

NEWSLETTER

Convention Chatter PLUS!

Issue #2026-3

January 9, 2026

LOW REGISTRATION FEES - Claudia Littlefair, Editor

How are Convention registration fees kept to a minimum? The answer: no one is paid for their work – not the Planning Committee and not the Callers and Cuers. And everyone, including those who work, pay the registration fee. Some of the leaders who disagree with this arrangement (paying to call or cue) do not participate in conventions. Other leaders and volunteers who agree with this arrangement have such a heavy workload, that they dance very little or not at all.

So, how can we show our appreciation for all of these unpaid “workers”? The answer is easy. Sign up for Convention – the sooner the better! It’s an awesome feeling for the Planning Committee when registrations exceed the breakeven point. And it’s hugely rewarding for Leaders when they have a full room of dancers to call or cue for. Remember, too, when you’re at the Convention, make a point of personally thanking those volunteers and leaders for their part in making our dance experience so enjoyable.



Early bird registration is \$75 per person. After June 30, rates increase to \$85. Click here to register or to find out more about the Alberta Convention, September 5-7, 2026, in Lacombe: <https://www.squaredancecalgary.com/convention-2026/>.

INDEX

Low Registration Fees	1
Convention Ruminations	1
Al's Convention Insights:	
Why Register Early	3
How To Get More Men	
To Square Dance	4
Thoughts For A New Year	5
Tips for Better Dancing	7
Try Trash Can Dancing	9
Check Out 'Czech' Dancing	9
National Festival BC –	
Spacious A/C Facilities	10

CONVENTION RUMINATIONS

Interview with Long-Time Caller, Lorne Smith, Calgary

How many Alberta Conventions have you attended and what was your first one like?

I've attended about 50, including the Nationals that Alberta hosted. The first one I attended was in 1969 and it was also the very first Alberta Convention. There was about 25 to 35 squares attended. I was a teen dancer and there were 4 or 5 teen squares. We mainly danced together at the back of the hall because we liked to put extra flairs and swings in our dancing. The Convention consisted of a Saturday afternoon workshop on moves like spin-chain thru and an evening dance, all held in one hall. The levels/programs in Square Dancing such as Plus, did not evolve until sometime in the early 1970's, and there was only one phase in Round Dancing (Square Dance Level).

Sometime during the day, there was also entertainment and a Federation Meeting. Some of the people I remember being there who are still involved in dance today are: Charlotte Hawthorne, Murray Few, Jerry Jestin and Bev Hansen (Hopkins).

The highlight of the convention for me was dancing with all the different callers and dancers from all across Alberta.

Was the Alberta dance community in the 1960's the same as it is today?

No, at that time, we were all one big community of dancers and leaders. It was senseless to have more than one event running at the same time, because most dancers went to all the same major events. Wandering Squares had given up their regular Labour Day weekend campout in order that the Provincial Convention could be held. The organizing committee for Convention was a lot of the same people who organized the Wandering Squares campouts.

There were 7 or 8 major events a year, mostly campouts, that everyone tried to get to, and many made Convention their priority. It was the biggest activity happening in the province and the “in” thing to go to.

Who called at Conventions in the early years?

Just about every active caller at the time called at Convention. It was the place to rub shoulders with other callers. It was also a stepping stone to getting known outside of local areas and a way to get out-of-town bookings. It was an ideal prestigious opportunity to call for big crowds, as every year Conventions got bigger.



Lorne & Barb Smith

What was your biggest Provincial Convention?

Spruce Grove in 1994 with over 1400 participants. Every level that was offered at the time was available and well attended. People got together after dancing to socialize. New friends were made from all over, and some became life time friends. It was an energizing atmosphere filled with comraderie.

One highlight was when callers Jerry Pierce, Barry Sjolín and Phil Hanson, on the spur of the moment, called together during one of their calling spots. The dancers loved it – the energy it created was extraordinary.

When was the first time you called at a Convention?

Even though I was calling multi-levels and was eligible to call by 1986, I wanted more experience. I felt that Conventions were not the place to learn to call. That can be done thru calling guest tips, teaching new dancers, and at the club level. Conventions are really the stepping stone to calling outside of the home club and local area.

