



CLUB NIGHT

Kathy, Paul Inject Excitement Themes, Prizes, Awards, Fun

The third Wednesday of the month has become a lot more exciting, largely through the efforts of Kathy Tuccio and Paul Gonyea, two freshmen Board members. Recent club nights have attracted about 20 dancers each night, with a mix of students and angels.

Kathy noted that as a new dancer, she had felt intimidated by the idea of Club Night, but after attending her first, she realized what an excellent way to increase floor time and improve her dancing. The first step was to encourage the new students to attend Club Night. Once upon a time, Club Night was a respite from class level dancing. Over time, we were never sure if we would have

a full square, and, on more than one occasion, we danced with phantoms, brooms, or trash bins to complete the square.

Paul started sending Evites online, which not only promoted Club Nights, but also allowed friends to coordinate their plans. Individuals and groups have been invited to host a Club Night with a specific theme (with the board offering a small stipend for decorations). We have had Club Night 101, Chinese New Year, Tax Day themes. A Hawaiian night is planned for July. Other Club Nights are available for you to sponsor.

Paul and Kathy drummed up a few door prizes, so every Club Night has a raffle. We want to continue this little perquisite, and prize donations

are welcome—tickets, gift cards, t-shirts, and other gewgaws and trinkets.

The Dynamic Duo also had the idea of awarding stars to student dancers who attend Club Night. Those who received stars for attending Club Nights received a special Super Star dangle at the Class Completion ceremony on June 2.

Kathy and Paul took their ideas, and put them in action to help the club prosper. As a nice consequence, the past few Club Nights have even made a few dollars for the club. Ideas and energy are what keep Western Star Dancers thriving. Kathy and Paul are to be congratulated, commended, and encouraged. They have done a fabulous job. Thank you.

Important Notice: EVCR will be closed for two weeks beginning June 16 for resurfacing the floors. We will dance at the Forest Hill Christian Church, 250 Laguna Honda (2 blocks from Forest Hill Station) in the interim. June Club Night is cancelled.

Board of Directors

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Role of Archangel Defined

The Board of Directors unanimously passed Policy Statement 19, Definition of the Role of Archangel during the May meeting.

The role of Archangel is crucial to the smooth conduct of the classes. This description is to provide objectives for the role. The archangel will act as the liaison between the current class and the Board of Directors. The archangel should be a mentor, a role model, a big brother/sister. Regular attendance is presumed. The archangel will take attendance weekly, and follow-up student absences with phone calls or other communications to encourage attendance. The archangel will monitor squares in class to ensure a good distribution of students and angels, strong dancers and weaker dancers. The archangel will monitor dancers and facilitate extra assistance (instructional DVDs, websites, individual instruction, etc.). The archangel will send weekly email notices of the week's dance schedule, future events, calls that have been taught, and other information. The archangel will communicate with the caller/instructor, maintain a list of calls already taught, and relay that information to club night or dance callers.

To offset the amount of work involved, archangels will receive admission to the club's dances for the year of service, and membership dues will be waived for the year as incentive.

Catching Up With Tom WSD influence reaches New York

Current class members do not often get the chance to meet some of the veteran Western Star dancers unless there is a special event such as the 2007 "Crossfire" premiere or the WSD Silver Anniversary Dinner and Dance. The Cleveland Convention will be an opportunity to catch up with some of the WSD members who no longer live in the San Francisco area. Tom Ophardt (pictured at right) now lives in Rochester, NY.

"I am still a member of Western Star and dance at the Plus level," says Tom. "My friend Matt was in medical school in Chicago and learned square dancing there and is still a member of Chi Town Squares. We discussed years ago that if we both moved back to Rochester, we would form a square dance club. So, in November 2006, we organized our first open house at the basement of the local MCC church. We selected our name "Lilac Squares" because Rochester is known for its lilacs. Three people joined us, then another, then another. It took almost a year and half to complete that class. Many times we didn't have enough for a square, then there were the ice storms, the snowstorms, the flu, the vacations, the electrical failures, and one dancer had a stroke. Eventually, a gay angel from a local straight club visited us, who invited a straight couple to help angel.



