

DANCERgram

September/October 2025



... for the latest news in the square and round dance community.

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FCA President's Message - September



School is back, summer vacations are over and it is the traditional time for the start of square dance classes. Unfortunately, traditions everywhere have been decimated by a number of changes in our society. Often there are two working members of the household and there are increased demands from exploding school activities that demand parents' attention and time and there was/is Covid.

Square dancing has survived on tradition for a long time and I wish that tradition works well in your square dance program. But at the same time, I want to encourage you (and me and every caller in the world) to look in new directions and start new traditions for your square dance program and the programs of other callers.

What can we do to spice up the activity? How can we encourage new dancers to join us for what we all know is perhaps the very best avocational activity in the world. I obviously don't have the answers, but I do want to be a cheer leader for you who are trying new class programs. You who are abandoning the traditional weeks and weeks of lessons leading to completion of the Callerlab mainstream program and adopting new strategies. You who are seeking new dancers in non-traditional places and ways.

Maybe you are trying shorter class periods and not the two or two-and-a-half hour lessons. Maybe you are aiming for a lesser goal than completing the full mainstream program. I hope you have found a system – probably a non-traditional system -- that meets the needs of the times. If you have found something that works for you, please share it with the rest of us. I'll bet dollars to donuts that each of us callers is looking for some magic to return square dancing to the glory days of old. We want to increase class numbers and increase dancer numbers.

If that is to happen each of us must look outside what we know as tradition and try, try again to find a system that will make square dancing look like what we've been calling it for years – modern western square dancing. My experience is that not very many non-dancers think there is anything modern about square dancing. Let's all work toward finding ways and means of making our wonderful activity modern.

Keith Stevens
FCA President

FCA President's Message - October

ATTEND THE OCTOBER CLINIC WITH MIKE SIKORSKY

I hope you plan to attend the annual FCA clinic, scheduled for the third weekend in October at The Villages. It is one of the best benefits of your FCA membership. This year, Caller Coach Mike Sikorsky will conduct the clinic. His reputation as a clinician is well respected and widespread. Mike is certain to present several ideas that can be helpful to you as you continue your quest to become a better caller. Undoubtedly, not all of his presentation will be new to you. But hearing again the ideas and calling principles that have been around for years (and most of them have) can be a reminder of one or two principles that you should use more often.

Vice President Gormley tells me Mike Sikorsky will be focusing on caller participation and not so much lecturing. Mike will be offering the opportunity for you to call and then to hear his suggestions for your specific improvement. It sounds to me like some really good personal coaching and help. And the cost of this personal coaching is covered by your FCA dues. A no-cost personal coach? What could be better?

If the clinic is not now on your calendar for October 17 and 18, in addition to the FCA annual meeting on October 19, you should put it there today. I will be hoping to see you at the clinic and the meeting. The clinic is the signal that our fiscal year will come to an end. That means new officers will be elected, and it is expected that Mike Gormley will be your president for the fiscal year '25-'26. I hope that among the issues he will address is the lack of good communication between the leaders of the annual round and square dance convention and the FCA.

Your current FCA executive board only learned after the fact that the convention leaders turned down an opportunity to cooperate with the 2028 National Square Dance Convention committee for planning and marketing a concurrent state convention and a national convention committee dance. Consequently, the date for the 2027 state convention will be moved to February 2027. Heavily influencing that decision to move the date was the assumption by convention leaders that the FCA callers would not give up calling their Saturday night convention schedule. The Saturday night dance, instead, could have been called by four national callers brought in by the national convention committee.

That assumption by convention leaders was made without speaking with your current executive board. I'm hopeful your new board will address this communication issue, along with the several continuing issues that plague our activity. Those issues include the decline in the number of new classes and the number of dancers, and the sparsity of new callers coming into our activity. My best to your new president and his board. I urge you to help when they ask for your participation in the organization. Thank you for the opportunity to have served as your president, and my best to each of you in your calling activity.

Keith Stevens
President, FCA

FLORIDA HISTORY



Bartley, Ernest Randall "Bart" - born May 11, 1919 (dec'd 22 Jan 2008) (caller) & Ruth A. Nielsen - born Jan 20, 1922 (dec'd 1 Aug 2013) (round dance instructor)

Obituary from Gainesville Sun dated 25 Jan 2008: "Dr. Ernest R. Bartley, [caller; cuer's taw for Merrysteppers in Gainesville], Professor Emeritus of the Department of Urban and Regional Planning and one-time Professor of Political

Science, University of Florida, died at The ET York Haven Hospice Care Center in Gainesville, Florida on January 22, 2008.

