

# DANCERgram

March 2021



THIS &  
THAT

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

This publication is a sub-set of the *DANCERgram*, which provides Square and Round Dance news for the West Coast of Florida AND is the official Newsletter of the West Coast Square & Round Dancers Association (formerly the *West Coast Dancer*).

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## West Coast Association

### President's Message:



The West Coast Association area's dancing situation has stayed pretty much the same since my last article.

The Executive Board held a Zoom meeting on February 20<sup>th</sup>. We are contemplating returning to dancing with our annual President's Ball in September if there is enough interest. If you would be interested in attending this dance, please email me at [sgdncfan@gmail.com](mailto:sgdncfan@gmail.com) and let me know your thoughts. In addition to being the President's Ball,

it will be a celebration of returning to dancing.

I'm using this downtime to update my various lists, enhance the DANCERgram, and provide updated information to the DANCERgram website and the Florida site.

If you are looking for dance information for the West Coast Association area, check out the DANCERgram Planner. You will find dance information regarding the clubs that are open at this time, as well as information on currently scheduled classes,

I hope to see you on the dance floor real soon!

Penny Green, President

# **Start-up of Advanced Dancing at Strawberry Square was a Success!**

I thought you might want to know how the Friday night advanced dance experiment went. Well, I was blown away by the attendance. We had four full Squares and an extra dancer to two. My expectation was maybe one and a half squares. It was great fun to see all those familiar faces and some new ones, too. Seems some dancers are eager to get back to the fun of our activity, and they used this experience to try it. I'd say the experiment was a great success. The dancers there expressed a desire to dance each Friday night that is available in the month of March, so there will be an advanced dance each Friday night in March. The protocol was kept. Each dancer was subjected to a temperature check as they entered. Masks were required for the dancing, and hand sanitizer was available at all times. There was no food or drinks provided except what dancers brought for their own use. All dancers participated in the safety precautions. It was fun for me to get back to calling to real people (some of the people there were real:)). The dancers seemed to enjoy the dance. Looked to me like as the evening progressed, the dancers tired a bit. I think I kept the tips relatively short, and I tried to make the dancing fairly conventional. We played with a new call during the first half-hour workshop (circle to a wave); it's a really easy call that no one will have to remember. It was a one-night stand for the call.

All in all, I'd say the experiment was a success, and I'll take the desire of the dancers to do it each Friday night in March as a testament that they enjoyed the dancing. I write this only as my observations of the evening, not as a pressure for you to attend. We'd be happy to have you consider dancing with us on Friday night, but we want you to feel safe and comfortable and dance with us when you feel it is safe and comfortable for you.

So the next dance will be Friday night March 5. Workshop 7 to 7:30 and the Dance at 7:30 to 9:30.

I'll look forward to seeing some of you there.

Stay well and stay safe.

Keith

# Strawberry Square Advanced Dancing

Our February “brush-up” advanced dance was a success. We had just over 4 squares of congenial glad-to-be-back dancers. When surveyed, the consensus was to continue advanced dancing on Friday nights through March, and Keith Stevens has agreed to call for us.

Thanks to everyone for attending and dancing in a socially responsible manner. Temperatures were taken, everyone wore masks (some also wore face shields), used hand sanitizer between tips, and maintained an appropriate distance when conversing between tips.

We will survey our dancers again at the end of March to see if there would be enough dancers to continue into April.

**Regarding planning dances for next season, please let me know of any advanced callers you might like to see on our schedule. Also, we would like to hear from you about dancing in Nov and Dec this year to help us estimate how many dancers we might expect in those months and decide how many dances to schedule for these months.**

Hope to see y'all on Friday.

Dunelle

## Kind Words from our Readers

Excerpt from the FCA President's Message in the February issue of *Bow & Swing*

“In the square and round dance world, we have a bunch of unsung heroes. They don't save lives, but they go over and beyond to serve and work for our activity. I am speaking of our club, association, and federation officers and the editors of our dance publications and club newsletters. SusanElaine stepped up when Bill Boyed needed to retired from Bow & Swing. Without her, another publication would be gone (If you subscribe, share your book and get others to sign up.) **Penny Green does an amazing job with the DANCERgram.** Steven Bigelow has taken over the Grapevine in NE Florida and continuing the long-standing tradition of excellence. There are many other newsletters and magazines that can help keep you up to date as dancing begins again. Thank your editors for their hard work. Special thanks also to the chairs of the special dances, festivals, and conventions we all enjoy.”

