



MOUNTAIN ECHOS

Late Summer 2005

From our past President

It has come to the end of my term as president. I leave the job with a heavy heart but in good hands. It's been a lot of hard work and has taken a lot of time, but above all it's been fun. We have been through a lot of changes in the club this past year. Hopefully going back to dancing twice a month will get members interested again, attending our dances, and supporting our club.

Square dancing is in trouble all over, and we can't begin to work on turning that around until we are a strong club again ourselves.

--We can't survive as a club without guests, and we won't have guests if we don't travel and visit other clubs.

We have to have a large class this coming year to build the club back up.

We all need to work together to show interest and support for our club and square dancing..... Just a few can't do it.

It has been my privilege to serve as your president. Thanks to everyone for your help and support.

Hope to see y'all in a square somewhere soon.

Bob Walker

Important Dates to Remember

Wed. Eve, Sept. 7th, First Class

Sunday, Sept. 12th, Greenway Dance

Wed. Eve, Oct. 26th, Halloween Dance

Wed. Eve, Dec. 7th, Toys for Tots Dance

Dues - Yes or No?

Here we are in the middle of a quarter; dues were due the first dance in July and they will be due again the first dance in October. Why do we bother paying dues, why not just pay for each dance that we come to?

There are some good reasons for paying dues and here are the three most important ones:

- They give the club operating money from month to month. They allow some money to accumulate in the checking account so that the treasurer doesn't have to worry from dance to dance if there is enough money to pay the caller.
- They are the cheapest way to dance. HMS's pay \$20 per person for 6 dances in a three month period. That works out to \$3.33 a dance instead of \$5 per dance. What a bargain!
- They are what HMS's bases their membership on. That means that when the club sends in its list of members for insurance coverage, your name needs to be on that list for you to be an insured member. Your name must appear on the list of some club for you to be covered.

What a bargain you get for the price of your quarterly membership. See you in a square, fellow member

Along with this newsletter, you have received your new directory for the upcoming dancing year. The membership list has been trimmed to include only active members and the By-Laws have been updated. Enjoy!

A message from our new President

Many years ago, 46 actually, I started square dancing. At that time, square dancing was thought by most of my teen age peers as an un-cool thing to do and most would have nothing to do with it. On the other hand, I was a nerdy kind of guy and doing un-cool things was just my standard operating mode. Once into square dancing, I found many new friends through the activity who shared my life philosophy, and I was hooked! Since then I've never looked back, and square dancing became an important part of my life.

In the 60's there were teen square dance clubs, single clubs, family clubs, square dance competitions, exhibitions, and square dancing as a recreational activity was growing worldwide at a fast rate. By 1976, the unofficial peak in square dancing popularity, it is estimated that there were several hundred thousand active square dancers in the USA alone. Now this number is not a big percentage of the total US population, but when you had a dance, you had better have a large hall because it would be filled with dancers.

Since the 90's, the activity of square dancing has changed in popularity significantly. There are few new clubs forming and many of the existing clubs are struggling with poor membership and participation. What has changed? Some experts feel the change has been caused by new demands on our time: Cell Phones, Internet, 200 channel TV, and Interactive games. But I still believe that if given an opportunity to choose between a cold keyboard or a TV screen, versus holding a warm friendly person the person will win out every time. Another consideration is the time commitment that a person has to make in order to become a proficient dancer. Many people I've chatted with would love to square dance, but are unable to make the commitment of spending 18-20 weeks of lessons necessary in order to learn. Younger people feel alienated by the activity because it does not share any of their music likes, and there are very few young people for them to meet within the activity. Clearly, in

order to make square dancing a successful activity in the future, we will have to find a model for success that is outside of the model of our past.

Albert Einstein said....

We cannot solve problems in our life using the same level of thinking we were at when we created them.

As a square dance club in a small town, we have an opportunity to make changes that will grow this activity. We should have an "off of the list" call introduced at each dance to create something different rather than the same old stuff we do every dance to avoid boredom. We should consider lowering our program level for part of each dance to enable dancers with less than "plus" or "MS" capabilities to enjoy. We should consider having classes of 3 or 4 lessons which will create a dancer with 25 calls capability (instead of the standard MS 67) and provide a dance environment they will be able to participate within. We should start a **new class every month** with students from prior classes being present to angel for the next class. We should make every effort to bring younger people into the activity by having present members bring their children to the dances. Once we obtain a quantity of new dancers, their dance level will grow over time. Without new dancers, the activity will not survive.

I am excited about square dancing and as your president I will work toward improving the club's membership as a number one priority. With your support, and suggestions, we can grow the club and improve the dance experience for our current members and our future members. It will require that every member we have, unite in this goal of doing whatever it takes to improve membership, and actively assist toward that goal by being an ambassador of square dancing and helping find and recruit new members. Square dancing is a friendly, healthy, and fun activity that we all share. With your support, we can turn around the trend and bring back the popularity of the activity.

Bob Bugash