The first time I called was in Lethbridge in 1988. I remember preparing like mad and feeling a combination of emotions – very nervous, full of anticipation and excitement.

How did you get involved in programming Conventions?

Being a multi-level caller, I assisted with programming the higher levels of dancing for many years. With my background experience, I could see how gaps could be filled to satisfy all the levels of square dancing. My first official program position was in 1999 as assistant program to Bill Cook in Strathmore. Then program chair in 2004 for the Calgary National, program chair in 2007 in Strathmore, and program chair in 2012 in High River and 2013 in Lacombe.

What are the challenges and duties of the Program Chair?

Meeting the dancer's needs (level of dance) so that it's worthwhile for them to come for the weekend. The challenge is to have an adequate amount of skilled callers to match the need. Sometimes the callers overestimate their own abilities, or there's a lack of callers to choose from. Another challenge is scheduling the right callers into the right time slots. Sometimes the dancers create problems - attending levels that are too difficult, or showing up late and missing out on the first part of the instruction.

In addition to scheduling, the program chair arranges for and sets up all the sound equipment. The more levels and types of dance offered, the more equipment is needed. Throughout the weekend, very little time is spent on the dance floor.



You've also served as General Chair couple. When and what are the challenges and duties in this position?

We were General Chair Couple for the High River Provincial Convention in 2013 and for the National Convention in Calgary in 2024.

Some of the Chair couple duties were: getting approval from the governing body to sponsor the convention, assembling committee chairs to make the convention happen, keeping the budget and committees on track, conducting regular meetings and being the liaison with the governing body. The Challenge: Being sure all parts of the convention happen seamlessly.

What makes Conventions important?

Conventions will vary based on the mix of who's calling and who's dancing. Some years are better than others. I think it's important to keep the bigger picture in mind - which is to maintain the provincial connection between leaders and dancers; the exchange of ideas between areas; and meeting key people in our dance community.

Making the "annual pilgrimage", touching base once a year, keeps our connection strong and healthy - especially during this time where our numbers have declined.

* * * * *

About Lorne & Barb Smith: Lorne started dancing in 1967, calling in 1986, and is a 3rd generation caller. His wife, Barb has been dancing since 1977. They have been involved in all aspects of the square dance world, both as dancers and leaders. Currently they call for four dance clubs, teach beginners through to C-1, and cue Phases 2 & 3 Rounds. In addition, Lorne & Barb guest call for many special events and weekends throughout western Canada. They are recipients of the Alberta Rose Award and Canadian Society Award of Excellence.

In addition to calling, Lorne & Barb are the Alberta Director to our national organization, Canadian Square & Round Dance Society, and an Accredited Member, Vice-Chair and Committee Member in our international association, CALLERLAB. They served as the Alberta Callers School coordinator for approximately 20 years, and more recently, over the past seven months, Lorne has conducted monthly Zoom Callers workshops. These were attended by more than 30 new/newer callers from Alberta, BC, Saskatchewan, Ontario and as far away as Australia.

AL'S CONVENTION INSIGHTS

Long-time dancer Al Moody has participated in, volunteered at and served on a number of Convention Committees. In this regularly featured column, Al shares some of his knowledge and experiences gathered over a number of years.



Why Register Early? A Look At What Happens Behind-the-Scenes

How can you spend money from an empty piggy bank? Only the Government can do that!

From the time the motion is made to grant an entity the right to host a square dance Convention, expenses are incurred. **Earlier registrations enable the Planning Committee to make payments on expenses required to host the Convention. This means that every dollar from an early registration is highly treasured and sought after.** The Alberta Federation usually makes available a small amount of money to enable the Host to put deposits on a venue. Other expenses quickly come forward such as printing promotional material, fabric if costumes are required, deposits for water dispensers, deposits for sound equipment, ribbons, badges and many other incidentals.

