

NEWSLETTER

Convention Chatter PLUS!

Issue #2026-4

March 10, 2026

PRE-CONVENTION 'HAND-WRINGERS' - Editor Claudia Littlefair

I wish everyone could experience what it's like to serve on a Convention Committee. It's a real eye-opener! **The worry of the unknown is a constant niggle in the back of my mind.** Will our budget meet our needs? Will we have enough dancers? Leaders? Will the program be adequate? Will the facilities work out? What about food? Entertainment? What are we forgetting? And the list goes on.

Monthly zoom meetings with a dedicated committee helps to ease concerns, **BUT, knowing we have enough dancers and leaders would make ALL the difference!** With less than six months to go, we have 57 registrants – about 25% of the number we need to break even.



So, help ease our worry - sign up now for Convention.

Early bird registration is \$75 per person. After June 30, prices increase to \$85. Click here to register or to find out more about Alberta Convention, September 5-7, 2026, in Lacombe:

<https://www.squaredancecalgary.com/convention-2026/>.

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AFTER PARTY TALENT SHOW! - Claudia Littlefair, Editor

Definition of "After Party" – a party held after an event. Typically, at every Alberta Dance Convention, some entertainment and refreshments are arranged for all to enjoy after the Closing Ceremonies on Sunday evening. **This year's After Party on Sunday evening, September 6th is the "Alberta's Got Talent, eh?" Talent Show with entertainment supplied by you!** Consider participating as a performer or simply enjoy the show.

Who is Eligible to Perform in the "AGT, eh?" Talent Show

ALL DANCERS AND LEADERS in attendance at the 2026 Alberta Dance Convention. Note: You do not have to be from Alberta to be a participant.

Guidelines

1. Keep acts family-friendly and non-offensive.
2. Keep it short - no longer than 5 minutes in length.
3. Can include any number of performers - solo acts, duets or groups.
4. Set-up time is minimal – avoid elaborate set-ups or props.

Examples of Acts

Magic act, comedy skit, poetry, singing, instrumental, reading, or any other act suitable for a mixed audience of all ages.

Judging

There is no judging. This is **purely for entertainment and fun!** A chance to display the diverse and varied talents within our dance community.

How to Register for "AGT, eh?" Talent Show

Prior to Convention, email the organizers with the type of act, amount of time needed for set-up and the length of performance. Although preference will be given to entries received prior to Convention, entry



requests received during the Convention weekend will be considered. *Note: It is our aim to have the Talent Show arranged prior to the Convention weekend.*

“AGT,eh?” Talent Show Organizers

It is the organizers’ responsibility to decide which acts are part of the show, how many, in what order, and to ensure that the show is running on time. Contact one or both of these organizers to submit an entry:

Marlene Symington: dmsymington@shaw.ca OR Claudia Littlefair: claudia.littlefair@gmail.com

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.



How Conventions Are Put Together

Usually, one person or a small group of volunteers decide to host a convention. An application is thereby made to the Alberta Square and Round Dance Federation (ASRDF) whose job it is to accept or deny the application. Sometimes it is an easy decision and other times difficult. A chairperson either volunteers or is appointed. Decisions like the date, location, theme, and vice chair persons are made. **Two of the biggest chair positions are Registrations and most importantly, the Programming Committee.**

The Registration Committee assists with others as to the design and printing of registration forms; distribution; keeping an accurate list of dancers, callers and cuers and collecting registration fees. Early registrations are really appreciated.

The Programming Committee has a very challenging mandate. They are responsible for keeping a list of all callers and cuers who will be on the program; evaluating each one for their ability, level of calling or cueing; scheduling when they will call or cue: ensuring that each has adequate rest time; time to get from one room to another. Efforts are made to ensure the all callers and cuers get equal stage time.

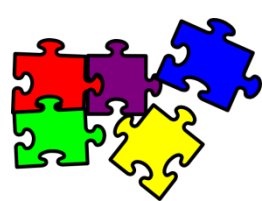
The promotion committee is responsible for getting the word out to all Clubs in Alberta. Depending upon the location, dancers are also invited from out of province.

