

NEWSLETTER

Convention Chatter PLUS!

Issue #2026-6

June 19, 2026

OUR FIRST CONVENTION - by Claudia Littlefair, Editor

When Dave & I started square dancing in Strathmore 32 years ago we were still busy raising our two kids. We only danced once a week at our club dances and only during the dance season. But in 1999 Strathmore hosted the Provincial convention so we went to that.



What a shock! Over 750 dancers!! To accommodate the numbers, dancing took place in several school gyms, all within walking distance of our home. Advanced tickets could be bought for an evening meal which was catered at

the curling rink. What a sight – hundreds of dancers being fed in record time. Along with the special events like the Opening Ceremonies, the banner parade and showcase of rounds, there was a fashion show featuring square dance clothes. There were also several booths selling dancewear, dance shoes, badges and other dance related items. We were in awe! **It was the first time we realized just how big and how vibrant the square dance community was.** We understood now why it took two years of planning by the committee to pull it off.

It's amazing the great people I have in my life that I wouldn't have ever met if it wasn't for DANCING.

Since then our numbers have declined. The next time Strathmore put on the Convention in 2007, we had just under 400 participants. Over the past ten or more years, we average about 250 dancers – some years a few more and some a few less. Space requirements have decreased and some events have been dropped like the fashion show and banner parade (the parade preceded the Opening Ceremonies, when each club marched in with their club banner). There's still a lot of planning and effort that volunteers put in to make a Convention a success, but the time commitment is shorter – 1.5 years compared to 2 or more years.

We've attended many conventions since our first one in 1999, and **even though numbers have declined, some things remain the same.** The camaraderie, the joy that our music and dance creates, the laughter and fun we have together, and the new and old friends we meet. **It's nourishment for the soul, and I don't believe anyone leaves the Convention without being fed.**



141 Registrants as of June 18. Room for MORE!

56th ALBERTA DANCE CONVENTION

September 5-7, 2026

**** Early Bird Registration - \$75 per Person ****

After June 30 - \$85 per person.

Click here to register or to find out more:

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

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TWO MORE ADDITIONS TO THE CONVENTION LEADER LINE-UP!

Square Dance caller, Alan Ellis, Spruce Grove, Alberta and Square Dance Caller & Cuer, Wendy Krueger, Abbotsford, BC have been added to the list. That brings the total of square dance callers up to 23 – 6 from British Columbia, one from Saskatchewan and 16 from Alberta. For the complete list of square dance, cued ballroom and clogging leaders go to: <https://squaredancecalgary.com/convention-2026-leaders/>



EDUCATION SEMINARS ON FRIDAY AFTERNOON!

PLAN TO ATTEND! Two Education Sessions are being held just prior to Convention, on Friday afternoon, September 4!



Too often the Education Seminars at Conventions are poorly attended because of scheduling and time conflicts. This year we are trying something new – seminars are being **held prior to the Trail-In Dance,**

on Friday afternoon. Come to one or both, and then get your registration package. The seminars are being held at Lacombe Memorial Centre.

2PM – 3PM GETTING NEW DANCERS

Statistics show that usually 50% of our dancers come by word of mouth. But what about the other 50%? Get some fresh ideas on how to market and advertise for new dancers.

3:15-4:15PM KEEPING NEW DANCERS

Statistics also show that only 50% of new dancers will return the following year. And of those dancers, only 50% will still be dancing 2 or 3 years later. Get some practical suggestions on how to keep dancers coming back.

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.



What You Gain From Attending Conventions

Have you ever looked over at another square that is having fun and wished you could be in that square? If I'm being honest, sometimes it can be boring to dance all the time with the same people in your square. That's one of the key reasons that Conventions are enjoyable.

There are so many things you gain from going to Conventions. You get to meet old friends – and new ones too. You get out of your comfort zone and have fun. You get to hear and dance to callers whom you have never experienced. You get to places you have never been to. You get to enjoy your favourite activity even more and heck, you might even learn something new and fun to do. What can be bad about that?

