- **LAW OF CLOSE ENCOUNTERS:** The probability of meeting someone you know increases dramatically when you are with someone you don't want to be seen with.
- **LAW OF THE RESULT:** When you try to prove to someone that a machine won't work, it will.
- **LAW OF BIOMECHANICS:** The severity of the itch is inversely proportional to the reach.
- **BROWN'S LAW OF PHYSICAL APPEARANCE:** If the clothes fit, they are ugly.

STRICTLY COME SQUARE DANCING: HISTORIAN DIGS INTO DANCE'S HISTORY

- excerpt by Mary Pilon, December 16, 2009, Wall Street Journal

Today's Wall Street Journal takes a look at those struggling to save the last square dance. But where did square dancing come from?

Square dance caller and historian Phil Jamison may have found out. It's taken the teacher of math and Appalachian studies at Warren Wilson College in Asheville, N.C., over 10 years to unearth pieces of the puzzle that have been missing for centuries.

He and other square dance historians say the story starts in France.

There, dances like quadrilles were all the rage in the late 18th century and like today's square dances, featured four couples in a square. After the American Revolution, former colonials rejected all things British, including the country's dances. More en vogue French instructors crossed the pond to teach their trendy moves. French terms like "do-si-do," "allemande" and "promenade" still remain part of the modern square dancing lexicon.

The dances done in early America then didn't have a "caller," or someone who yells out the moves to dancers, like square dancing today. Rather, the expectation, Jamison says, was that dancers went to school, memorized the moves, then went to the ball.

Square dancing then was mostly done to live music, almost always played by African-American musicians. It's believed that many of these musicians became callers due to the gap in literacy and formal training among slaves of the time. Jamison says he found evidence of an African-American caller dating back as early as 1819 in New Orleans. Other African-American dance moves, instruments like the banjo and fiddle, and call and response traditions were also incorporated, he says.

"Even though we don't currently see the banjo, fiddles and square dancing as a part of African American culture," Jamison says, "they once were."

Calling gained popularity up and down the Appalachian range throughout the 1800s, Richard Severance, archive director of the Square Dance Foundation of New England, says.

Dancing numbers dwindled in the 19th century and opposition among religious groups of the time didn't help recruiting, either. "There was a puritanical belief that you shouldn't touch a young lady," Severance says.

Later in the century, square dancing was replaced by couples dances like waltzes and polkas in city ballrooms. But square dancing still thrived in rural areas.

In the 1920s, Henry Ford became a promoter of the old style of square dancing, opening a ballroom in Michigan. Ford promoted the dance among his factory workers and their families, historians say. He thought having square dancing in schools helped children learn manners, exercise, values and grace. In 1928, save-squaredancing.com reports, boards of education across the country endorsed the Ford square dancing program. (Perhaps it is he who so many of us have to blame for our grade- and middle-school gym class trauma.)

Many soldiers took the dances overseas during World War II, Severance says. To this day, there are still square dancing communities worldwide, all still call in English.

Around the 1950s modern square dancing was standardized. Lessons, which are still taught today, comprise of 69 standard moves. When the Western attire of slacks and petticoats became the norm, it was considered casual compared to the formal tuxedos and ballroom gowns of the time. Len Houle, president of the United Square Dancers of America says.

There are also "traditional" square dancers who base their moves more in the Appalachian style before the 1950s standardization. Today, traditionalists typically don't require lessons and dance to live music rather than recordings. For many traditional dances, no lessons are required to enter.

Partially due to dwindling numbers, modern square dancing groups made pushes in the 1980s and 1990s to be considered the official dance or folk dance of the U.S. President Ronald Reagan made square dancing briefly the national folk dance from 1982-1983. The USDA has put its national campaign on hold for now, until the group finds a legislator to support the bill, Houle says. However, there are currently 31 states that have officially recognized square dancing.

And as reported today, the numbers of square dancers are dwindling again, from an estimated 1 million dancers in the late 1970s to around 300,000 [2009] according to the USDA. Recruitment efforts continue.

"The doors are open to anybody and everybody," Houle says.