Some people take the attitude that "*Someone Else*" can make the decision to attend or to register early. But what happens if "*Someone Else*" doesn't register early or doesn't plan to attend? **This can negatively affect the Convention in two ways.**

#1: MONEY. The Planning Committee may not be able to make the deposits on a favoured venue or pay for other necessary pre-convention expenses. Planning a convention is like planning a wedding. Securing a hall is one of the very first tasks. If registrations are slow to come in, the numbers cannot support the cost of the hall. Canceling the hall might be the only fiscally responsible option. This leaves very little lead time to find a new smaller and less expensive place to host the event. At the time of writing this article, 37 people have registered. That's about one-third of the hall rental cost. The first deposit to the hall is due at the end of January, and the rest is due shortly thereafter.

#2: LEAD TIME. Sufficient lead time is required by the Program Chairs in order to plan a suitable program. The Round Dance program is custom designed based on who has registered, and what phases and rhythms they dance. Participating callers and cuers are asked to register no later than 4 months in advance - by April 30. This allows the Program Chairs time to create the program and distribute assignments prior to the end of June. The leaders then have the summer to prepare their assignments.

So, do your part in making sure that the 2026 Convention can happen – make the decision to attend AND register now. Then you won't have to worry about it later and the Planning Committee will be better equipped to prepare a great program.

HOW TO GET MORE MEN INVOLVED IN SQUARE DANCING

Source: Email from Tom Gray, President of Leduc Square Dance Club

Good morning, Claudia. Yesterday, I asked Google, "HOW TO GET MORE MEN INVOLVED IN SQUARE DANCING?" Here was Google AI's response. Seems to me that we've been working on these things for a decade or more. – Tom

To get more men involved in square dancing, focus on modernizing the activity's image, emphasizing its physical and social benefits, and using targeted, inclusive marketing strategies.



Modernize the Perception

- **Avoid the "Barn Dance" Image:** Promote the activity as "Modern Western Square Dancing" or "Modern American Square Dancing" to dispel out dated notions.
- **Relax the Dress Code:** Encourage casual "street attire" instead of traditional costumes, which can be a barrier for newcomers. Men typically wear long trousers and a collared shirt, and casual variations are widely accepted.
- **Update the Music:** Incorporate a variety of music types, including rock and roll, line dancing, and two-stepping, alongside traditional tunes to appeal to a broader audience.

Highlight Key Benefits

- **Physical Activity:** Emphasize the health benefits, such as getting a good workout (dancing for two hours can be equivalent to walking five miles).
- **Mental Stimulation:** Note that square dancing keeps you mentally alert because you have to listen to and interpret the caller's instructions.
- **Social & Teamwork Aspects:** Stress that it is a fun, social activity and a great, low-pressure way to meet new people and build a sense of teamwork and community.
- **Singles Welcome:** Make it clear that dancers do not need to sign up with a partner and that singles are always welcome.

Implement Targeted Marketing

- **Public Demonstrations:** Hold demonstration dances in public spaces like malls, fairs, and community events, actively engaging onlookers and passing out flyers.
- **Word of Mouth:** Encourage current male dancers to invite their friends, neighbors, and co-workers. Personal invitations are often the most effective recruitment method.
- **Online Presence:** Maintain a professional website and use social media platforms, posting photos and videos of people having fun to show a lively, modern atmosphere.
- **Targeted Outreach:** Advertise in specific places men might frequent or to relevant local groups, such as sports clubs, apartment complexes, or companies.
- **Offer Free/Discounted Lessons:** Provide free "open house" nights or offer discounted lessons to get people in the door and collect their contact information for future marketing.
- **Use Inclusive Language:** Ensure all communications avoid gender-specific instructions like "boys do this, girls do that," instead focusing on general dance positions and roles.

- Last Christmas, Grandpa was feeling his age, and found that shopping for Christmas gifts had become too difficult. So he decided to send cheques to everyone instead.

In each card he wrote, "Buy your own present!" and mailed them early.

He enjoyed the usual flurry of family festivities, and it was only after the holiday that he noticed that he had received very few cards in return. Puzzled over this, he went into his study, intending to write a couple of his relatives and ask what happened. It was then, as he cleared off his cluttered desk that he got his answer. Under a stack of papers, he was horrified to find the gift cheques which he had forgotten to enclose with the cards.

