



JUNE 2006

Star

The

Western

Newsletter of Western Star Dancers,
a contemporary American square dance club
primarily serving the San Francisco LGBT community.
International Association of Gay Square Dance Clubs member.
Contact us at:
www.westernstardancers.org OR 584 Castro Street #480
San Francisco, CA 94114



CELEBRATING
WSD'S
SILVER JUBILEE

WSD—Bigger & Better

Western Star Dancers now number 59, an increase in membership of nearly twelve percent over last year. In an era where straight square dance clubs are in a decline and gay clubs are being constantly challenged to maintain their membership, the Western Star is in ascendance.

Club Administrator Daryl Daniels commented, "I'm ecstatic about the club growth. When I first joined the club a few years ago, the membership seemed lethargic. It is exciting to see the enthusiasm and energy that now characterize all of our activities."

Membership Coordinator Joe Casserly echoed those remarks, "Our club is doing fine and dandy. Attendance to our dances is up. We have an enthusiastic class. I do not see any [anticipated] crisis, and I don't think that I'm being shortsighted."

Several fun activities are in the works. Besides the IAGSDC 23rd Annual International Convention in Anaheim over the July 4th weekend, which many of you will attend, there are some local plans. In August (date to be determined) we will host the annual Angel Island Picnic. Watch your mailbox for more information.

WSD will hold a yard sale, probably in September. This is a chance for you to clean out some of the "treasures" you have accumulated, and let someone else enjoy them. Our attempts at a silent auction in the past were disappointing. We hope that a yard sale (in a really prominent location) will let us make some money, have some fun, and maybe recruit some new dancers.

Our summer activities will culminate with the Castro Street Fair. Once again, we will have a booth with dancing. Plan now to join us in our primary recruitment activity.

These are exciting days for the club. Join in. Don't stop. Don't slow down.

ONLY ten months remain until the Western Star Dancers' 25th Anniversary Blowout! Details are few, but imaginative Todd Young, Special Events Coordinator, is heading up the committee. Volunteers to assist in this noble endeavor should call Todd (436-9161) or speak to him at class. This will not be a traditional fly-in, nor will it be merely a dance. What it will be remains to be seen, but we know it will be fabulous!

THE Board of Directors is sponsoring a 25th Anniversary logo design contest. The contest is open to everyone in the whole world. Deadline for submissions is July 31, 2006. The author of the logo that is chosen will receive some sort of nice award or prize or honors. Anyway, give it a try, and you might win something!



Board of Directors

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Quarter Century Countdown

The **Western Star Dancers** have entered their 25th year of square dancing and will be celebrating the completion of a quarter-century at festivities to be held in March of 2007. Of course, most of the WSD members were not dancing 25 years ago. Most were involved in other pursuits. Some were in diapers and were breast feeding (some still are).



In 1982, Michael Jackson released "Thriller," the biggest selling album in history; Ronald Reagan was in the White House; and the cost of a first-class postage stamp was 20 cents.

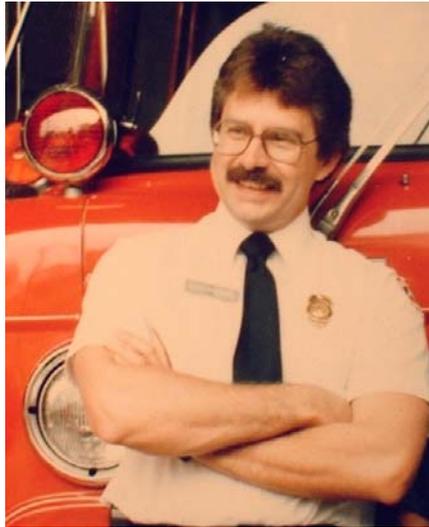
Hey Matt, where were you in '82?

"This is the group I worked with as a volunteer for thirteen years in the village of Yellow Springs, Ohio."