"While I was at Western Star's 25th Anniversary Dance, I took several short movies and played them at our club; so that they have a vision of what gay square dancing is all about. Our caller does not allow much styling, so I am encouraging the group to attend the convention in Cleveland. We would like to officially join the IGSDC in Cleveland, which is only a 4-hour drive from Rochester. Due to the influence of Western Star Dancers, another square dance club is being established."

THE ANGEL IN YOUR CORNER Brandon

Class members often notice Angels with a badge from a different club. WSD is fortunate to have graduates of other clubs help to fill out a square. They may bring a slightly different styling with them; so that helps the students to prepare for the variety of moves they will encounter when they attend the big Saturday night dances. Brandon is from Malaysia, where he enjoyed disco dancing, but had no opportunities to square dance. He has spent his 5 years in the U.S. living in San Francisco, and he just started square dancing last Fall in a Foqqy City class.



"I think I have made some new friends square dancing," he reports, "and will continue to do so. They are mostly very nice and friendly people. It feels like living in one big happy and warm family. It means a lot to me, especially since all my family members and friends are far away. I try to attend, as much as is possible, the square dancing events around The Bay Area."

No matter what happens, Brandon always enjoys his time in a square. "Every call is fun to me, although there have been times when I was confused with a few of the calls. And as long as I am still in the square and get to dance, I am happy. I tend to screw up once in a while; but hey, nobody is perfect. We all make mistakes; but that's how we learn and develop."

something we can share together

by dan smith

D: What's your name?

R: Richard Leadbetter just like it sounds.

D: Where were you born?

R: Havre, Montana.

D: How about your family?

R: Mother was a high school junior who got pregnant and was taken out of school before I was born. When I was 15 months old she had to give me up for adoption by a couple in Browning, Montana, which is on the Blackfoot Indian Reservation, I grew up there. Browning is a little town 15 miles west of Glacier National Park.

Childhood was pretty ordinary except for the fact that nearly all my friends were Black Feet. I kept my horse at a neighbor's little farm just outside town. We'd walk out to the farm, get the horses to come over with a bucket of oats and ride back; so most of my



Richard leads Marilynn Fowler across the dance floor

horse back riding was bareback.

We had a cabin up in Glacier National Park. It was just a five minute walk from the hotel so we spend a lot of time

looking at tourists; great sport for kids; like going to a zoo.

D: Did you go to college?

R: Yes I went to boarding school at Gonzaga Territory School in Spokane, Washington for 2 years and at the end of that I went into the Jesuits. All of my college training was done inside the Jesuits. I spent four years in the novitiate where we had absolutely no contact with the outside world; no newspapers, no television. Then I spent three years in a school of Philosophy studying Tomas Aquinas' Christian style of Philosophy. I decided at the end of that time not to continue so I left the Jesuits after 7 years. I was about 25.

D: So when you left where did you go?

R: I bought a car, drove to California. and got a job at the May company. I got put in the toy department, which was a very interesting experience---straight out of the Jesuits into this mad chaos of Christmas time in a big department store.

I'd been deferred from the armed services because of school and the last thing I wanted was to go into the army and just be ordered around again. So I joined the Air Force, and spent time

at White Sands Missile Range learning how to program a computer, which was a very rare thing in 1962. I worked on an old UNIVAC computer with vacuum tubes. I also worked on the 2nd digital computer ever sold in America, a CDC1800. So I was one of the first persons in the world to learn Fortran and use a digital computer.

I was transferred to Saint Laurence Island in the Arctic Ocean, 70 miles from Russia and 120 miles from Alaska. I ran the television station which was also used to monitor all Russian army radio broadcasts from eastern Russia. After spending a year in the Arctic I wanted to go somewhere warm. I thought, "I'll go to Australia." So after leaving the service I went to Sydney, got a room at an all male boarding house in a place called Randwick. I met this gentleman there who took me to the Randwick races. The Australians are mad keen race fans. In those days on Saturdays everybody went to the races.