- Two things that are hard on the heart: running up stairs; and running down people.
- At my age I no longer need alcohol to get dizzy, pass out, and fall into the bushes. I can simply do that now by going outside on my front step and bending over to tie my shoe.

THOUGHTS FOR A NEW YEAR

- by Dorothy Stott Shaw, Poetess, Author and Wife of the
Infamous “Pappy” Shaw, otherwise known as Father of Square Dancing



Did it ever occur to you that man is designed for dancing?

Watch a marsh hawk, cutting a clean edge of motion across a September sky. Watch a young horse in open pasture, running for pure delight; or a red setter coursing among willows and sedges near a duck-clotted lake. Watch a porpoise playing in the open sea and making of swimming a thing even surpassing the joy of fishes; or peer at a little green snake, making a shining whisper of movement through orchard grass.

Then, take a look at man! Oh, he *can* swim, and run and creep, and even fly – after a fashion, for he is resourceful even though he is awkward and physically inadequate. But he does not do these things one-tenth as well as the deer, the swallow, the salmon or the lizard.

Just a minute! **Take another look at him. He is built for dancing! There he excels all other creatures.** A vertical spine – great length of limb – beautifully swivelled joints (what other creature can stand on one foot and swing the other leg in a tall circle?) – a plantigrade foot – a head regally poised on slender hinges – and what a hand, so sensitively articulated at wrist and finger joints!

Look closer. The hand is designed, as is the hand of no other being, to take and clasp the hand of a fellow being: in meeting and greeting, in comforting and congratulating, in passing in a pattern. And the countenance on that poised head is capable of infinite gradations of joy, of tenderness, compassion, enthusiasm and fun. The lips can smile and laugh; the mouth can speak in friendliness, howl in glee, shout for joy. And hidden somewhere in that fragile skull, those slender veins (where *is* it hidden?), the curious capacity for keeping time: to a drum, to a fiddle, to a singing voice, to the steady in-beat of surf on a white strand. And he leads with his heart, man does, his heart that in most creatures is safely tucked in under, out of harm's way.

Oh, man-designed-for-dancing, the rhythm of the year turns past the solstice; the blood quickens. Take that sweet woman on your arm, straighten the vertical spine, lift the poised head, step out, with that plantigrade foot pointed cleanly, onto the dance floor and right on into the new year.

Use your head for looks (you've been thinking with it all day) – cervicle vertebrae lined up straight, chin raised a little, eye flashing, lips laughing. Hold out that wonderful hand to clasp another hand; give the owner of the hand a happy grin; call across the floor at the top of your lungs – “room for another couple in this set!”

And lead with your heart!

No other creature – no running, flying, leaping, swimming creature – can throw back its head, fling out its arm in a world-embracing gesture – feet unconsciously tapping to fiddle music in the background – and cry from a full heart,

Happy New Year Everybody!

* * * * *

ABOUT Dr. Lloyd “Pappy” Shaw: Dr. Lloyd 'Pappy' Shaw was one of the most influential figures in square dance history. Educator (high school teacher, principal, and superintendent of schools), researcher, author, caller, teacher of callers, and promoter of square dance—through the travels of his young Cheyenne Mountain Dancers, his *Cowboy Dances* book, and his subsequent callers' classes, **Shaw sparked a nationwide revival of interest in square dance.** In the years immediately after World War II, square dancing boomed as a social activity, and hundreds of would-be dance leaders from across North America flocked to Colorado Springs to study with him.