Many dancers often comment that attending Conventions increases their enjoyment of dancing and their proficiency. Every caller or cuer has different music and calls or cues differently. This makes you a better dancer as you become more confident in your ability to dance to "new" voices. By dancing to these different leaders, you also hone your listening skills because you cannot anticipate calls or cues.

Callers and cuers also gain from going to Conventions. It's an opportunity to meet and network with other leaders, and to observe and learn from them. For newer leaders, it's a challenging opportunity to call or cue in a new setting to a new group of dancers. For all leaders, it's a chance to showcase their skill set to a different and probably larger group of dancers.

And provincially, we become stronger dancers and leaders, which make for better dances everywhere.

Together, leaders and dancers can enjoy a wonderful dance experience, try out and learn new things, get reacquainted with old friends and meet new ones, and come away with some very special memories.

INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT ALBERTA CONVENTIONS

- **The summer square dance camping club, Wandering Squares, held its first campout in 1958, and usually held a large campout on the Labour Day weekend.** In 1969, they gave up this weekend to make way for Alberta Square & Round Dance Federation's annual Provincial Convention.
- **The Alberta Federation holds the Annual General Meeting at our Conventions** making it convenient for Albertan dancers and leaders to attend. It's also a built-in opportunity for us to support and show appreciation for the volunteers who have stepped up to be part of our provincial group.
- **There are three parties involved in putting on the Provincial Conventions.**
 - (1) **Alberta Federation** – sanctions the Convention and provides some seed money.
 - (2) **Convention Sponsor** – is an association in one of the three zones - Edmonton, Central Alberta or Calgary. They, too, provide some seed money.
 - (3) **Convention Organizing Committee** – this is a sub-committee under the Convention Sponsor who plan and put the Convention together from start to finish.
- **The first ever Alberta Dance Convention was held on Saturday, August 31, 1969 in Red Deer with 25 to 35 squares (200-280 dancers).** Saturday afternoon was a workshop followed by a dance in the evening. Everyone danced together in one hall. The levels/programs in square dancing such as Plus, did not evolve until sometime in the early 1970's. There was only one phase in Round Dancing ("square dance level").
- **In the early years of Conventions just about every active caller was on the program.** It was the biggest event of the year, and a 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. The same holds true today.
- **The biggest Convention was held in Spruce Grove in 1994 with over 1400 participants.** One highlight was when Jerry Pierce, Barry Sjolin and Phil Hansen, on the spur of the moment, called together during one of their calling spots. The dancers loved it – the energy it created was extraordinary.
- **Years with high attendance:** Calgary, 1980 – 846 participants; Red Deer, 1981 - 1110 participants; Strathmore, 1993 – 970 participants; Spruce Grove, 1994 – 1408 participants; Strathmore, 1999 – 754 participants, Leduc, 2001 – 936 participants. *(Note: There may be more years with high attendance prior to 1979, but I don't have access to those records.)*
- **The number of leaders at Conventions have ranged from 20 to 60 leaders,** with the majority from Alberta, and some from other Provinces and some States.
- **Staffing and volunteers are a vital part of Conventions.** Without their donation of time and hard work, Conventions could never take place. Every person in attendance, including the callers, cuers, committee members and other volunteers, pay the registration fee. No one receives payment for services rendered. Instead, they pay to work.
- **A Provincial Convention is not held in the same year that Alberta hosts a National Convention** (eg. 2024 when Calgary hosted the National Convention).



Friendship Ring at Leduc Convention, 2014. 250 participants.

- **The Trail-In Dance held on Friday evening at the Convention's location is not officially part of the Convention.** Therefore, the option to hire callers and/or cuers is available. Some years this is done, and other years the Trail-In Dance is handled by volunteer leaders.
- **Prior to 1995, all profits from Conventions were turned over to Alberta Federation,** who also took responsibility for any losses if incurred. Since then, a portion of profits (or losses) is shared with the sponsoring Host.
- **Typically Alberta Conventions were held each year in a different city or town.** The last six Conventions have been held in Lacombe where the facilities are reasonably priced, the space is adequate for our numbers, there is sufficient and reasonably priced camping and hotels nearby, and it is centrally located.