"Square dancers have become my replacement in many respects for this group. Dance classes replace weekly skills training. Car fire calls and EMS response have become equivalents for Saturday night dances, and Convention is sort of like those rare barn fires, or working house fires that require a whole lot of neighbor people and equipment from all over the county."

"I owned and operated a foreign car garage in Yellow Springs during the '70s & early '80s. Then I went to work as the buildings and grounds director for a local, community-sponsored non-profit skilled nursing facility. That was a fantastic job—a real personal growth period spanning eight years."



Matt—During his days as a driver for a fire department in Ohio.

"The Stage Door in Dayton—a twenty-minute drive from Yellow Springs—was my favorite place for an after-work beer and game of pool. Walking in the front door, you would see a bar very similar to the Rainbow Cattle Company in Guerneville. Next best place was The 1470, a club of mixed (but mostly Gay) patrons. Loved it. Learned a couple of now-forgotten line dances there. Met a few hotties, too."



Matt (right), pretending not to lust after the fire department's medical doctor.

Thanks for sharing, Matt. And who would have thunk there were **Castro Clones** in Ohio during the '80s?



Having finally reached his purple prime, **Matt** recently graduated **Mainstream** (again).

In 1982, the blockbuster movies were *E.T.* and *Tootsie*, San Francisco defeated Cincinnati in the Super Bowl (26-21), and the median household income was \$20,171 (in current dollars).

Jim, what were you up to in '82?

"I'd moved to San Francisco in mid-1980 (from a teaching job in South Carolina) with my 16-year-old daughter, Winter. I met my lover, Bob (a former Catholic priest), at 21st Street Baths in early '81."



Jim enjoying a bay cruise in the early 1980s.

"By '82 I'd finally gotten a job (as a writer for Shaklee Corp.) that paid my share of the rent, and Bob and I and Winter, had moved in together."

Sadly, Bob is no longer living. Does your daughter still reside in the area?

"Winter is married and she is living in Mt. Juliet, TN, (near Nashville)."

Thanks, Daddy Jim, for your memories of days gone by.



Jim—Golden Gate Park, 25 years ago.



Jim—Applauding for **Matt** at Graduation, 2006.

Taps to Square Dancing

Interview by Dan Smith

D: So your name is...?

S: Steve Scott.

D: Where were you born Steve?

S: I was born in Little Rock, Arkansas. You can't tell by my southern accent.

D: Where were you raised?

S: My Father worked as an accountant for a construction firm so we literally lived all over the country. Whenever a dam was built or a bridge was finished, we moved on with the entire construction firm. I attended school in multiple states—South Dakota, Alabama, Georgia, Ohio, West Virginia, etc. We moved every two or three years.

D: How many sisters and brothers do you have?

S: I'm an only child.

D: Can you tell me your first realization about being gay?

S: I have lots of memories of having 'fun in the hayloft' with my younger male cousin. Visiting my Grandparents in Arkansas was like summer camp because most of my cousins lived out in the country and had horses, cattle and chickens. I helped with the chores and rode the horse out to Spring Lake and played around in the barn. I really didn't think of those experiences as being gay I was just having fun.

In high school I did the hetero dating scene. I went to my junior and senior high school proms with a girl. I was always trying to have sex with everyone and anyone of either gender as much as possible. Well, it really only happened with guys (laugh)! After high school I kind of realized that... "Hm, maybe there is something to this?"