Another important committee chair is that of Finance. Accurate records are kept for every financial transaction. It is important that each committee stick to their budget. Each has to work as a team in order for the convention to succeed – no one committee is more important than the other.

In order to ensure that the entire plan for the Convention is recorded in Minutes for all committee meetings, a secretary is required to attend each one. This comes in handy for all the Convention chairs so that everyone is aware of their duties and results.

There are many other committees required to make a convention a success. For example, volunteers are needed to move chairs and tables; set up a “silent auction”; ensuring that drinking water is always available; name tags and ribbons; security; clean up; food service; ensuring that the “leaders lounge” is stocked with snacks; a communication system for the callers and cuers; signage for the various rooms: decorations; work parties; room set ups and several other groups. **Many dancers do not realize how much work goes into ensuring that everyone has had a good time with lots of happy memories.**

Throughout the whole process from the granting of the right to host the Convention to the final de-briefing, many hours are spent by many volunteers in meetings and preparing reports. **This was all done to make sure that you, whether a Dancer, Caller or Cuer, had an enjoyable Convention with many happy memories.**



Buffalo were roaming the range when a tourist passed by. “Those are the mangiest-looking beasts I’ve ever seen!” he exclaimed. One buffalo turned to another and said, “I think I just heard a discouraging word.”



MESSAGE FROM THE 2026 ALBERTA DANCE CONVENTION PROGRAM CHAIRS

- Square Dance Program Co-Chairs Dave Littlefair & David Symington
- Round Dance Program Chair Mary & Bruce Nelson, Asst. Chair Deb & Ray Schmidt
- Clogging Program Chair Ida Murray

This is an invitation to call, teach, or cue at the 56th Alberta Dance Convention in Lacombe on the 2026 Labour Day weekend, September 5 to 7.

The Convention weekend provides a great opportunity to work with leaders from all parts of the Province and abroad, meet new friends, and be reacquainted with others from all parts of our dance community. Special thanks to those of you who have already registered.

Registration Deadline to be included on the program is APRIL 30, 2026. Click here to register:

<https://www.squaredancecalgary.com/convention-2026/>

Leader Workshops

In addition to the Convention, our provincial association, *Square & Round Dance Instructor's Association of Alberta* (SRDIAA), are planning leader workshops in Lacombe prior to the weekend, on Wednesday, Thursday & Friday, September 2, 3 & 4. These workshops are in the planning stages and when finalized, the information will be made available.

We hope you'll join us in making this Convention a fantastic dance party to remember!



GOOD NEWS FOR CLOGGERS!

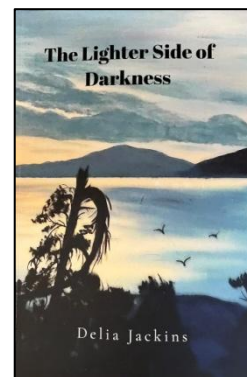
Suitable clogging space has been secured for the Convention! Cloggers will be dancing at St. Andrew's United Church auditorium, right next door to the Lacombe Memorial Centre (opposite end of the Centre's parking lot).

** Announcement!! ** DEE'S BOOK IS PUBLISHED!

Calgary dancer, Dee Jackins, has published her book titled *"The Lighter Side of Darkness"*. The back cover of the book sums it up well:

"Memoirs of a blind square dancer! Delia Jackins proves that blindness is no barrier to living life to the fullest. Join her as she shares her remarkable journey, embracing every challenge with humor, courage, and a determination to find the light in every situation."

You may recall some of the stories in the book from the regular column (by the same name) that Dee wrote for the *Alberta Chatter* newsletter, which ceased publishing in 2024. It's a delightful and inspiring read, and especially significant because Dee is part of our wonderful dance community. Note the painting on the front cover of the book – this was also done by Dee.



The cost of this 95-page soft covered book is \$20 plus shipping. To order, please contact Dee directly at deliaj@shaw.ca. Dee also brings copies of the book with her whenever she goes, so save on shipping costs.

A bank robber pulls out gun points it at the teller, and says, "Give me all the money or you're geography!" The puzzled teller replies, "Did you mean to say 'or you're history?'" The robber says, "Don't change the subject!"