In Perth I met my wife Doris and her kids Victoria, 16 and Dominic, 12. I adopted them and they took my name. We were married for 37 years. I now have five grandchildren and one great-granddaughter. My wife became one of Australia's best known poets; lectured and wrote a lot. One of her books is *The Fat Lady's Song*. She died of bone cancer in 1994. At that point I had to make a decision as to what my life would be.

I picked up a gay newspaper circled club listings and joined them: The Boilers, an older man's gay club, average age about 65; I also joined a dining club where men got together once a month for diner; and I joined the Victoria Bear's. They were looking for someone to go on a committee. I joined and now one of my best friends is a man from that club.

Then one day I typed in gay tours and came up with a group called **Toto** like in *Wizard of Oz*. So I signed up for a January tour of Costa Rica. They'd asked us to send a picture and short little résumé. Then they told you who your roommate was going to be. My roommate was Ron Goodman. I sent Ron an E-mail: "Look we're going to be roommates why don't we try and get to know each other a little bit before the tour?"

Well when Ron and I got talking to each other and everything and getting to know each other, one of the things that Ron told me was that he was into square dancing. He founded the Chi-Town Squares in Chicago. Ron went back last year for their twentieth anniversary. He'd been to 21 square dance conventions. I thought, 'It's something different and it's something to do.' I decided to join Western Star and do the course. Now we're both going to go to the Convention this year in Cleveland. It's something we can share together even though we're at completely different levels. I'll never get anywhere near his level.

D: Any last thoughts we might find interesting?

R: I think it's interesting that I waited until I was 69 to come out as a gay person. The best thing about it, which probably happens to most gay people, was that nobody cared. As far as everybody was concerned I was still me.

D: Thank you Richard.

R: You're welcome.

August 9, 2008

Circulate SF 2008

Earn a Dangle!

Square dancing at some of San Francisco's most beautiful spots

10:30 am
Start Here

Music Concourse

National AIDS Memorial Grove

Rich Reel caller



12 noon
Lunch

2 pm

Palace of the Legion of Honor



Please bring picnic items to share

\$5 Donation Requested

Part of My Life

by dan smith

D: What's your name?

C: Christian Hofmann.

D: Where were you born?

C: I was born in Rheinfelden, a small town in Southern Germany, right at the border to Switzerland. I'm an only child. Mom was a housewife. My Father was a principal but retired a few years ago. He came here last September. That was his first time in the U.S. and he had a really good time. We went to Bryce Canyon, Grand Canyon and Yosemite. He told me that cities he could see anywhere, but those National Parks... (Christian chuckles). That is the one thing that is quite unique here in the U. S.

D: Did you belong to any clubs in high school?

C: I was in the choir, a theater group for awhile, a literature group where we read and discussed certain pieces of literature. Then from the 10th grade on I would actually go to a dance club and this is where I came across square dancing for the first time. We also did line dancing, round dancing and regional folk dances. For square dancing the teacher would explain the moves in German but he would still refer to the calls with English terminology. When we were actually dancing he would only instruct us in English.

D: Is there any exciting thing that happened to you in square dancing back then?

C: I grew up in a very rural area and when I started square dancing it was the late 80's and extremely conservative; nobody was openly gay. It officially didn't even exist. And I met the first openly gay guy in my square dance class and was very impressed that existed. At 15 I was too young to know anything about my own sexual orientation. I was a very shy guy and I never introduced myself. I just watched him from a distance and I thought, "Well he seems to be very self-confident about it." He made quite an impression on me at that time (Christian chuckles). My life became more fun

when I moved away and went to law school. That was at the age of 19.

D: What law school did you go to?

C: I went to law school at Freiburg in southwest Germany. I stayed a little over four years. The first two years were a lot of fun as I was enjoying my freedom. I traveled around Europe and met lots of people; had quite a good party life. The last two years were very hard because we not only have finals at the end of the semester, but at the very end of studies we undergo an exam of 7 consecutive days. For five hours each day you sit there and solve cases, which cover the whole four years of your studies.