I have an interesting coming out story, if you will. I attended the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana and received a BA degree in Psychology. The final year I took a Sociology course. We were supposed to interview a criminal for our final paper; it was for half our grade. At that time, 1969, homosexuality was a crime in the state of Illinois and so I went to a Greyhound [station] (Steve chortles) picked up an older man ('Older man' at

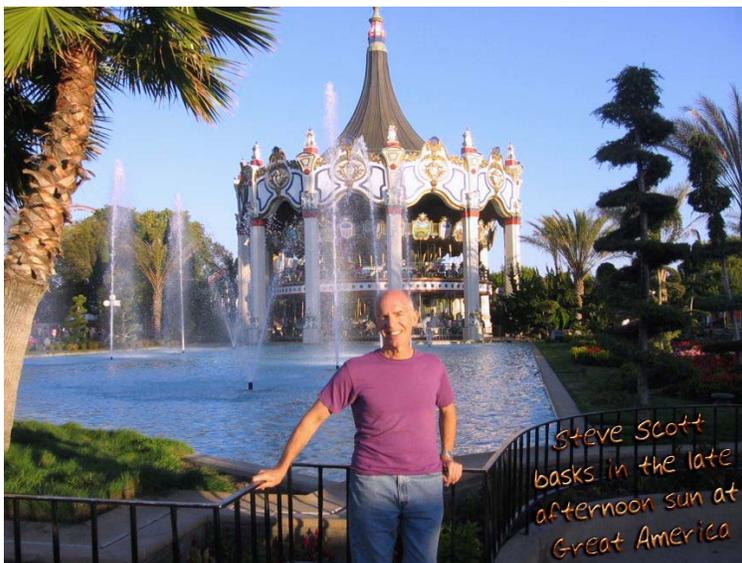
that time was someone about 35), had sex with him, got some information from him and wrote up an A+ paper. Those days it was pretty dark because homosexuality was a DSM diagnosis (*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual*). That book was a labeling device for mental health disorders and homosexuality was in it. I was undeterred however (laugh) and I experimented a lot more. After that I got a Masters Degree in social work from the University of Oklahoma in Norman. And that's where I really started experimenting sexually with men and, I'd say, really identified as being a gay man.

S: Oh, well! Dancing, we want to get into dancing? I will credit my mother; she took me to a dance studio when I was about ten. It had ballet classes. I was the only boy in a class of girls. I absolutely hated it and I was awful at it too. The teacher said I wasn't graceful. I went home and complained. Mother said, "Well they have tap dancing at that studio too." I thought "That's noise and that sounds interesting." Well I was really good at that and I loved it. The class introduced me to rhythms and that's very important in all kinds of dancing, including square dancing. I took individual lessons up through high school. I was quite good, if I say so myself.

Out here in San Francisco it was disco! Let me tell you I was hitting the disco clubs every single weekend. I was a disco bunny and loved it. I also took a little country western, two-stepping. At rock concerts, I'd move to the beat. Music and dance has always been a part of my life.

D: How did you get into square dancing?

S: I had been in an 18-year relationship, and when it ended in 97 I thought, "What the heck am I going to do with myself?" One day I went



After college I got a job in Northeastern Arkansas at a Community Mental Health Center in Jonesboro. I worked there for about four years. Then in 1975 I decided that I had met my commitment to my home state and I needed to explore my sexuality a bit more. I literally went on a 'happy home-ground' search. It struck me that maybe Phoenix, Los Angeles or San Francisco might be good places to, I don't know, be who I am. So I explored those cities and it was a pretty easy choice. When I got off the plane in San Francisco, I remember it very clearly, I saw a man coming off the plane and being greeted by his boyfriend/lover with a big kiss. And I thought, "Well I'm going to live here."

D: Tell me about you and dancing.

to the Folsom Street Fair. I heard some country kind of music...came upon WSD's booth and saw people dancing. I realized immediately, "Well that's it of course; dancing, I've always loved dancing." I saw it as an opportunity to meet people, well, specifically gay men. I actually thought, "Oh, who knows I might find my next lover, oh just any minute?" More then that, because it was in San Francisco and because I was going through what I was going through emotionally and it was a gay club and there were men dancing with men and it was 'hugs all around' at the end of the tip...