He was born in Lincoln, Nebraska, May 11, 1919. Dr. Bartley came to Gainesville in 1949 after receiving his Doctorate from the University of California in 1948. He served for some twenty-four years as a member of the faculty of the Department of Political Science. He participated in 1975 in the formation of the Department of Urban and Regional Planning. He retired formally from the University in 1992, but he continued to teach until his death. During his fifty-nine years of association with the University of Florida, he received seven teaching awards from two colleges for his outstanding teaching. He was on the graduate faculty and served as a member of several University-wide committees.

After obtaining his Baccalaureate degree from Nebraska Wesleyan in 1940 and his Master's Degree from the University of Nebraska, in June, 1941, he joined the United States Air Corps as an aviation cadet. Commissioned as a second lieutenant, he was retained in the Air Corp training command for two years. At his request, he was then assigned to a combat unit. As a Captain he flew aerial combat as a captain on the first B-29 sorties from Saipan to Japan. He was transferred to the headquarters of the 21st Bomber Command where he served on General Curtis E. Lemay's war plans staff.

Upon his return to the United States, he continued to serve in the Air Force Reserve from which he retired in 1979 as a Lt. Colonel. Dr. Ernest Bartley was a member of the 73rd Bombardment Wing Association. Commencing in the 1950's, Dr. Bartley served as a consultant in land use control planning and regulation. He was a consultant to the Alaska Statehood Committee, the Alaska Constitutional Convention, and was active in Washington, D.C. during Alaska's struggle for statehood. At the 50th anniversary of the Alaska Constitutional Convention, Dr. Bartley was honored for the significant role he played in the writing of the Alaska Constitution.

He was an active member, supporter, draftsman and spokesman in support of efforts in Florida for the enactment of planning and growth management legislation. Dr. Ernest Bartley served as consultant to numerous cities, counties, and private clients in Florida and other states. He qualified in state and federal courts as an expert witness in some eighty cases involving urban and regional planning. He drafted numerous zoning ordinances and subdivision regulations for municipalities and counties in Florida. He was sought as a speaker at numerous planning conferences and conventions.

His professional associations included the Florida Planning and Zoning Association, American Society of Planning Officials (now The American Planning Association), The American Institute of Planners (now the American Institute of Certified Planners) and other groups. In 2000, Dr. Bartley was honored in New York by election to membership in the College of Fellows of the American Institute of Certified Planners. He was appointed as a member of the State of Florida's Planning Commission by (then) Governor Robert Graham. He held numerous offices in the organizations to which he belonged. In 2007, Ernest R. Bartley received the Lifetime Service Award from the Florida Chapter of the American Planning Association for "Outstanding Achievements in the Field of Planning."

He was author or co-author of many books, monographs, pamphlets, and papers. Dr. Bartley's *Tidelands Oil Controversy*, originally published by the University of Texas Press, was republished as one in the series of *Classics in American Land Law*. National and State Government textbooks, written with the late Dr. John M. Swarthout, were published by Oxford University Press. His *Text of a Model Ordinance* written with the late Frederick H. Bair, Jr. and published in several editions by the American Society of Planning Official, was a standard work on the subject for many years.

In 2007, an annual life-time of achievement award was established in Dr. Bartley's name by the Department of Urban and Regional Planning. The first recipient of that award was the former Florida Governor, Reuben Askew.

Survivors include: his wife, Ruth Nielsen Bartley; brother, Dr. Richard Bartley of Springfield, Missouri; daughters, Susan K. Miller and Debbie D. Williams, both of Augusta, Georgia; five grandchildren, Todd Miller, Suzanne Ingersoll, Deborah McGinley, Will Williams, and Nan Williams; and one great-grandchild, Neila McGinley.

A Memorial service will be held at Milam Funeral Home, 311 South Main Street, on Sunday, January 27 2008 at 1 pm. Later this year his cremains will be interred at Florida National Cemetery. Memorial contributions may be made to Haven Hospice of Gainesville, FL, 4200 NW 90th Blvd., Gainesville, FL 32605." In the square dance world he was known as Bart Bartley; caller for Merrysteppers of Gainesville.