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR: There is also mention in the *Bow & Swing* directing people to our website ([www.dancergram.com](http://www.dancergram.com))! The Wilabys were the long-time editors of the **Northwest Association's** *Panhandle Press*. They just retired from that position. Since no one stepped up to take it over, the association president Barbara McDonald temporarily took it over in addition to being a Federation officer, president of the Northwest Association, and president of their local club. There hasn't been an official newsletter in **Southeast** for many years, but their president sends any emails to their dancers with dance information, health and sympathy information, birthdays and anniversaries, etc., every week, and many times more than once a week. Steve has also been president (along with his partner Sally Galick) for many years (I believe since 2012). He also sends a lot of photos to the *Bow & Swing* for publication! Some of us just don't know how to say no!

## **“We’ve always done it this way.”**

By: Teresa Berger Executive Director, CALLERLAB

“The most damaging phrase in the language is ‘We’ve always done it this way.’  
Rear Admiral Grace Murray Hoppe

2020 was quite a year! The world has changed the way it operates as 2020 forced us to reconsider how we live and interact during a pandemic. As 2021 begins, I've been reminiscing about not only the challenges we faced (and continue to face) but also the positive changes we have experienced in the last year. Social distancing required us, as a square dance community, to engage our critical thinking skills to utilize technology in new and inventive ways with our clubs and organizations. I am constantly encouraged by the virtual dances hosted by callers, dancers, and organizations. How cool is it that participants from all over the world are dancing in real-time! We have turned our homes, garages, and driveways into dance halls with music, movement, and fun! Now it is not uncommon for boards, organizations, or clubs to host video meetings that allow members to discuss topics, vote, and take care of business from their homes. What a great time to get involved and have a voice in your local organization! It's especially refreshing to hear about the increased emphasis on sociability despite staying home. From Zoom meetings and phone calls to socially distanced activities, it is truly amazing how our square dance families stick together during this difficult time of change. The pandemic forced us to think outside the box (or square in our case). Despite the fact that ‘We’ve always done it this way,’ we have mixed it up and learned quite a few new things along the way! I don't know about you, but it is sure encouraging to see groups adapting and evolving based on the current situation.

CALLERLAB continues to work on our mission, “To foster the art of square dance calling, and improve caller skills,” but we are undergoing quite a few changes as well! The CALLERLAB Board of Governors held their first virtual board meeting at the beginning of the pandemic. Unfortunately, we have had to cancel our in-person Convention for 2021, but we're now on our way to planning virtual events instead! Be

sure to check out our website, [CALLERLAB.org](http://CALLERLAB.org), for more information about exciting events happening in spring 2021 in place of our annual Convention!

Besides the excitement of planning for spring virtual events, CALLERLAB strives to continue our normal operation as much as possible. Our membership renewal season is in full force! We appreciate all the members who have joined or renewed so far! If you would like to become a member of CALLERLAB, please feel free to contact us. Membership dues help to pay for the full-time office and staff that serve the square dance activity. We are happy to be a resource for callers and dancers—your membership makes that happen! We also have a Subscriber category for dancers who would like to receive electronic news reports as well as our newsletter, *DIRECTION*. This is a great way to stay up-to-date on things happening with CALLERLAB, our committees, members, and the square dance world! Contact the Home Office for more information and to sign up as a subscriber.

CALLERLAB continues to provide a variety of resources for the square dance community. Have you visited the CALLERLAB KnowledgeBase at [knowledge.callerlab.org](http://knowledge.callerlab.org)? This repository collects information for both callers and dance leaders about a variety of topics. In the KnowledgeBase, you'll find advertising tips, Winning Ways stories, lesson systems, media articles, choreography ideas, and much more! Another useful site is [teaching.callerlab.org](http://teaching.callerlab.org). This provides materials to assist a modern square dance caller who is teaching new calls to dancers or teaching new applications of a call to dancers at the Basic and Mainstream levels. Also, if you are looking for other unique dances, you will definitely want to check out [dances.callerlab.org](http://dances.callerlab.org). The Dance Resource site is a compilation of beginner party dances, community dances, Contra dances, and traditional square dances. Finally, the CALLERLAB website will be receiving a facelift soon! Be sure to check out our new site at [CALLERLAB.org](http://CALLERLAB.org) for more information.