Felix Fornino, who used to be an administrator of the club, was there with his lover. Felix gave me the application or the information and I signed up. (*To be continued*)

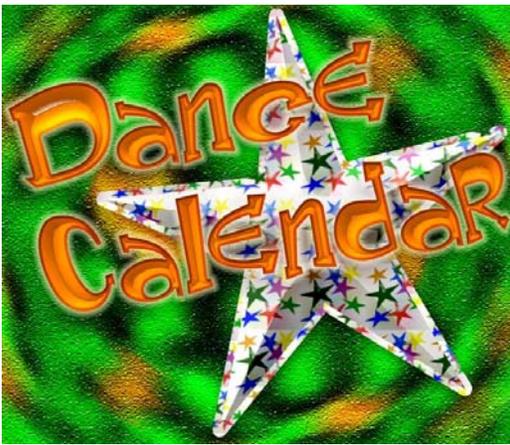


Don't Stop!
San Francisco
WESTERN STAR BANDERS
Don't Slow Down!



2006
Purple Mainstream
Class Completion





*Class/Club Night
Tuesdays
TGIF Dance/Potluck
3rd Friday
1700 Galois Boulevard
Pleasant Hill*



*Class Night Tuesdays
Forest Hill Christian Church
250 Laguna Honda Boulevard*



*Class Night
Wednesday
6:30-9:30 PM
St. Andrew's Methodist
4111 Alma Street
Palo Alto*



*Class Sunday Afternoons
Jon Sim Center
1519 Mission Street*

Dancing with Local Clubs



*Class/Club Night
Wednesday 7-9:30 PM
Montclair Women's Cultural Arts Club
1650 Mountain Boulevard
Oakland*

June 3
7:30-10:30 pm

Diablo Dancers 16th Anniversary Dance Tim Crawford calling. MS/P/A \$8/\$10 Jewish Community Center, 2071 Tice Valley Boulevard, Walnut Creek

June 4
2-5 pm

Midnight Squares A2 Graduation Tim Crawford calling. A/C1* \$8/\$10/Graduates Free Jon Sim Center, 1519 Mission Street, San Francisco

June 9-11

PACE Ross Howell calling. Friday 7:30 pm A2, Saturday 11 am, 2:30 pm C1. Sunday 11 am C3A, 2:30 pm C3 Diablo Light Opera Co., 1948 Oak Park Boulevard, Pleasant Hill

June 17
7-10 pm

Foggy City Dancers Pre-Pride, Pre-Convention Dance Mike Kellogg calling. MS/P/A* \$8/\$10 Ebenezer Lutheran Church, 678 Portola Drive, San Francisco

June 18
2-5 pm

Midnight Squares C2 Graduation Dance Mike Kellogg calling. C2/C3A* \$8/\$10/Graduates Free Jon Sim Center, 1519 Mission Street, San Francisco

June 21
7:30-9:30 pm

Club Night Gary Young calling. Eureka Valley Recreation Center

June 24
7:30-10:30 pm

Pride Dance Sandra Bryant calling. MS/P/A* \$8/\$10 Ebenezer Lutheran Church, 678 Portola Drive, San Francisco

June 30-July 3

IAGSDC 23rd Annual Convention When You Wish Upon a Thar MS through C4 Anaheim Marriott, Anaheim, CA

July 14-16

PACE John Sybalsky calling. Friday 7:30 pm A2, Saturday 11 am, 2:30 pm C2. Sunday 11 am C3A, 2:30 pm C3 Diablo Light Opera Co., 1948 Oak Park Boulevard, Pleasant Hill

July 19
7:30-9:30 pm

Club Night Neil Heather calling. Eureka Valley Recreation Center



Don't Stop!
 San Francisco
 WESTERN STAR DANCERS
 Don't Slow Down!

Pride Dance 2006

Sandra Bryant

Saturday, June 24, 2006
 7:30-10:30 pm

Ebenezer Lutheran Church
 678 Portola Drive
 San Francisco

Members \$8
 Guests \$10

Call

Mainstream Plus
 Advanced Star



Western Star Dancers
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 San Francisco, CA 94114