Source: <https://squaredancehistory.org/exhibits/show/lloyd-shaw>

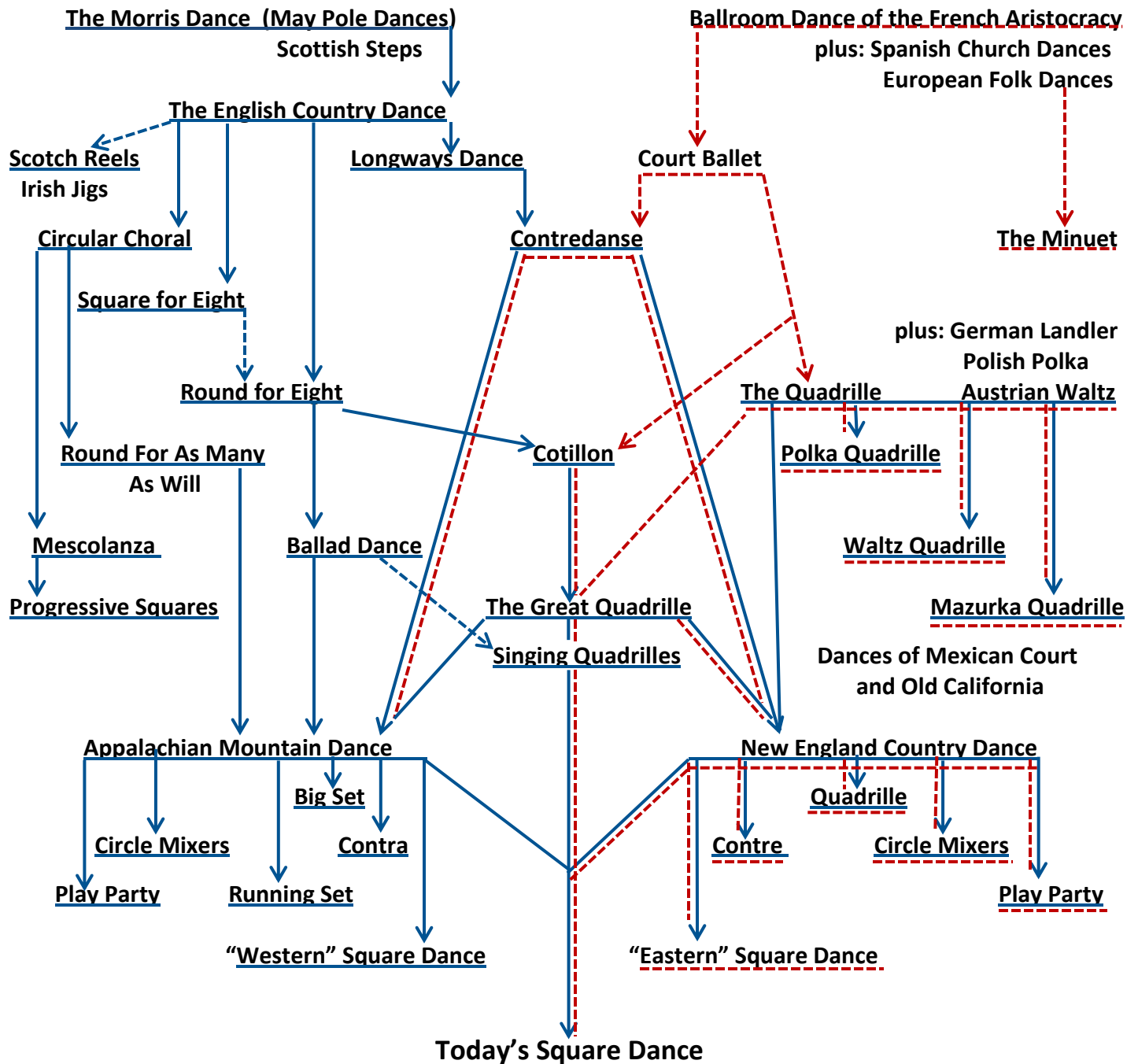
ABOUT Dorothy Stott Shaw: In the 58-page document titled ‘*History & Heritage of Modern American Square Dancing*’, (click here for document: <https://www.geocities.ws/jollyprom/pdfs/shehisto.pdf>) publisher Bob Osgood, writes:

“First something about the main author. **There is no one we know is better qualified to take you on a guided tour through the fascinating past of square dancing than the author Dorothy Stott Shaw.** Mrs. Shaw and her husband, Dr. Lloyd „Pappy“ Shaw, became the centre of the rebirth of the great square dance movement in the 1930’s. For many years the leaders in square dancing have sought out the Shaws at their home in Colorado Springs for guidance, philosophy, history and encouragement. From their great storehouse of information, Mrs. Shaw has gathered the special gems that fill these pages. It is her hope, and ours too, that they will serve to enrich your enjoyment of this great activity.”