The CALLERLAB Home Office has also seen its fair share of changes in the last decade. CALLERLAB has been lucky to have Dana Schirmer as the Executive Director since 2009. Dana has been an incredible asset to CALLERLAB, and we're extremely grateful for his leadership, wisdom, and commitment. He has certainly made a positive impact. His care for the organization and for the square dance activity has not gone unnoticed. I have been fortunate to learn from Dana since I started as CALLERLAB's Assistant Executive Director in 2018. I'm thankful for his investment in my journey as we transition roles. As Dana's retirement from the Executive Director position approaches, I extend my appreciation on behalf of the organization for the amazing work he has done! Dana will continue working with the Home Office during the transition, so don't worry; he's not going anywhere yet!

On a personal note, despite the challenges of the last year, I could not be more excited about the future of square dancing! Things will look and feel different—there's no doubt about that! Just because “we've always done it that way” doesn't mean we have to do so. The last year has been a good time to practice adapting to change as we have conquered so many obstacles with creativity and persistence. We have an incredible opportunity to be part of history in the making as square dancing evolves to meet the needs of a changing world. We will get through this bump and come out on the other side--refreshed, reinvigorated, and ready to share our passion for square dancing with the world! Stay safe and stay healthy until we can get together again. Please know that



I'm cheering for all of you. Be creative, be persistent, and most importantly, don't give up! Change is hard, but we can do it together!

# NEWS

**For Immediate Release**

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## **71st National Square Dance Convention® Pre-Convention is first to be virtual**

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced events to be canceled and upended lives, but it has also brought innovation.

The 71st National Square Dance Convention's® Pre-Convention is one example. The event was originally scheduled at Evansville's Doubletree Hotel, but the National Executive Committee (NEC) granted permission to NSDC organizers to hold the Pre-Convention virtually after they determined COVID caseloads were still too high to hold large gatherings in person. Because necessary planning still needed to happen, organizers decided to use Zoom and make the event the first virtual Pre-Convention.

The event will run for four days, beginning March 10. The NEC will have meetings and hear reports from the 70th, 71st, 72nd, and 73rd conventions. On Saturday, March 13, there will be breakout sessions beginning at 10 a.m. that will stretch until 4:30 p.m. and reconvene with a wrap-up session at 7 p.m. There will be eight virtual "rooms" that will be renamed after each round of meetings.

There will also be a virtual dance on March 12 beginning at 8 p.m. with callers James Cha and Janet Lewis. Virtual square dances usually have two couples at a time dancing. There will also be at least one game.

While the Pre-Convention is the first to be virtual, plans are still underway to have the 2022 National Square Dance Convention ® fully in-person. Keep June 22-25 on your calendars and "Join Us Down By The River" for a memorable convention. Register for the virtual dance and the 2022 convention at [71nsdc.org](http://71nsdc.org).

# NEWS

**For Immediate Release**

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## 70<sup>th</sup> NSDC is on!

Join us for a reunion in 2021!

February 18, 2021— Visit Jackson and the Jackson Convention Complex have confirmed that the 70<sup>th</sup> National Square Dance Convention® will be happening June 23-26! Grab your friends and join us for twice the fun in 2021!

It's been a long road, but the Jackson Soul Team Board has never stopped thinking of ways to make the convention one you won't forget.

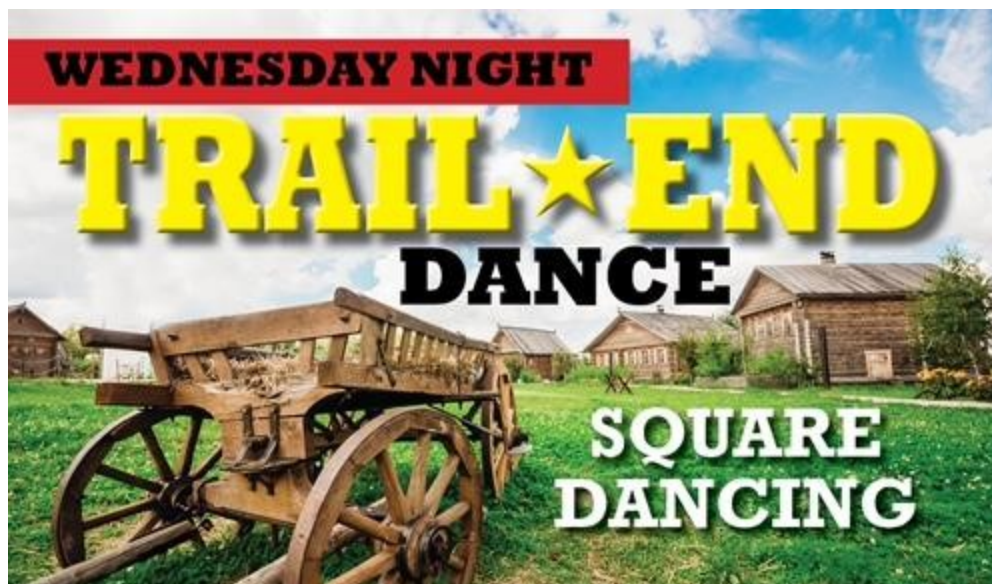
Speaking of forgetting, if it's been a while since you've been out on the dance floor don't worry. The convention's many callers will have you casting off the rust so you can get coordinated in no time. You'll be loading the boat, spinning the top and recycling like never before.