SAY “CHEESE!” An Interview with Grace & James Chen

- Editor, Claudia Littlefair

An ‘unsung hero’ is defined as “a person who makes significant, valuable contributions but receives little or no recognition, praise, or public acclaim for them.” In my opinion, **Grace & James Chen are the perfect example of unsung heroes.** In a recent interview I discovered how much time and effort they put into taking pictures at our dance events.

What attracted you to square dancing?

We love to dance, and square dancing has brought us so many wonderful benefits. Because the movements are standardized around the world and classes are taught in English—from Basic all the way to Challenge levels—we can join in anywhere. There’s no need to memorize dance sequences, callers guide us through every step, singing out the moves so dancers can fully relax and enjoy the music.



Beyond the dancing itself, the square dance community has been a great place for us to make new friends and learn more about the Canadian culture. It has helped us feel connected and supported as we integrated into the mainstream society.

When did you join square and round dancing, and what programs do you dance?

In October, 2009, we joined Banff Trailers Square Dance Club in Calgary with instructors Dave and Claudia Littlefair. In September, 2012 we joined Cue Steps Round Dance Club with instructors Ron & Donna Baba. Today, we square dance Mainstream through to Challenge 1, and round dance Phase 3+.

What is your background in photography?

James learned basic skills in photography when we lived in Taiwan, and Grace learned over time as photography is one of her hobbies.



How do you successfully combine your hobbies of photography and dance?

By 2013 we were taking pictures at dances and emailing them out to whoever wanted them. Since then, our email list has grown to over 400 dancers and new people are readily added to the list. All they have to do is give us their email address. We are happy to share these photos with dancers for their enjoyment. We also expanded our email content to include posters of upcoming dances and events.

Describe some of the behind-the-scenes work that goes into this labour of love.

We spend about a half hour at each dance taking the photos. **Depending on the number, it usually takes about 2 to 3 hours to sort through, upload, and send our pictures out.** When we worked full-time, we did these jobs in the evenings or on weekends in between dance events. All the photos are categorized by year and by event. Due to limited computer storage capacity, we keep the photo albums for about eight years.

What motivates you to continue?

Taking photos is James' big hobby. We think that it's always nice to look at the photos and reminisce about all the great fun we had together! Also **the photos are good ways to promote our favourite activity.**

"We do not grow too old to dance. We grow old because we do NOT dance."

~ Herb Greggerson, Square dance caller 1953

"Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass. It's learning how to dance in the rain".

Following a funeral service, the pallbearers are carrying the casket out of the church when they accidentally bump into a wall. From inside the coffin they hear a faint moan. Opening the lid, they find the man inside alive! He leaps out, performs a little jig, and lives another 10 years before eventually keeling over.

Once again, a ceremony is conducted, and at the end the pallbearers carry out the casket. As they head toward the doors of the church, the wife of the deceased leaps to her feet and shouts, "Watch the wall!"

“TRAIL THRU”, “TRAIL END”, “TRAIL IN”, “TRAIL OUT” DANCES WHAT DO THEY ALL MEAN?

Recently I was reading through the FAQ section of the American National Square Dance Convention website, <https://nsdcnec.com/> and came across these first two dance definitions.

What is a Trail Thru Dance?

Dances held “on-the-trail” to the Convention are called Trail Thru Dances. These dances may be sponsored by any group and are not official convention dances. They celebrate the visitation of dancers passing through the area “on-the-way” to the Convention.

Prior to the Alberta Convention there are several “Trail Thru” Dances so plan your route now! More information and costs can be found at:

<https://www.squaredancecalgary.com/convention-2026/>.



- **Friday to Sunday, August 28-30, for New and Mainstream Dancers**, at Tees Hall (30 km. from Lacombe). Hosted by Wandering Squares Club. Caller is David Symington from Calgary, AB and ALL Callers and Cuers in attendance. Camping is free!
- **Friday to Sunday, August 28-30, for Plus Dancers**, at Holiday Ranch, Innisfail (80 km. from Lacombe). Caller is Gary Winter from Sherwood Park, AB.
- **Sunday to Tuesday, August 30-September 1, for Advanced Dancers**, at Holiday Ranch, Innisfail (80 km. from Lacombe). Caller is Murray Few from Edmonton, AB.
- **Thursday, September 3, Mainstream Dance with Pre-Rounds, 7pm-9:30pm**, Kozy Korner, Lacombe, hosted by Alberta’s callers & cuers association, SRDIAA. No charge.