After that I specialized in International Business Law, writing my PhD theses on a topic in Banking Law. I moved to Brussels to work for about six months for the legal service of the European Commission. Then I did two years of required Practical Studies in Saarbrücken. I worked for judges and also as a prosecutor for a short while. I actually got the offer to stay at that court and to work to become a judge but I decided to go into Academia and to start teaching. I got the offer to move to Berlin, which I accepted, and now I'm teaching at Humboldt University in Berlin. I've been on a leave from my job since I came here in 2006...in total for 21 months and I'll return and start working there on the 1st of August of this year. By then I must have finished my reserch here.

But in between I took an extended vacation and went to Australia for four months. I stayed in Sidney most of the time but also traveled further up north. I met quite a few nice people in Brisbane and stayed there for a while and then went up to Cairns to become a certified diver and dove at the Great Barrier Reef which was great fun.

D: How did you end up dancing at Western Star?

C: When I came here I looked into the possibilities to start square dancing again because I remembered that I

enjoyed doing it during my high school years. At the Castro Street Fair I came across a flier of the Western Star Dancers. I decided. "Yaw, let's check it out." But it took me, another five months to finally look at the website and find out about the location and the class hours.

When my roommate and I arrived, Paul just started talking to us and was very friendly. I asked him if it was even possible to join now. He said, "Well you should just check it out today, see if you like it; we'll see if we think you are too far behind or you'll be able to catch up



and then we'll see." Everybody was very supportive, that's the one thing that surprised me very much, how willing everybody was to just integrate us--and give it a try and to be very patient with us and it's been like this ever since.

D: How do you feel about the age differences in the class?

C: We usually kind of stick to our own age group most of our time anyway so it's a good opportunity to get to know people in other stages of their lives.

D: Is there anything else of interest that you would like to have in the article?

C: Maybe you could end it by saying that I regret very much that I'll have to leave San Francisco and the Bay Area in July because I enjoyed my time here very much and now square dancing is part of my life.

D: Thank you Christian.

C: You are welcome.

Meeting Minutes

The Board of Directors meeting minutes are published in order to keep club members informed of the affairs of the club. Oral or written comments may be directed to any board member. Members are welcome to attend board meetings

Minutes of the Board March 17, 2008

The meeting was called to order at 6:12 p.m. by Administrator Daryl Daniels. The minutes of the February meeting were accepted as amended. Daniels reported that more than half of the members have opted to receive the Newsletter online. The next edition will have only about 40 copies. Plans for the upcoming Anniversary Dance/Pajama Party were discussed. Ron Masker has contacted us about a fund raiser for the Aids Emergency Fund at the County Fair Building in Golden Gate Park on June 1. They would like us to dance as entertainment. Masker to provide more information. Regarding a float in the '08 Pride Parade, the decision was made to cancel any plan for this year. The subject will be raised at the annual meeting and if the enough members are interested in a float for the '09 parade, a task force will be formed to investigate the matter. Daniels announced that membership in the club has reached 80 individuals (62 men and 18 women). The position of Archangel was discussed. A proposal was made to give the Archangel free club

membership and a pass for all dances for a year. The treasurer reported that we received well over \$700 in donations with membership renewals. The treasurer's report was accepted. There was a discussion about including more Plus dancing during Mainstream classes. The feeling was that there is not enough floor time for Plus dancers to practice during the course of the year. More Plus dancing during class would reward our faithful Angels who show up week after week. The Events Coordinator introduced several itineraries for Circulate SF 2008. The event is scheduled for a Saturday in August. A proposal for a New Member Recruitment Incentive was tabled. The Administrator reminded the Board that we are still looking for storage facilities for club memorabilia. The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Minutes of the Board April 14, 2008