If all that's too easy, the 70<sup>th</sup> NSDC will also have workshops for C1 and intro to C2, as well as regular tips involving both levels from callers such as Jack Pladdys, Tom Davis, Tom Miller, and Charlie Robertson.

Round dancers won't be left out. The convention's many cuers will have you waltzing, foxtrotting and doing the rumba to your favorite songs again, no matter what level you are. Clogging, line dancing, hex squares and many more things will also be ready for dancers to try.

No matter what your interest, you're sure to have find something memorable. Come to the City with Soul and remember what dancing is all about!





## MAINSTREAM EXHIBIT HALL B



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Tony Oxendine, MC featuring  
the Ghost Rider's



## PLUS EXHIBIT HALL A



Sponsored by  
the ARTS

Roy & Betsy Gotta, MC

## ADVANCED TRUSTMARK BALLROOM B

Join Us Down By The River



71st NATIONAL SQUARE DANCE CONVENTION®  
EVANSVILLE, INDIANA

Sponsored by the 71st NSDC  
Travis Cook MC

JACKSON  
CONVENTION  
COMPLEX  
8:00 - 10:00 PM



Dancing Fun in 2021 in the "City with Soul"

YOU TRAVELED FROM ACROSS THE UNITED STATES. *Welcome to Jackson, y'all!*

# LAST SQUARE STANDING



**CALLER:**  
**Eric Henerlau**  
Corte Madera, CA

**FRIDAY JUNE 25**  
**Exhibit Hall B**  
**Jackson Convention Complex**  
**2:00 - 3:00 pm**

Forms must be  
submitted by noon Friday,  
June 25th to Room 214.

Competitors must check  
in at Exhibit Hall B by 1:45 pm.



*Winners from  
the 68th NSDC  
in Atlanta*



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## 2021 <sup>USA</sup> West Convention **POSTPONED to 2022**

**A**fter a great deal of reflection and discussion, we have made the decision to **postpone** the convention to **August 17-20, 2022**. We are concerned that, given the continued spread of the coronavirus, travel may still be limited, and large social gatherings may still be restricted in California next summer. Also, even if some dancing resumes in late spring or summer, dancers may not have enough floor time to fully participate in a three-day convention. We are grateful that our convention venue, the Handlery Hotel in San Diego's Mission Valley, has offered us the exact same contract provisions for the following year. So we will be **ready for you in 2022**.

If you have already registered for the convention we hope that you will rollover your convention registration to our new dates in 2022. If, for some reason, you are not able to join us in August of 2022, you may request a full refund. You will be receiving or may have already received an e-mail with more information.

If you made hotel room reservations at the Handlery for the original dates in August 2021, we will send you further information soon about canceling and rebooking your rooms. The hotel is in the process of setting up the room block under the new dates and will give us new reservations codes shortly. We will contact all of those listed in our block as soon as we get confirmation from the hotel.

Thank you again for supporting the 19<sup>th</sup> <sup>USA</sup> West Square Dance Convention. We do hope that you will **Come for the dancing and stay for the Zoo – see San Diego in 2022!**

**LPaul & Sally Schmidt**

General Chairmen

**Jim Maczko & Patty Wilcox**

Assistant Chairman & Pre-Registration



# On The Record SQUARES

Buddy Weaver

[www.BuddyWeaver.com](http://www.BuddyWeaver.com)

[buddy@buddyweaver.com](mailto:buddy@buddyweaver.com)

## THE LARGEST SQUARE DANCE EVER

On July 13, 1950, Santa Monica, California, was host to the largest square dance ever. This dance was part of the city's Diamond Jubilee, which featured many events over multiple weekends. On this day, six city blocks, roughly the length of eight football fields, was closed off to traffic so that fifteen-thousand square dancers could dance in front of thirty-thousand spectators. To accommodate the dancers, theatre speakers were attached to city street posts to broadcast the sound everywhere. Lighting was brought in from Hollywood to illuminate the area for dancers, spectators, and the press. The event was covered in newspapers, magazines, and newsreel. It was a big deal but was it the largest square dance ever?