What is a Trail End Dance?

Trail End Dances are held the night before the official start of the Convention and signifies that the travelers have reached the “end-of-the-trail” to the convention. There may be several Trail End dances conducted at the convention facility, local hotels, or other dance facilities.

What is a Trail In Dance?

In Alberta we refer to the Trail End Dance as a Trail In Dance. It is not an official part of the Convention.

The 2026 Trail In Dance is being held on Friday, September 4th at the convention hall, Lacombe Memorial Centre. Pre-Rounds 7:00 pm, Mainstream Squares 7:30-9:30 pm. Caller is Gary Winter, Sherwood Park, AB and Cuer is Claudia Littlefair, Strathmore, AB. Pay at the door, \$10/person. This dance is hosted by the Convention sponsor, Calgary & District Square & Round Dancers Association.

What is a Trail Out Dance

At the Alberta Convention we refer to the final Dance on Monday morning as a Trail Out Dance. It features all the callers and cuers in attendance, and is hosted by next year’s Convention Committee. There is no cost.

One day at a local café, a woman suddenly called out, “My daughter’s choking! She swallowed a nickel! Please, anyone, help!”

Immediately a man at a nearby table rushed up to her and said he was experienced in these situations. He calmly stepped over to the girl, then with no look of concern, wrapped his arms around her and squeezed. Out popped the nickel. The man returned to his table as if nothing had happened.

“Thank you!” the mother cried. “Tell me, are you a doctor?”

“No,” the man replied. “I work for the Tax Department.”

ROUND DANCE PHASES

Source: <https://haroldsears.com/dance/articles/phase.html>

Excerpts from Article written by Round Dance Instructors, Harold & Meredith Sears

ROUNDALAB is the International Association of Round Dance Teachers, Inc. They have created the Phase Rating System of round dancing to provide a vehicle for rating the round dance figures according to degree of complexity. Each phase has a specific syllabus of basics — steps, movements, and actions.

Phase I

This is the beginner level, mainly seen in two-step and waltz. For instance, a simple forward or back step is considered phase I, as is the side, close, rock, and recover. However, phase I also includes some simple figures of more than one step, such as the waltz box and the balance.

Phase II

This is the easy level. It includes many figures that take a full measure of music or even more. Where the simple box was phase I, the progressive box (two measures) and the left turning box (four measures) are phase II. They are phase low because they have been around a long time, and dancers have been traditionally learning them first. So phase II round dancing is sometimes "old" and not necessarily "easy."



Phase III

This level is essentially a transition level, used to introduce additional rhythms beyond the two-step and waltz, and of course to introduce new steps and figures. At phase III, you can begin to dance fox-trot, cha-cha, rumba, and most of the other rhythms as well.

Phase IV

Phase IV, the intermediate level, builds on the transition to the advanced level. New rhythms are introduced, such as samba and paso doble, another 20 or 30 figures (varies with each rhythm) are added to our growing repertoire, and the use of the entire body becomes more and more important. Many figures at this level simply cannot be performed without the use of stretch, sway, rotation, and rise and fall. So body mechanics becomes just as important as the steps in the overall flow of the dance.

Phase V

Phase V takes us into the advanced level where we continue to add sophisticated steps, step combinations, and body movements. Some of these new figures are modifications or extensions of lower level figures. For instance, the waltz weave is a phase IV figure; the natural weave is phase V. The open natural turn is phase IV; the running open natural is syncopated and phase V.

Phase VI

This is the highest level within round dancing, and it is the level with the greatest breadth. There is no "end" to this level because new material is continually being written. This continued opportunity for growth is what draws us on and makes round dancing endlessly fascinating.

Phase VI figures are complex and sophisticated. For instance, the "fregolina" figure is seven measures and 28 steps long, and the "chasse cape" can run for eight measures and 36 steps (including some syncopation).