From that same document, here is a replica of a diagram showing the complicated roots of today’s square dance.

From the Greens and Fields of England

From the Royal Ballrooms of France



TIPS FOR BETTER DANCING

- Excerpt from Article by Ed Foote, Caller

The purpose of this article is to enhance your dancing pleasure. Dancers who follow these rules find they dance more, stand less, and in general have a more enjoyable dancing experience.

Take Hands With Those Standing Beside You

This should be done immediately after completing any figure, to enable you to see the formation you have (line, wave, etc.) when doing the next call.

1. **Hands should be joined within one-half second after the completion of any call.** Failure to join hands after a call will often result in sloppy lines or waves, which could cause the square to break down before or during the execution of the next call.
2. **Elbows must be bent when hands are joined.** If arms are outstretched when hands are touching, the set is much too large to operate smoothly.



How To Avoid Breaking Down



1. **Believe the caller.** Often dancers will stop cold if a caller tells them to do something and they do not understand why. Forget worrying about “why” and just do as the caller says. Refusing to execute a given command will cause the square to break down.
2. **If the caller gives a call you have never heard, do not give up and quit.** In the vast majority of cases the caller will tell you how to do the call after he has said the name, especially if it is not one of the Mainstream or Plus Program calls. Even if you have never heard a call, if it is not complicated, there is no reason for inability to do the call if the caller talks you thru it.
3. **If you want to help someone who is lost, use hand signals.** A very effective method is to point to the spot they should be occupying. If you talk, you could cause yourself and others in the square to miss hearing the caller give the next call.
4. **If you are positive you have done a call correctly, do not let someone who is unsure of the call make you change your position.** This will keep the square going.
5. **Experienced couples should be across from each other when squared up, never adjacent,** if a set consists of two experienced couples and two inexperienced couples. This will give each inexperienced dancer an experienced corner, and will provide each side of the square with experienced dancers when doing calls.
6. **Keep your head raised.** This lets you see what is going on. Many people dance looking down at the floor, and thus are out of touch with the set as a whole.
7. **Keep the set small.** Touching hands immediately after each call is one way to accomplish this. Large sets break down much more often than small ones.
8. **Always have your set lined up with the walls.** Often a set will become slightly offset from being lined up with the walls; now a Cast Off or other turning motion may cause some people to become disoriented. If the caller has the set Promenade and has the heads or sides Wheel Around, it is quite likely the set will not be lined up with the walls. **Solution:** Take it upon yourself to make slight adjustments on the next two or three calls to get the set aligned with the walls. One person can cause the whole set to adjust, so you be this person.



If You Become Completely Lost

1. **Do not turn around.** This will make it difficult for someone behind you to help you recover. It is much easier to guide someone into place by guiding them from the back.
2. **Turn your head in all directions to see where you should go.** If someone says to turn around or you see that you should turn around, then do it. Otherwise, retain your facing direction and let someone guide you into place.

3. **Do not wander around.** Stay put until someone either guides you into place or directs you to go to a certain position. Do not be surprised to get this help – expect that you will get it and be ready to respond to it quickly.

If Your Square Breaks Down, Get to Facing Lines

Do this by: (1) Squaring your set (go home), and then
(2) Have the head couples slide to the right to form normal facing lines of four
(each boy with a girl on his right).



Now watch the other squares. Often the caller will get the squares back to facing lines several times before finally getting to a Left Allemande; when he does get them to facing lines, your square can now pick up the next call and you are dancing again. You may not wind up with your original partner or corner, but you are dancing and that is the name of the game.

This will not work every time, as sometimes the caller does not bring people back to facing lines before a Left Allemande; but it works often enough to be worth doing. In fact, many callers will intentionally bring people back to facing lines in order to pick up those who have broken down early. If you do not accept this opportunity to resume dancing, you may have as long stand until the next Left Allemande.