The argument can be made that there have been much larger numbers of dancers at National Conventions over the years, but every convention divides the dancers into various halls; no one hall has all of the dancers at any time. By contrast, the Santa Monica Diamond Jubilee dance had all of the dancers on one floor, all dancing to the same caller and band. The dance itself was there and a half hours long, much greater than some events that were staged for a world record. This would make the Santa Monica Diamond Jubilee the largest square dance ever, even to this day.

The dance was recorded on reel-to-reel tapes. These tapes have some issues; in addition to not being properly stored for seventy-years, there are parts where the recording starts in the middle of a tip or cuts off in the middle of a tip. There are some instances where the sound input was too loud causing the recording to distort (clip). In spite of these problems, the recording is a fantastic snapshot of a once-in-a-lifetime event.

As part of on-going efforts to preserve square dance history, these tapes have been digitally remastered. Narration has been added to give background information on the event and participants. The Santa Monica Diamond Jubilee is presented as a series of podcasts; each week is a new episode. Available free of charge to everyone for listening (streaming) or downloading. Go to [buddyweavermusic.podbean.com](http://buddyweavermusic.podbean.com).

Write to me at [buddy@buddyweaver.com](mailto:buddy@buddyweaver.com) and find me on Facebook on the following pages: Buddy Weaver, Blue Star Square Dance Music, New Hi Hat Square Dance Music, and Rawhide Square Dance Music.

Reprint from *American Square Dance* – February 2020

## Inspirational Quotes

By Ed Foote

(from the collection of Ed Foote)

“Practice kindness all day to everybody, and you will realize you’re already in heaven now.” ... Jack Kerouac, writer

“The earth has music for those who listen.” ...William Shakespeare, playwright

“The most wasted of all days is one without laughter.” ...E. E. Cummings, poet

“Scatter joy!” ...Ralph Waldo Emerson, poet/essayist

“If you’re not having fun, you’re doing something wrong.” ...Groucho Marx, comedian, producer

Reprint from *American Square Dance* – February 2020

## All Things Considered

By Ed Foote

### QUESTIONS ASKED OF ME

This month we continue looking at questions I have received over the years.

QUESTION: Do you always make a front square [for] your “pilot” square?

ANSWER: Dancers are under a misconception that callers have one square they are focusing on all the time. Callers are actually watching squares all over the floor to be aware of how the floor is handling the material. New callers may only have the ability to watch one square, but they need to start watching more squares as [they call].

QUESTION: But don’t you need a pilot square to find the corner?

ANSWER: There are two parts in calling material. 95% of calling is just having dancers moving smoothly – only 5% is finding the corner.

Most dancers think the caller is always tracking the corner, but in actual fact, the caller is usually not thinking about the corner until less than 30 seconds before a Left Allemande. So a caller only needs a “pilot” square when it is time to go for the Left Allemande.

QUESTION: So where is your “pilot:” square on the floor in terms of finding the corner?

ANSWER: I don’t have one – I have a minimum of 43, and preferably 4. By “pilot” I mean knowing partner and corner relationships in a square, and my goal is to have 4 such squares. These squares are scattered all over the room. Most experienced callers operate in this manner.

Sometimes dancers, for fun, will intentionally change partners in a square right in front of the caller or try to confuse the caller by dancing ½ sashayed, thinking that this will cause him/her trouble. This does not affect experienced callers at all because they will simply shift their attention to other squares in the hall, both for regular dancing and for finding the corner. The only person it will adversely affect is a newer caller because they are likely only watching one square, and it is not good etiquette to try and get a new caller nervous.

QUESTION: When you decide to go for a Left Allemande, how long does it take you to get there?

ANSWER: 12 seconds or less. Any good sight caller can do this. At caller schools, I work with callers to get to a Left Allemande in 15 seconds.

QUESTION: How involved is it to get to a Left Allemande? It seems like it would be very difficult.

ANSWER: It is actually quite easy. There are a few simple formulas to memorize, any one of which will result in a Left Allemande. Once a caller has memorized a formula, it is no effort at all.

Reprint from *American Square Dance* – February 2020

## Dancing Starts in Southeast Florida!

Hi dancers,

Great news! - We have just been cleared by the City of Boynton Beach to restart our dances. Our start-up dates will be as follows:

**Friday, March 12th (next week)** - Castoffs Plus Dance with rounds; Early rounds - 6:30 - 7:00 PM; Squares with rounds - 7:00 - 9:00 PM.