* * * * *

The dance phases give us some indication of the difficulty of the dance, and some indication of the specific figures to expect in the choreography, but choreographers may ask us to perform those figures a little differently than usual or facing a different direction, and step cues can be used to take us through a unique and totally unexpected sequence, all without raising the phase level at all. **It is indeed a rich and interesting game.**

TRADITIONAL VS. MODERN - HOW DO THEY DIFFER?

Sources: [Traditional Square Dance Wikipedia.org/wiki/Traditional_square_dance](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Traditional_square_dance)
[Old-Time Ozark Square Dancing thelibrary.org/lochist/periodicals/bittersweet/fa74d.htm](https://thelibrary.org/lochist/periodicals/bittersweet/fa74d.htm)

Some time ago I was asked to explain the difference between ‘modern’ and ‘traditional’ square dancing. At the time I had been dancing for 19 years and didn’t really know the answer. So some research was needed.

The Beginning

Years ago it was necessary for the caller to be near to, or even to be a part of the square so he could be heard above the live music. This method required several callers on the dance floor at the same time – especially when it was a big dance. With the advent of amplifiers and microphones, only one caller was needed and he could stand up on the stage. As well, records could provide the music in place of live bands.

This marked the unofficial beginning of Modern Western Square Dance (MWSD). It evolved from Traditional Square Dance (TSD) some time during the 1940’S & 50’s – over 75 years ago (not so modern after all!)

Number of Calls

TSD uses a limited number of basic calls (about 25) so extensive lessons to learn the calls are not required. Rather than individual calls being taught, a pattern of calls are taught, and then repeated throughout the song.

In MWSD, there are currently 68 calls in the Mainstream program. It’s common to take a full dance season to be introduced to the calls, and another dance season to reinforce them. The Mainstream program is just one of several. If a dancer knew all the calls in all the programs they would know well over 500 calls.

Choreography

In TSD sequences of basic calls are called in a set order and repeated. For example, couple #1 dances the sequence with couple #2, then #3 and #4. Then it’s couple #2’s turn to visit around the square, and so on. The newer dancers would take the #4 position so that by the time it was their turn to lead the sequence, they would know the choreography. To fill in time between “visits”, couples would clap hands, swing or jig (similar to the basic clogging step). Dances are repetitive and could easily be memorized. Also, in TSD the caller uses more chatter in the calls. For example, a caller using the call “once and a half” might say: *“Once and a half and pat her on the head. If she don’t like biscuits, feed her cornbread.”* These extra words keep the rhythm for both the caller and the dancers.



MWSD has all eight dancers moving most of the time and has a greater variety of movement. Instead of memorizing patterns, dancers memorize the calls and are ready to execute them as soon as the call is delivered. The caller can change the choreography on the fly and each dance has the potential to be different. The choreography can be altered to be easy or challenging, all within the same program.



Music

The use of live music is the norm in TSD, with the fiddle being a common lead instrument. Much of the music is in 6/8 time (jigs) and 2/4 time (reels).

In MWSD a wide variety of music is used, from country to rock, show tunes, pop, Latin and classical – anything with a strong beat. The variety in music appeals to a larger group.

Standardization

And finally, there’s the whole issue of standardization. There is no governing body to set standards for TSD. The result is that there are regional variations in how dancers execute the calls, and the same dance figure may have different names in different regions, or the same name but a different figure.

In MWSD, CALLERLAB, the international association of square dance callers, was established in 1974. The Association has and continues to standardize the call names, definitions and programs that are accepted worldwide. Calls are in English regardless of country, and are taught the same way. This allows dancers to go anywhere in the world and square up. Recently the Association has undertaken a major overhaul of the dance programs, reducing the number of calls from 68 to 50 in the Mainstream program, and increasing calls in the Plus program from 29 to 50. The revised programs will take effect in September, 2026.