How To Pass Proper Shoulders

Whenever you Pass Thru with someone, always pass *right* shoulders, *never* pass left shoulders.

How To Learn Properly

1. **Try to understand the definition of the call rather than just memorizing a position.** If you understand the definition, you will be able to do the call from any position; but if you have only memorized one position, you will be lost if the call is used from any other position.
2. **Please be quiet while the caller is explaining something.** You may not need the help but others may.
3. **If a caller is walking the floor thru a call, do not get ahead of the caller's prompting even if you know what comes next.** This is inconsiderate of fellow dancers who need this help and could keep them from fully understanding the call, leading to a possible breakdown of the set later on.



Two Primary Reasons For Squares Breaking Down

1. Failure to take hands with adjacent dancers at the completion of every call to form lines or waves.
2. Failure to listen to or believe the caller.



About the Author: *Ed Foote is considered by many to be one of the foremost authorities on the activity of Modern Western Style Square Dancing. He began his calling career in 1965 and calls all square dance programs thru Challenge. Ed has so many credits to his name in the Square Dance Community that a complete listing here would not be possible. He is seen by many as the "Callers Caller" and has been known to provide dancers with some of the most dynamic and entertaining choreography in the world. Ed is a full time International Caller who makes his home in the Pittsburgh area when he is not traveling.*

- Phil walks into his boss's office one day and says, "Sir, I'll be honest with you. I know the economy isn't great, but I've got three companies after me, and I'd like to ask for a raise, respectfully." After a few minutes of haggling, the boss finally agrees to give him a 5 percent raise, and he happily gets up to leave. "By the way," the boss asks as Phil leaves his office, "which three companies are after you?" Phil replies, "The electric company, the water company and the phone company."
- A mom texts, "Hi! Son, what does IDK, LY, & TTYL mean?" He texts back, "I Don't Know, Love You, & Talk To You Later." The mom texts him back, "It's ok, don't worry about it. I'll ask your sister, love you too."

TRY TRASH CAN DANCING!

Source: 2014 Cariboo Connection Issue #44, Mary Anne & Nick Turner

American square dance caller, Allan Hurst, reports that he occasionally runs into a situation where there are only 6 people available to make a square. On one such night, the dancers noticed two garbage cans (with lids) on wheels at the back of the hall. After some discussion, it was decided to try and use these trash cans as “dancers” to fill empty spots in the square. After a bit of adjusting and a lot of laughter the dancers were successful. Over time the “Garbage Can Tip” became quite popular and was often requested, even when there was no shortage of dancers.



Such an event sounds like it could be fun and would certainly liven up an evening. Photos of such an activity could make for an interesting press release. If you would like to try the “Garbage Can Tip” below are some of the guidelines that Allan Hurst has developed.

Dancers

- The dancer who starts interacting with a garbage can at the beginning of a call is responsible for moving the garbage can into place for the next call.
- If the dancer moving the garbage can has to step out of place to do so, wait an extra beat to let them move back into place before saying the next call.
- If the garbage can hasn't needed to move for one or more calls, the dancer nearest to it is responsible for getting it moving when appropriate.
- More than 2 garbage cans in a square is too confusing for all parties concerned.

Performance & Timing

- Call A bit more slowly than usual.
- Expect to cue more frequently than usual. “Don, you need to finish turning thru with your garbage can partner.” “Someone needs to help that garbage can boy do his u-turn back.”
- Resist the urge to stack calls without warning. If you stack calls “in real time” your 2nd or 3rd call is likely to not be heard by the dancers, who will probably be laughing and shouting as they try to get the garbage can moving.

Choreo Tips

Keep choreo simple, and stick to standard applications as often as possible. Everybody has to move. At any level, “8 person” calls work the best with two garbage can dancers. Singing calls are a lot easier if the garbage cans are girls. Dancers will quickly figure out they can just “roll the girls” to the next boy in sequence.

Practical Matters

Only use garbage cans with snug lids and empty the can before dancing with it.

So the next time you only have six or seven people squared up ... search for a garbage can ... or even a chair with wheels.