Leaders, Committee Members & Volunteers at High River Convention, 2012. 451 participants. 1950's Theme Dance.

REMINDER TO SUBMIT NAMES FOR THE MEMORIAL SERVICE @ CONVENTION



A special Convention tradition is to honor members of our square dance family who are no longer with us. This is done in conjunction with Sunday's non-denominational church service.

Names must be submitted by July 1st in order to be included in the Memorial Book at the September Convention. Information can be submitted online by filling out the submission form on the Alberta Square & Round Dance Federation website: <https://squaredance.ab.ca/memorials/>.

Alternatively, the submission form can be downloaded and then mailed to Reuben & Mary Coleman, RR #1, Boyle, AB TOA-0M0. Ph: 780-689-2593; or by email to: marycoleman@mcsnet.ca . Provide the name of deceased, date of death, name of club, name of district or zone, and submitted by (name and phone number).

BRING SILENT AUCTION ITEMS TO CONVENTION

We are excited to be holding a Silent Auction at Convention. Proceeds from the auction help to offset convention costs. Everything and anything brings in a bid – appliances, baby blankets, Christmas objects, drills, egg timers, food baskets, gardening tools, handcrafted items, ice buckets, jewelry, knitted articles, lotions, music, novels, outdoorsy stuff, puzzles & games, quilts, reading lights, serving dishes, tools, unicycles, vases, wine glasses, xylophones, yard decor and z-o-o-o much more!



NOTE: New items are preferred, or items that are in "next to new" condition. The Silent Auction Organizers reserve the right to refuse or discard items that are not in suitable condition. Questions? Contact Bonnie McCauley: bonnie.mccauley@auarts.ca

Student Answers in English Class

- In midevil times most people were alliterate. The greatest writer of the futile ages was Chaucer, who wrote many poems and verses and also wrote literature.
- The greatest writer of the Renais-sance was William Shakespeare. He was born in the year 1564, supposedly on his birthday. He never made much money and is famous only because of his plays. He wrote tragedies, comedies, and hysterectomies, all in Islamic pentameter. Romeo and Juliet are an example of a heroic couplet.
- Writing at the same time as Shakespeare was Miguel Cervantes. He wrote Donkey Hote. The next great author was John Milton. Milton wrote Paradise Lost. Then his wife died and he wrote Paradise Regained.
- Julius Caesar extinguished himself on the battlefields of Gaul. The Ids of March murdered him because they thought he was going to be made king. Dying he gasped out: 'Tee hee, Brutus'.

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!

Strut your stuff! BE A PARTICIPANT!

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.



"He's about 5'3", wearing a red jacket, smells of beer, and he shot a gun at me.

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/Scouts

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



UPDATE TO TRAVELODGE ALERT!

If you booked your room early at the Travelodge in Lacombe, phone them to confirm your reservation! Apparently, the list was lost. **Do not call the 800 number.** For quicker access use the local Lacombe phone number **403-782-7826**. The 1-800 number goes to the Wyndham Reservation Centre where it can be difficult communicating about the reservation and people may end up with a second reservation if that Centre thinks they should create a "new reservation".

ACTUAL SIGN IN A . . .

- **RESTROOM:** Toilet out of order. Please use floor below.
- **LAUNDROMAT:** Automatic washing machines - please remove all your clothes when the light goes out.
- **SECOND HAND SHOP:** We exchange anything - bicycles, washing machines, etc. Why not bring your wife along and get a wonderful bargain?
- **HEALTH FOOD STORE:** Closed due to illness.
- **CONFERENCE:** For anyone who has children and doesn't know it, there is a day care on the first floor.
- **BROCHURE:** If you cannot read, this leaflet will tell you how to get lessons.
- **REPAIR SHOP:** We can repair anything. (Please knock hard on the door. The bell doesn't work.)
- **OFFICE:** After tea break, staff should empty the teapot and stand upside down on the draining board.