NO THUMBS SQUARE DANCING

- by David Sanford, Waldorf, MD, American Square Dance Magazine, May 2002

Okay, so I don't really mean "no thumbs," but something very similar. **What I wish to encourage is "light-touch" dancing, which many dancers have adopted - as opposed to "firm-grip" dancing.** The problem with "firm-grip" dancing is there is a potential for pain when arthritic hands are squeezed even slightly; when shoulder joints with bursitis are pulled; and even when fingers are pressed into adjoining rings. Of course, not all "firm grip" dancing results in injuries, but there are many people who have experienced pain due to "firm grips" and "pulls" and there are some people who no longer dance due to pain or injuries incurred on the dance floor. We can avoid this with "light touch" dancing. Besides, it is a very pleasant way to dance. Try it; you may like it.

First a definition: If the person with whom you are holding hands cannot slip his or her hand away from yours, then your grip is too tight. Tightness in a grip comes primarily from the use of the thumb (hence the title of this article). Some may think this is "limp grip" dancing. Not so. Firmness is in the wrist. With a firm wrist, there is positive contact and no sense of limpness.



Let me describe each of the "light-touch" handholds in square dancing.

1. **Handshake:** if your thumb makes contact at all, it should only rest lightly on the other person's hand. No sense of "grip" whatsoever.
2. **Wave (hands up):** Open hand, four fingers closed, thumb extended. Contact with palm and fingers. No thumb contact.
3. **Forearm:** Cup the hand with the thumb more parallel to fingers, not a "bracelet" position. No thumb pressure. People have been bruised from a thumb on their forearm. **Side-by-Side Couple:** Man offers his hand in a natural, slightly curved, sideways position. Woman rests her hand on his. No grip whatsoever.
4. **Courtesy Turn:** Man's left hand is an open platform; woman rests her hand on his. His right hand rests gently on the woman's back or waist as the couple turns together. Please, don't push.
5. **Star Thru/Box the Gnat Twirl:** With the arms lifted, there is a greater risk of shoulder injury. Men, don't clamp the women's hand. No thumb use at all. Let the woman's hand turn against yours. There is pressure for position, but no grip.

Dancers, if you are not already dancing with a light touch, please give it a try. Callers, you can make an enormous difference if you teach this handhold style in class. In fact, why not have an actual "no thumbs" tip each night of lessons. Keep the level extra easy, so the dancers can focus on "light-touch." Perhaps, if your dancers are willing, you could occasionally do a "no thumbs" tip at a club dance!

No generation gap between me and my younger college classmates, I thought. Wrong. When a teacher used the expression "broken record", a young man next to me asked, "What's that mean?"

"Endless repetition," I explained. "If a record were scratched, the needle would skip and play the same piece of music over and over."

His face brightened. "Like a corrupted MP3 file?"



FERRIS WHEEL! THE STORY BEHIND IT'S ORIGINS

CALLERLAB Knowledgebase <https://knowledge.callerlab.org/>
Article by Caller Don Beck, 2026

A common question voiced by both dancers and callers can be paraphrased as "where did that call come from?". When Don Beck, the author of Ferris Wheel, was recently asked that about Ferris Wheel he responded with two documents. The first was an explanation of what prompted him to invent the call and how the name came about [See below.] The second contained his original hand-written notes, dated July 1974, about how the call worked and how it could be used.

I was driving down a highway near Chicago thinking that we didn't need this rash of new calls that everyone was creating, because there was still plenty that we could do with our existing calls, BUT if I were to create a new call, what would it be?

The currently, frequently featured formation was the Two-Faced Line, so that was what I pictured in my mind. **Almost immediately, the current Ferris Wheel action appeared in my head.** Then there was the question of naming it. As far as naming new calls went, my philosophy was that if it had an obvious name, such as a combination of existing calls, use that name. If there was no obvious name, pick something that was completely different.



The Ferris Wheel action was definitely related to a Wheel and Deal action, so the name should relate to that. It was this action of moving one couple in-between two other couples as shuffling cards, so I named it Shuffle and Deal! I then checked Bill Burlison's book of calls and saw that there already about six calls that used the word Shuffle. Being completely new at this, six calls, seven calls, what's the difference! I had no idea that only one of those Shuffles was being used (at the challenge level).

The next step was to write up the call and send it to all of the note services with hopes that it would be one they chose to publish. A few days later, I got a phone call from Bill Peters (whom I had never met at the time) saying, I see that none of the other note services have published your new call yet. I like it and would like to publish it, but... I interrupted him saying that I'm guessing you don't like the name.