CHECK OUT ‘CZECH’ DANCING

Not enough dancers to make another square? Try ‘Czech’ Dancing – good for any number of people. It’s called ‘Czech’ because that is where it began. The how-to’s are simple:

1. Make a line at the bottom of the hall, facing the caller – doesn’t matter about gender or number of people.
2. Everyone imagines his own phantom square in which he acts as the man in #3 position (the head man who is watching caller in a normal square); or she acts as the lady in #3 position. Easiest if all the men line up side by side, and all the women side by side.
3. As the tip starts the whole line is doing the same action, ie. #3 position. (Note: ladies stay in #3 position and do not rotate to next partner).
4. *Variation:* Make a column instead of line. In this case, dance the #2 or #4 position, or whichever position is easiest to see.

It is good exercise – mentally and physically - and an interesting feeling to see the line working “as one person”. Best of all, you don’t have to sit out a dance!



SPACIOUS, AIR CONDITIONED FACILITIES!

- by Wendy Krueger, Co-Chair, 2026 Canadian Square, Round, and Clog Dance Festival

The **2026 Canadian National Festival** is being held at **Penticton Trade and Convention Centre (PTCC)**. It is a modern, beautiful 60,000 sq. ft. facility in downtown Penticton, half a block from Lake Okanagan. PTCC is used for conferences, trade shows, conventions, banquets and parties. **This facility is all on one floor, all in one building.**

With a facility this large, we have ample space for as many people as we can imagine coming to the 2026 National. The specific rooms for each genre and level of dancing (Square, Round, Clogging) will be determined by our program chairs sometime this spring. Here is a list of a possible configuration of seven rooms we could work with for dance spaces:

1. Salon A - 8364 sq.ft.
2. Salon B - 3200 sq.ft.
3. Salon C - 3486 sq.ft.
4. Meeting Room 1-2 - 1590 sq. ft.
5. Meeting Room 5 - 900 sq. ft.
6. Meeting Room 6-7 - 1200 sq. ft.
7. Ballroom 2 - We will use part of this 13,000 sq.ft ballroom according to size needed.

Readers might wonder how these spaces compare to capacity for square dancing. Well, about 100 sq. ft. is needed per square of dancers. So 8300 sq. ft. is big enough for over 80 squares. The smallest room listed is Meeting Room 5 at 900 square feet. That's big enough for 9 squares.

The floors for square dancing have been tested by experienced dancers on our committee. It is comfortable and smooth in two types. The smoothest polished concrete is in Ballroom 2. Shoes with a little extra cushion would serve well in this room. And the tightest, smoothest, lowest-pile textile floor covering is in the other spaces. Dance shoes with a leather sole serve very well on this kind of floor. Flooring for Round dance and Clogging in our preliminary planning will be all wood, brought in and laid down for our event. **Flooring is almost as big in the budget as rent of the venue.**

The entire facility is air-conditioned, and it was built for Penticton's summer heat. Our committee visited the facility when a big event was on in the heat of summer 2025 and the temperature was very nice inside. When we are dancing, we'd like a constant temperature of about 67 degrees F (18 or 19 C)--maybe even cooler for cloggers. The number of dancers in a room figures largely into the interior temperature.



The committee is very happy with the early bird ticket sales of almost 450. Calculations based on the statistics of other events indicate another 250 to 350 people can be expected to register in the next six months. We haven't established an upper limit to the number of participants for the 2026 National Festival. **With a facility like PTCC, we feel like we can invite the world and accept everyone who wants to come. BC'ing you in Penticton!!**

To register, or for more information click here: <https://festival2026.squaredance.bc.ca/>

Late one night a burglar broke into a house and while he was sneaking around he heard a voice say, "Jesus is watching you." He looked around and saw nothing. He kept on creeping and again heard, "Jesus is watching you." In a dark corner, he saw a cage with a parrot inside. The burglar asked the parrot, "Was it you who said Jesus is watching me?" The parrot replied, "Yes." Relieved, the burglar asked, "What is your name?" The parrot said, "Clarence." The burglar said, "That's a stupid name for a parrot. What idiot named you Clarence?" The parrot answered, "The same idiot that named the Rottweiler Jesus."