DON'T MISS OUT ON THE PRE-CONVENTION EVENTS!

★ MAINSTREAM CAMPOUT WEEKEND Friday to Sunday, August 28-30

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! No pre-registration required.

★ PLUS WEEKEND AT THE RANCH Friday to Sunday, August 28-30

Holiday Ranch, Innisfail (80 km. from Lacombe). Caller is Gary Winter from Sherwood Park, AB. Cost: \$35/person (\$42.50 at door). Contact Ida: 403-347-8098 or email holidayranch@live.ca.



★ ADVANCED POST WEEKEND AT THE RANCH Sunday to Tuesday, August 30-September 1

Holiday Ranch, Innisfail (80 km. from Lacombe). Caller is Murray Few from Edmonton, AB. Cost: \$35/person (\$42.50 at door). Contact Ida: 403-347-8098 or email holidayranch@live.ca.

★ MAINSTREAM DANCE, LACOMBE, Thursday, September 3

7pm – PreRounds; Squares 7:30-9:30pm, Kozy Korner, Lacombe, hosted by Alberta's callers & cuers association, SRDIAA. No charge and no pre-registration.

★ NEW!! EDUCATION SEMINARS, Friday, 2-4:30 PM, September 4

Lacombe Memorial Centre. First seminar, 2-3:15pm, "Getting New Dancers", second seminar, 3:30-4:30pm, "Keeping New Dancers". Come to one or both. No charge.



CONVENTION 2026 TRAIL-IN DANCE, Friday, September 4

Lacombe Memorial Centre. Pre-Rounds 7pm, Mainstream Squares 7:30-9:30 pm.

Caller GARY WINTER, Sherwood Park and Cuer CLAUDIA LITTLEFAIR, Strathmore, AB.

Pay at Door, \$10/person. This dance is hosted by the Convention sponsor Calgary & District Square & Round Dancers Association.

For more information or flyers, click here: <https://www.squaredancecalgary.com/convention-2026/>.

LEARNING BOTH SIDES

Excerpt from 'SOLO CORNER' - by Marsha Sullivan, Footnotes Newsletter, November 2018

As single dancers, to be successful we need to force ourselves onto the floor and put our crooked finger up to announce there is an opening in the square. But if you dance single often, it makes good sense to learn how to do both, the girl's and the boy's parts.

The best place to practice is at your own club. Tell the square that you are learning the new position, and ask them to guide you if you end up turning the wrong way. Everybody will feel a part of your learning process, and it will guarantee some great laughs for all of you. Don't pick the square right in front of the caller. While callers appreciate new dancers being front and center so they can help them when in trouble, learning to dance opposite of what you are accustomed to is something that simply takes floor time because you already know the moves.

If you have a "young" mind that easily adapts to new situations, you can learn both positions from the very beginning of your dancing experience; however, if you struggle with remembering the definitions and applying them, it is better to become accomplished at your dance level before trying the switched position. Dancing with a caller who trains you in "dancing by definition" will make it easier to learn, because you will already be familiar with switching from left to right hands; or right to left.

1. **Ate salad for dinner!** Mostly croutons and tomatoes. Really just one big, round crouton covered with tomato sauce. And cheese. FINE, it was a pizza. I ate a pizza.
2. **How to prepare Tofu:** A. Throw it in the trash. B. Grill some meat.
3. **I just did a week's worth of cardio** after walking into a spider's web.
4. **I don't mean to brag but . . .** I finished my 14-day diet in 3 hours and 20 minutes.
5. **A recent study has found** that women who carry a little extra weight live longer than men who mention it.