**Monday, March 15th** - A-JACKS Advanced dance with rounds - 2:00 - 4:00 PM.



The dances will be held at the newly renovated Boynton Beach Cultural Center (The Old High School across the street from the Old Boynton Beach Civic Center), 100 East Ocean Avenue. (Just east of Seacrest). We will be dancing in the upstairs dance room. There are both stairs and an elevator. We hope you will all come out to celebrate the resumption of dancing and getting back to some semblance of normalcy.

All of the requirements are shown below, but as a reminder, you must be vaccinated to attend the dances and the City requires that anyone entering the building must wear a mask. Please be extra careful this week to wear your masks and social distance to stay safe before coming to the dance. You have all managed to stay safe this entire year, so we trust that our dancers are all being careful.

**Please respond to Jack at [lewisjsquare@yahoo.com](mailto:lewisjsquare@yahoo.com) and let us know if you plan on attending either or both dances, so we will have some idea what to expect.** Thank you all, and we hope to see you soon.

Jack & Ilene



Dancers,

Spring is fast approaching. If you haven't had a chance to buy Marshall Flippo's Biography, *Just Another Square Dance Caller*, here's your opportunity. It would be a great read until we get to dance again – hopefully soon! Spring is fast approaching. If you haven't had a chance to buy Marshall Flippo's Biography, *Just Another Square Dance Caller*, here's your opportunity. It would be a great read until we get to dance again—hopefully soon!

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If you want an e-book, it's available for Kindle, iBook, Kobo, or Nook format at their providers.

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to either email or call me!

Stay safe and warm! Spring will come, I promise!

Larada Horner-Miller

Author

Just Another Square Dance Caller: The Authorized Biography of Marshall Flippo

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Google+: <https://plus.google.com/u/0/103131274415611764833>

## Will a Face Shield Protect You From the Coronavirus?

Before you ditch your masks, learn more about the pros and cons



This article was originally published on June 24, 2020. It was updated on June 30, 2020, to reflect new information about this rapidly evolving situation.

Cleveland Clinic is a non-profit academic medical center. Advertising on our site helps support our mission. We do not endorse non-Cleveland Clinic products or services.

We've been doing the mask mambo for months now. Some of us can wear them effortlessly while others...ehhh, well. Let's just say this new accessor has added a little frustration to some of our daily activities. But whether we like it or not, masks aren't going away anytime soon.

What's the alternative to foggy glasses, dragon breath, a mask that travels all over your face, or just being a hot, sweaty mess all the time? Enter face shields. They've started to pop up on fashion sites, and you've probably seen someone wearing one at the store. But are face shields really the best option when it comes to protecting yourself from the coronavirus? Keep reading to find out.

## **What is a face shield?**

Face shields have been used in healthcare settings for a while now, but they've become a staple for medical personnel who have to intubate patients with COVID-19. Face shields are often worn during a wide variety of medical procedures. This includes surgeries or any procedures where bone fragments, blood, or other bodily fluids could get into the eyes, nose, and mouth.

A face shield is simply a curved plastic or Plexiglas panel attached to a headband that can be worn over the face. It should fit securely, so there isn't a gap between the band and the forehead. The shield should also extend beyond the chin.

"Because they extend down from the forehead, shields protect the eyes as well as the nose and mouth," says pediatric infectious disease specialist Frank Esper, MD. The coverage that face shields offer is ideal since the new coronavirus can enter the body through those points.

## **Are face shields effective?**

A 2014 study showed that when tested against an influenza-infused aerosol from a distance of 18 inches away, a face shield reduced exposure by 96% during the period immediately after a cough. The face shield also reduced the surface contamination of a respirator by 97%.

*"It protects you, the wearer," Dr. Esper says. "But if you cough, because the face shield is away from your face, those droplets can still get out better than if you have a mask on."*

## **Are face shields good for everyday use?**

CDC does not recommend wearing face shields for normal everyday activities or as a substitute for cloth face coverings. However, some people may choose to use a face shield when they know that they'll be in sustained close contact with others. In these cases, it's best to wear a mask underneath the face shield and maintain physical distancing when possible. This will help minimize the risk of infection since face shields have openings at the bottom.

The CDC also says if face shields are used without a mask, they should wrap around the sides of the wearer's face and extend below the chin. The CDC does not recommend plastic face shields for newborns or infants.

## **How to keep a face shield clean.**

As mentioned earlier, masks absorb droplets when we sneeze or cough. Face shields don't. Dr. Esper stresses that should you decide to wear a face shield; you'll need to sanitize it frequently.