He was son of James Earl Bartley and Neva Louise McNiel; was buried in Florida National Cemetery, Bushnell, FL. His tombstone says: Capt, USAAF; Lt. Col. U.S. Air Force; World War II' Professor of 58 years.

Obituary from Gainesville Sun dated 7 Aug 2013: "Augusta, GA - Mrs. Ruth A. Bartley [cuer; caller's taw for Merrysteppers of Gainesville] entered into rest Thursday, August 1, 2013, at Augusta Gardens. Ruth A. Bartley, 91 was wife of the late Dr. Ernest R. Bartley and a long-time resident of Gainesville, FL. Family members include daughter, Susan K. Bartley Miller of Augusta, GA; son-in-law: Dr. George W. Williams, of Augusta, GA; grandchildren: M. Todd Miller (Juliane), Suzanne M. Ingersoll (Jay), Deborah N. McGinley (Tim), Will Williams, Nan Williams Bowman (Vance) and five great-grandchildren. Mrs. Bartley is preceded in death by her daughter: Deborah Dell Bartley Williams. A wonderful mother, she supported her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren in their many activities. A homemaker and organizer, Mrs. Bartley was most active in her church, children's school activities, the University of Florida activities as a professor's wife and a member of the Goal liners (supporters of the Football Team). Every football season, including 2012, with a sparkle in her eye, you could find her in the stands cheering on her Gators. Mrs. Bartley, an avid antique doll collector, was a long-time member of the Dollings Club in Gainesville. For years, she enjoyed square dancing, round dancing, and ballroom dancing where she served in several offices in the state and local organizations. She enjoyed travel related to doll collecting, her dancing and her church family.

A memorial service will be held at a later date. Memorial contributions may be made to First United Methodist Church of Gainesville, FL, 419 N.E. First Street, Gainesville, FL 32601. Thomas Poteet & Son Funeral Directors, 214 Davis Rd., Augusta, GA 30907 handled the cremation. Burial will take place in Omaha, Nebraska." She was buried in Springwell Cemetery, Omaha, Douglas County, Nebraska. They were active in 1950s & 1960s in northeast Florida. Ruth was daughter of Hans Sophus Nielsen and Niela Bertha (___). Ruth's headstone says Loving wife, Grammy & Gigi. Dancer, Collector, Vibrant, Tenacious, Innovator, Leader, Spunky, Dedicated. It has the engraving of a University of Florida Gator.

1984 – inducted into the **FLORIDA SQUARE AND ROUND DANCERS HALL OF FAME**

1962 – Round Dance Council of Florida President (Ruth)

1959-1960 - Florida Callers Association President (Bart)

They were members of:

Merrysteppers (1957)

71st Florida State Square & Round Dance Convention

“Survive the Curse of the 71st”

A Halloween party!

<https://www.dancergram.com/aa-FWS/convention/hotel.html>

<https://www.dancergram.com/aa-FWS/convention/2026AllItems/2026RegistrationForm.pdf>

Square Dance Insurance

Greetings,

This [information] should be forwarded to EVERY club in your organization. And EVERY club should make sure all their members and visitors to their clubs are aware of this information. This needs to be done immediately.

Notice for ALL clubs enrolled in the USDA Insurance Program:

No Independent Square Dancer is Insured with USDA Insurance. There are no exceptions. There is not an individual insurance policy the club can purchase from the USDA Insurance program to just insure the independent dancers. Each club should work with their regular visiting independent dancers and encourage them to join the club.

A suggestion would be to have a notice on the sign in sheet you have for independent dancers. Here is some suggested wording.

“As an independent (non-club member) dancer you are not covered by the club’s square dance insurance. Please know that you are dancing at your own risk. May we suggest you talk with an officer of the club about joining and becoming one of the insured dancers.”

Elizabeth Sanders
USDA National Insurance Coordinator

75th National Square Dance Convention

Waco's looking for Dance Leaders

DEC. 31, 2025
is the deadline for Dance Leaders to register for the 75th National Square Dance Convention®. Profiles must be submitted by
JAN. 31, 2026

1. Sign up online today at www.75nsdctx.com to receive your registration number for the 75th NSDC,
2. Then you go to <https://sdconvention.com> to complete your Dance Leader Profile.

Welcome to Waco!



Scan the QR Code to register



75th National Square Dance Convention®
June 24-27, 2026 • Waco Convention Center

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