The meeting was called to order at 6:07 p.m. by Administrator Daryl Daniels. The minutes of the March board meeting were approved. In the Administrator's report, Daniels gave a 'well done' for the Pajama Party/Anniversary Dance. Because there is no pressing need to raise money at the present time, a proposed yard sale was postponed until fall (if then). Daniels also reported that he has purchased a digital recorder as a replacement for Dan Smith's tape recorder used for WSD interviews. Re. the Castro Street Fair, we are requesting the same spaces we have had for the past couple of years (at the corner of 18th and Hartford Streets). Daniels is also working on a Policy Statement outlining the duties of the Archangel. The treasurer's report was accepted. The Dance/Events Coordinators reported that they are in talks with callers for 2009. Also, Club Nights are booked through the fall. Plans are still being formed for Circulate San Francisco and our annual picnic. McLaren Park is in consideration as a picnic spot. The Administrator again asked for storage space for club memorabilia. The meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

FREE
Plus Class
Introduction
Monday, JUNE 9
7:30 - 9:30 pm

Plus Class Begins
Monday, June 16
7:30 - 9:30 pm

15 Weeks!

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

20 PLUS 08
Class

Rich Reel
Instructor/Caller

New Plus Dancers
\$70
Repeating the Class
\$35

Notice to dancers from other clubs:
Plus Class registration does NOT
include WSD club membership.
Full yearly club membership is available
for \$20

Eureka Valley Rec Center
100 Collingwood Street
San Francisco

Respectfully submitted,
Jim Dewsnap, Secretary



DIABLO DANCERS
www.diablo-dancers.org
Class Night—Tuesdays
1700 Oak Park Boulevard
Pleasant Hill

FOGGY CITY DANCERS
www.foggycity.org
Class Night—Tuesdays
Studio 204
3435 Cesar Chavez
San Francisco

EL CAMINO REELERS
www.reelers.org
Class Night—Wednesday
St. Andrew's Methodist
4111 Alma Street
Palo Alto

MIDNIGHT SQUARES
www.iagsdc.org/midnightsquares/
A & C Programs
See website for
classes & locations
San Francisco

Other Bay Area Square Dance Clubs

Oaktown 8s
www.oaktown8s.org
Class Night—Wednesday
Montclair Women's
Cultural Arts Club
1650 Mountain Boulevard
Oakland

June 7
7:30-10:30 pm

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

June 9
7:30-9:30 pm

Free intro to Plus Dancing. Rich Reel caller. EVCR

June 13-15

PACE Ben Rubright caller. Friday 7:30 pm A2, Saturday 11 am & 2:30 pm C2 7:30 pm C4, Sunday 11 am C3A, 2:30 pm C3. Diablo Light Opera Co. 1948 Oak Park Boulevard, Pleasant Hill

June 16
7:30-9:30 pm

Orange Plus Class Officially Begins. Rich Reel caller. EVRC


June 18
7:30-9:30 pm

Club Night CANCELLED Eureka Valley Rec's floors are being resurfaced

June 28
7:30-10:30 pm

Pride Dance Disco-Do-Si-Do. Darren Gallina caller. MS/P/A* \$8/\$10 Ebenezer Lutheran Church, 678 Portola Drive, San Francisco

July 3-6

 **25th Annual IAGSDC Convention**
Touch a Quarter Century
MS-C4
Cleveland, Ohio

WESTERN STAR DANCERS ANNUAL PICNIC
SEPTEMBER 1 LABOR DAY
JOHN M'LAREN PARK
WATCH FOR FURTHER DETAILS!

July 11-13

PACE Rob French & CJ Smith callers. Friday 7:30 pm A2, Saturday 11 am & 2:30 pm C1 7:30 pm C4. Diablo Light Opera Co. 1948 Oak Park Boulevard, Pleasant Hill

July 16
7:30-9:30 pm

Hawaiian Club Night! Fen Tamanaha caller. EVCR

For the latest dance information, check NorCalDanceCalendar.org
National & International events can be found at www.iagsdc.com Click on Events





Western Star Dancers
584 Castro Street #480
San Francisco, CA 94114

**EVRC closing June 16
for 2 weeks.
Temporary venue
announced inside.**