"We know this virus likes to live on plastic a lot better than it likes to live on porous materials like cloth, paper, or cardboard," he says. So again, clean your face shield once you take it off. You can sterilize it with an antibacterial wipe, alcohol pad, or soap and water.

If your face shield cracks or becomes damaged, don't continue to use it. Many places offer face shields in bulk. This makes it easier for you to pitch the damaged face shield and move on to the next one.

Reprinted from the Internet – March 2, 2021

## **Tony Oxendine Talks About Jerry Story**

February 27 at 3:02 p.m.

I guess it's time for me to post my last update on Jerry Story. I've put off doing this – Mostly because I didn't want to finalize things. But I owe it to myself and perhaps to others to document mine and Jerry's relationship. To do that properly, I have to go back to August of 1980. Actually, maybe a little before that. This is the beginning of a long story.....

In the late 1970's and into the early part of 1980, Jerry and I were burning up the road touring. I was still in college, so I only went out in the summer and on weekends. Jerry, however, was on the road for probably 300 plus days a year.

As things go, Jerry and I called in many of the same cities and saw many of the same people. When I went into a town, all I heard was raves about this caller that was just in town – Jerry Story. According to Jerry, the same thing was happening to him. Eventually, both of us got tired of hearing about the other

one. Consequently, without ever having met one another, neither of us liked the other.

Now.....I can get to the summer of 1980. Both of us called extensively in Ohio, and we both met (separately, of course) this dance couple – Ted and Linda Messbarger from Lancaster, OH. Linda came up with the outlandish idea that it would be a smart thing to hire both of us for a weekend. Calls were made (this was before email and cell phones) and the date was set. Jerry and I met for the first time at Ted and Linda's on the Thursday afternoon before the weekend. After dinner, we set up our equipment (Yak Stack and Hilton 300) in their kitchen, and we "commenced" to learning songs together. After several cases of Miller Light, sometime in the early morning we came up with several songs that eventually became standards for us. We also took the first steps to a lifelong friendship.

Songs like "I Think I Could Love You," "Bring back," Small World," "Gold Rush," and many others now became our songs. The weekend was a huge success – 40 squares. On Sunday, both of us were still flying high. I had never worked with someone that had some much enthusiasm. And even back then, Jerry's talent was AMAZING,

This weekend in Lancaster eventually moved to Columbus and became the first thousands of dances and weekends that Jerry and I did together. At our peak, we had over 30 annual weekends together as well as a 3-week European tour each year. Together we have called in almost all 50 states – (damnit, I'm still missing Idaho 😊) and in more than a dozen foreign countries. We drove together, roomed together and flew together. In a very short time, we became much more than friends – We were family. I watched his two boys grow up – and he watched mine. My kids still call him Uncle Jerry.

In the beginning, I was a pretty good singer, but my choreography was average at best. I found out quickly if I was gonna share the stage with Jerry, I better learn how to call. Jerry was the most gifted natural caller that I have ever met. Calling was second nature to him, and he was never hesitant to share his knowledge, not only with me but with anyone. Working beside Jerry so often made me become a better caller, and much, if not most, of my chorographical knowledge, is directly related to working with him.

Jerry and I always had a very friendly competition with each other. It was always something like "OK, Hotshot. Let's see you top this". This friendly competition created some magical moments on the dance floor. I'm not sure that I will ever be able to create moments like this without him.

It seems that I've spent the better part of my calling career on the stage with him. We had so many good times. I can remember calling to 20 squares of dancers in Sweden at 5 o'clock in the morning. I remember Jerry playing the guitar at afterparties using a credit card as a pick. Did I say afterparties???? There were times that we left the afterparty just in time to shower and get ready for a morning workshop (we were very young and dumb at the time). For

many years we had an AMAZIN dance week at Kirkwood Lodge with Marshall Flippo.

In 1986 Jerry and I started our own record company – Royal Records. We were such novices at this time. We had borrowed enough money to pay for the session and buy a full-page ad in both square dance magazines for a year. I guess dumb luck prevailed. Royal Records quickly became one of the major square dance labels, and it is still going strong 35 years later.

Was he cantankerous? Hell Yes!!!!!! Jerry, to quote a famous comedian, “Had no time for fools.” If you didn’t want to ride the train with him, you better get the hell out of the way. And Man, could he call!!!!!! Arguably, Jerry was one of the best callers our activity has ever produced. Many would say THE best. I find it hard to argue with that. Jerry did it all. He could sing, he could do hash – He was the only caller I know that could start off the dance with the dancers dancing on the ceiling and keep them there all night!!!