SQUARE DANCE PARTY DANCE CHECKLIST

CALLERLAB Social Connections Committee

Editor's Note: The last newsletter (#2026-4) contained the in-depth article by Mike Seastrom about putting on Square Dance Parties to attract new dancers. This is the checklist that went along with the article.

Use as many steps as your group is comfortable with. This checklist is only a guideline. Plan one event at a time and modify the points above to fit your group and to improve as you continue. This will help you grow and enhance your social connections in your community. Have fun!

1. Set Your Purpose & Plan the Event

- Know the goal: growth, visibility, and social connection.
- Schedule **3–4 Party Dances per year** if possible.
- Choose a date/time that is accessible to the public and works for your group.
- Select a welcoming, easy-to-find venue (your normal venue if possible).
- Coordinate with your caller(s) early .

2. Promote & Invite

- Clearly advertise as a **new dancer-friendly, no-experience-needed event**.
- Emphasize: fun, simple, social (not lessons).
- Invite past attendees ("Friends of the Club" list).
- Encourage members to personally invite friends.
- Promote through:
 - Social media
 - Community boards
 - Local organizations

3. Build Community Partnerships

- Partner with local groups (churches, service clubs, scouts, etc.).
- Co-host or cross-promote events.
- Explore fundraising opportunities with partners.
- Position your club as a **community-centered activity**.

4. Guest Registration & Follow-Up System

- Set up a **sign-in table** (required for liability)
- Collect:
 - Name
 - Email
 - Phone number
- Create/maintain your **"Friends of the Club" list** (continue to build and update)
- Offer a **raffle incentive** (gift card, small prize) that helps collect this information

5. Create a Welcoming Environment

- Provide **clearly printed (sticker) name tags** and markers to fill in names.
- Arrange **circular tables** for easy conversation if possible.
- Set up a **snack table accessible from both sides** if possible (hand sanitizer on table).
- Play soft background music during breaks.
- Ensure the space encourages mingling and comfort.

6. Prepare Your Members (Ambassadors)

- Brief members before the event:
 - Greet all newcomers warmly.
 - Introduce guests to others.
 - Invite guests into squares.
 - Rotate partners and avoid cliques.
 - Engage in conversation during breaks.
- Remind members:
 - Focus on inclusion over dancing skill.
 - Respect personal space (especially with new dancers).

7. Coordinate with the Caller

- Keep teaching **short, simple, and upbeat**
- Use: the caller sets the program at his or her comfort level
 - Easy squares
 - Mixers (rotating or not)
 - Line dances
 - Simple contras
- Avoid complex choreography
- Use **lively, recognizable music**
- Encourage the caller to:
 - Mingle with guests
 - Help create a welcoming tone

This event should be no more than two hours. Leave attendees wanting more and uplifted.

Punctuation is Powerful: An English professor wrote the words "A woman without her man is nothing" on the chalkboard and asked his students to punctuate it correctly. All the males in the class wrote, "A woman, without her man, is nothing." All the females in the class wrote, "A woman: without her, man is nothing."

8. Structure the Dance Program

This is totally up to the caller(s)

- Start with a **simple circle or line dance**
- Progress to mixers for interaction
- Introduce basic square dancing
- Keep a steady pace—don't over-teach
- Maintain energy throughout
- End with a **fun, celebratory finale**

9. Encourage Social Connection

- Build in **break times for conversation**.
- Encourage mixing between dancers and guests.
- Create a relaxed, laughter-filled atmosphere.
- Focus on **connection over perfection**.

10. Post-Event Follow-Up

- Send thank-you messages to attendees.
- Invite guests to:
 - Future Party Dances.
 - Lessons/programs.
 - Social events (potlucks, outings, etc.).
- Add attendees to the ongoing **"Friends of the Club"** list.