He said yes, but it's your call, and I'll keep your name if you want. Since a challenge dancer friend of mine had told me the same thing, I said that I was willing to change it. Bill asked if he could suggest a name, and I said yes. He said "Step Ahead". I said no way Bill, that's not catchy enough. I asked when he was going to publish it, i.e. when he needed a new name. He gave me two days! I called one of the other note service publishers, a friend named Jay King, to see if he had any suggestions. Jay said that he hadn't opened his mail yet, so no, he didn't. So I went back into my head. I figured that since it started with a Circulate, I might call it "Circus Wheel", but that didn't do it for me. **Following that line of thought, "Ferris Wheel" was the next option.** I loved it, Bill Peters loved it, and the rest is history.

On their way to get married, a young Catholic couple is involved in a fatal car accident. The couple found themselves sitting outside the Pearly Gates waiting for St. Peter to process them into Heaven. While waiting, they began to wonder: could they possibly get married in Heaven?

When St. Peter showed up, they asked him. St. Peter said, "I don't know. This is the first time anyone has asked. Let me go find out," and he left.

The couple sat and waited, and waited. Two months passed and the couple were still waiting. While waiting, they began to wonder what would happen if it didn't work out; could you get a divorce in heaven?

After yet another month, St. Peter finally returned, looking somewhat bedraggled. "Yes," he informed the couple, "You can get married in Heaven." "Great!" said the couple, "But we were just wondering, what if things don't work out? Could we also get a divorce in Heaven?"

St. Peter, red-faced with anger, slammed his clipboard onto the ground. "What's wrong?" asked the frightened couple. "OH, COME ON!" St. Peter shouted, "It took me three months to find a priest up here! Do you have any idea how long it'll take me to find a lawyer?"

Newsletter #3



Can you believe it is a scant 6 months until the biggest Canadian Square, Round and Clog dance party of the year?! There is a momentum swelling in our activity. We are rediscovering the joy of music and dance and happy friends all around us. I hope you are as excited as we are to make the 2026 Canadian National Festival the focal point of your summer. We have a vibrant city, the best of beautiful British Columbia as our Festival's backdrop, dozens of dance leaders and hundreds of dancers to entice you to spend July 15 to 18, 2026 with us. We are deservedly "house proud" about the venue, the Penticton Trade and Convention Centre. Spread the word, encourage your friends to register, and make this event memorable for great music, great friends, and the greatest pastime (or is it our secret obsession?)

This newsletter is an update on progress, as well as giving general information which we hope is of help.

December was a very busy month with registrants taking advantage of our Early-Bird rates before they expired. So far, in addition to dancers from Canada, we were pleased to know we shall be welcoming guests from the USA, Germany, China and Australia. We shall enjoy dancing to at least 56 leaders over our core dance areas of Squares, Rounds and Clogging. All levels are represented with the heaviest registrations being of Plus Squares and Intermediate Cloggers. There are a significant number of singles, so our planning will take this into account.

The easiest way to register is online with its advantage of providing quick confirmation. Forms can be downloaded from our website squaredance.bc.ca. Click on the Festival heading on our landing page and you shall be taken immediately to the section giving detailed information including hotels with which we have arranged special rates and RV Camping information. Risking repetition, we remind you that the Okanagan Valley and Penticton in particular are very popular summer resort areas and are usually fully booked. So early advanced booking is strongly recommended. The Penticton Trade and Convention Centre is large enough that we do not foresee a possibility of exceeding its capacity. It has sufficient halls and rooms that each level of dancing shall have its own space.

Like all events we shall be requesting volunteers to step forward and become part of the team ensuring things run smoothly. Our organizing committee covers the planning requirements. Where we shall need assistance is during the Festival itself. Our secretary, Arlene Laing, is maintaining a list of volunteers. The areas where we need help include the registration desk, security for the leaders' room and hall monitors. Please email her at arlenelaing2@gmail.com if you can join the team.

Should you have questions or require further information, we invite you to forward them to Arlene Laing who shall forward them to the appropriate committee member for response.