But as we both matured in the activity, I saw Jerry become more and more a leader in the square dance picture. Jerry became very involved in CALLERLAB and especially Caller Education. He became a CALLERLAB Accredited Caller coach, and he taught his CRaMS system of calling to callers worldwide. Jerry is primarily responsible for the emphasis being put back on Relationships in the CALLERLAB Caller Coach Curriculum. For the past few years, Jerry was at the forefront of instigating the new Social Square Dancing Program.

Jerry’s last year was very hard on him. He and Kristy both were hospitalized with COVID-19 early in 2020. Jerry had diabetes and suffered from poor circulation in both legs – making it extremely difficult for him to walk. His circulation issues eventually created heart problems. In late 2020, he was admitted into the hospital for a triple bypass. The bypass was successful, and the doctors could remove the ventilator that was breathing for him. Thanks to Jerry’s cousin Steve, I was able to “face time” with Jerry for a short while soon after. Even then, he still had not lost his sense of humor. All of us were hoping that he was out of the woods, but his heart was still struggling. Eventually, the doctors had to amputate one of his legs to relieve the stress on his heart.

Jerry really never recovered from this. On Saturday morning (December 19<sup>th</sup>), Kristy received a call from the intensive care nurse telling her that Jerry had “coded” and they would try and keep him alive until she got there (Kristy lives about 1-1/2 hours away). Kristy and their youngest son Jake left Fairfield immediately. Their oldest son, Josh, serves in the US Air Force and was stationed near Destin, Florida. They called Josh on the way to the hospital, and he got a flight to Iowa City. The earliest that he could get there, however, was almost midnight. No one expected Jerry to last that long.

But.....Did I say earlier that he was cantankerous??????? Jerry held on for better than 18 hours – Until Josh made it to the hospital around 11 pm. Shortly after Josh got there, Jerry passed away – surrounded by his family.



A Go Fund Me account was set up to help Kristy with the mounting bill. As of today (2.28.21) square dancers and friends worldwide have donated over \$42,000.00. You may continue at <https://gofundme.com/f/jerry-and-kristy-story>...

Kim and I flew to Iowa to attend Jerry's graveside service. With the pandemic in full swing, there would be no funeral. There was a handful of us that came in to visit our friend one last time. This sad occasion actually turned into a celebration. We gathered in the hotel lobby. All of us had some type of funny story about Jerry, and we were able to laugh through the tears. Throughout this ordeal, I stayed in daily contact with the Story family. I could not be there with them, but I could be their contact with the many dancers and callers who were so concerned. I considered it an honor that the family trusted me with this.

As things started to settle down, I remain in close contact with Kristy. We speak several times a week. During one of our conversations, Kristy asked if I would try and record a square dance tune in memory of Jerry. I had already thought of this and was just wanting to find the right time to approach Kristy with the idea. So..I set out to find the PERFECT song to pay homage to my friend. Remember about 5000 words ago? I told everyone about that night in Lancaster? One of the songs that we developed for our "show" was "Don't It Make You want to Go Home." Over the years, other callers have "borrowed" much of the tunes that Jerry and I came up with on that night. However.....I have never heard anyone else do that song. So, it seemed perfect.

The very next day, I contacted Michael Salacuse of Circle Left Studio in Nashville and told him what I wanted to do. Michael has done several square dance recordings for Royal Records and knew Jerry well. Michael and I went through several versions, and he came up with one that I REALLY loved. After a couple of weeks of practicing, I put a vocal on it last week – using the same figure that Jerry and I always used on it. I even tried to "Jerry" it up at the end.



"Don't It Make You Want To Go Home" is going to be released as a single on March 2, 2020. You'll be able to download it off of the Royal site – [www.royal-records.com](http://www.royal-records.com).

On December 19, 2020, square dancing lost a true legend. Fortunately, Legends never truly die. The multitudes of callers that Jerry influenced and the thousands and thousands of dancers that still hear "Celebrate," "Alright – Alright-Alright," or "Gee and Haw" at a dance will always remember Jerry Story.

As for me, I'll always miss my friend but every time I say "Four Boys Prommmmmmmmmenade!!!!!!", he'll be in the back of my mind somewhere saying – "OK Hot shot, Do This."

The DANCERgram magazines presented on this website are written and published by a square and round dancer concerned about preserving our dance activity. The magazines include *Planner* (weekly), *This & That* (monthly), *Joys, Concerns, & Sympathies* (as needed), and *Directory* (as needed). All of the magazines are under the DANCERgram banner. In the event of new information between publication dates, notification is sent via the *Flash*.

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