11. Measure Long-Term Success

- Monitor:
 - Growth in club membership
 - Lesson enrollment
 - "Friends of the Club"** list
- Adjust future events based on feedback and experience

Guiding Principles (Keep Front and Center)

Make it **welcoming**. Make it **intentional**. Make it **joyful**. Make it about **connection first!**

BE A GALLANT SQUARE DANCER

- **Wear your nametag.** In the square, give a warm greeting, and introduce yourself – especially to new dancers and those you don't know.
- **Join the nearest square that is forming.** It's not cool to walk through the middle of a square to get to another. Hold up your hand or fingers to indicate how many people are needed to complete the square.
- **Remember your position when you square up** (heads, sides, and position number). Remember who's your corner. They're your most important dancer to you after your partner!
- **Use a gentle handhold.** Touch palms with fingers extended, not grasp or hold onto other dancers' hands. Never push or drag a person into position.
- **The default hand-holding position** is right hand palm up, left hand palm down (like a teapot). This way everyone always interlocks.
- **Keep your squares tight.** Sometimes while dancing we can drift away from one another. It is easier to keep time with the music and easier to move into the next formation if we're closer to one another.
- **Avoid strong fragrances.** Some dancers have fragrance sensitivities to strong perfumes and deodorants, causing breathing problems or allergic reactions.
- **Overlook mistakes made by others.** Everybody makes them. Yes, even you! Be supportive. There will be times when you will need to gently guide your out-of-place neighbour back into position, and please try to be subtle when you do.
- **Square up again quickly if your square breaks down.** First, return to your home position with your original partner. Second, make facing lines by head ladies joining hands with their corners. The caller will notice your facing lines and can adjust his calling accordingly.
- **If your square breaks down in a singing call,** square up with your current partner.
- **Let the caller be the teacher.** Resist the temptation to explain a call to others in your square. After the tip is over, your friends might appreciate some help from you... if you're asked!
- **Maintain 'touch' in a square.** Use quick taps or touches as you pass other dancers. This helps everybody maintain their positions in the square and will help you stay alert to your own position and direction.
- **Thank everyone in your square at the end of a tip.** At the end of the evening, join in the friendship circle to thank everyone for an enjoyable time.



NEW DANCERS FROM THE HOME SCHOOLING COMMUNITY

- by Caller Ian Craig, Silver City Squares, Silverton Oregon, November 2023

Editor's Note: Both clubs in Leduc and Lacombe, Alberta have had success growing their clubs with families from the home schooling community. It's a valuable avenue to explore. Younger dancers bring energy and vitality to a club.

A few years ago a few of the youth in our club invited some of their friends who were home schooled. My job was to show them a good time and teach them well. They had a blast and the next year invited a ton of their friends. Then the last 2 years we became connected with the home schooling network and they added us to their newsletter and things exploded.

Last year we ran two full mainstream classes and graduated 48 new dancers. This year we have 56 in our September class. The home schoolers can also use square dancing as PE. The nice thing is after the parents starting seeing how much fun the youth were having they are coming now as well and we have full big families doing a family activity together. This is the way square dancing was originally intended. We dance 12 squares on class night and 8 squares on dance night. I'm not sure what we will do when we graduate, because 12 squares pretty much fills up our little community center.

The other thing we have introduced is line dancing after the dance or class. The youth will stay for well over an hour after the 2 to 3 hour dance is over to socialize, line dance and round dance. None of them want to go home.

This group also won first in most categories at Pacific Northwest Teen Square Dance Festival this year (photo of participants on RHS). The parents are planning on bringing in the media to show what we have done and their desire is to reproduce this success throughout Oregon.

I would love to take credit for this success, but I can't. I will say I work my butt off weekly to show them a good time, provide new things for them to learn, provide music they will like and make sure they are learning, but they did the leg work.



For some more information on the Silver City Squares:

- **The club dances mainstream with 2 plus tips twice a month.** Some years we teach one class others we teach two with one class starting in September and another the beginning of February, and classes run 16-20 weeks, but we continue after graduation working on extended application and positions year round. Most years we also run a plus class on a differing night.
- **The club is NOT just a teen club, we are now about 1/3 adults.** The youth are mostly homeschool kids but not all of them, I don't know the percentage. My understanding is all they need to qualify for PE credits its for the president of the club or me as the teacher to sign off. They take the same class as everyone else takes.
- **We do 4 parades a year, but our promotion is primarily word of mouth, with the homeschool newsletter.** The dancers simply love the dancing, all forms, which is why we also do line and other forms after every dance or class. This is also why we get large angel participation. We make every time they meet feel kind of like a party with refreshments as well.
- **So far we have allowed any of the youth that want to participate go to Teen Festival.** That requires them to commit to coming to Saturday morning intense training as well as competition weekend. We do fundraising so they don't have to pay. I also try to keep my classes at a pretty high level. Dances are a little easier, but still upbeat. We also had 4 Callers compete and do well and 3 cuers.

I hope and pray others can have the success we have had.

- Ian Craig, Aurora, Oregon Email: ian@doplanner.com

HIGHLIGHTS TO LOOK FORWARD TO!

<https://festival2026.squaredance.bc.ca/>

- ★ **GENERAL SCHEDULE** – is posted on the landing page to help you see the overall pulse of the Festival. The detailed schedule will be posted when ready and included in your registration package.
- ★ **GRAND MARCH** – participants will be gathering at 6:30pm, Thursday. **Bring your club, association and federation banners.** Signs will be handed out for each province, state and country. The Opening Ceremony will follow. Note: Closing Ceremony is Saturday, 6:30pm.
- ★ **ADVERTISE** – your club, association or special dance at the Festival. You can place an ad in the souvenir booklet (see website, deadline June 30) or bring a display and flyers to put on a table in the FLEX Hall.
- ★ **BALLROOM 2/FLEX HALL** – **It will be a happening place!** Registration table, display tables for flyers you bring to promote events, local vendors can give away samples; you can shop for BC Federation merchandise and previously-worn square dance attire; solo dancers meeting space.
- ★ **DELICIOUS, CONVENIENT & WELL-PRICED MEALS** – the caterers at PTCC have our dinners planned for us. Granted, PTCC is in the heart of Penticton with dozens of restaurants all around, and you will want to get out and try some. Consider, though, the convenience and relaxation of pre-ordering supper, sitting down with your friends right in the Atrium of PTCC, and having a meal right on site. **Preorders must be in by July 6.** Go to the website for the form.
- ★ **“DANGLE DANCES”** – two unique experiences at the Festival will take you back to Peachfest days. One is a dance at **King’s Park**, where the Jamboree was held on sheets of plywood laid down on the field, and the other is AquaDucks, dancing in the warm waters of **Okanagan Lake** at the beach just north of PTCC. You will get a specially designed dangle for dancing at these “dangle dances”!
- ★ **TRY-IT! SESSIONS** – are for anyone who wants to try Clog, Line, Square or Contra dancing. The non-dancing public is invited, and so are you. **Stretch your comfort zone and try a new dance form.**
- ★ **NEW CALLERS AT FESTIVAL** – Callers School is a 5-day course that is being taught in Penticton leading up to the Festival by two Canadian caller coaches, Barry Clasper and Dottie Welch. We are putting time into the schedule for these brand new and newer callers to call for you at the Festival. Please support their efforts and aspirations and come dance to new callers on **Thursday and Friday in Ballroom 2 at 10am.**
- ★ **LOCAL ATTRACTIONS, SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES** – abound in Okanagan Valley. One attraction is being pre-planned by a committee member and requires you to sign up in advance, and the capacity is only 20 participants. Mark Garstin will lead a **tour of the Dominion Radio Astrophysical Observatory**, a 35-minute drive south of PTCC. Look for the sign-up poster in the North Lobby.
- ★ **TWO TRAIL-OUT DANCES** – one in **Castlegar** in southeastern BC at 7pm, and one in **Aldergrove** in the Fraser Valley at 1pm, both on Sunday, July 19.

“B.C.’ing you in Penticton”

Co-Chairs Dennis Sutton and Wendy Krueger