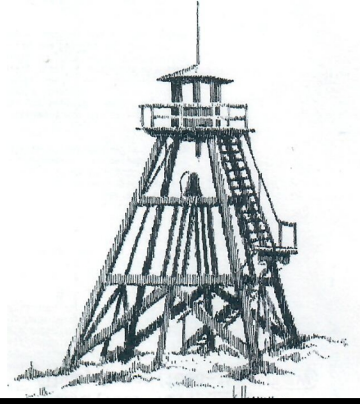


# The Guardian



Last Chance Squares, Helena, Montana - January 2023 - Volume 13

Weclome to the New Year of 2023. Dwain and I were able to dance at the last new dancer class of 2022. We were a little "cruise lagged" and were glad to be home. I hope everyone had a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I am anxious to see what the new year brings. Dwain and I were asked to represent Montana as US West Delegates so that will be a new adventure. We are also going to: Montana State at Great Falls; Idaho State at Boise; US West at Albuquerque and Knot Jamboree at West Yellowstone. We also hope to get to some of the dances at Lolo. I think we have a busy year ahead of us.

*Happy New Year*

**HAPPY  
NEW YEAR**

## New Dancer Lessons

Jan 9th - Hawthorne  
23th - Hawthorne  
30th - Hawthorne

Break  
time

Feb 6th - Hawthorne  
13th - Hawthorne

Mar 6th - Hawthorne  
13th - Hawthorne  
20th - Hawthorne - Graduation

## Club Dance Dates:

Jan 14th - BHB  
28th - BHB

Feb 11th - BHB - Valentines  
25th - BHB

Mar 11th - BHB - St. Patricks  
25th - BHB

April 22nd - BHB - Spring Fling

May 13th - BHB

Summer Dances TBA

**恭賀新禧**  
**Happy New Year**

# Talking Up Square Dancing

By Roy Gotta (reprinted from *Behind the Mike*, September 2018)

When talking to friends or colleagues:

First of all, if anyone asks you why you square dance so much, your first response should be “Because it’s fun and I enjoy it. I get some exercise and I get together with friends without having to set up an event. I can just show up at a dance.”

Stop talking about the “Good Old Days”, when there were 40 clubs and attendance was typically 6-10 squares, with some clubs having 15 to 20 squares. Nobody wants to hear how good it used to be, they want to be involved with something that is good right now. When talking about your club, don’t say, “Oh, we get 2 to 3 squares.” Instead, enthusiastically say, “We usually get 20 to 30 dancers and sometimes as many as 40 or 45 with guests.” It’s the same thing, but with a positive spin.

What music do you like? When talking about square dancing, ask what type of music they like. Whatever their answer, be prepared to say that callers these days use some of that, in fact on any given night you might hear country, oldies, modern pop & hip-hop, standards, or even classical.

Socializing. Talk about how it is a great way to meet and interact with people from all walks of life in an inclusive, non-threatening atmosphere.

Here’s a question you can put to them. Many people exercise, and many people socialize, but how many do both at the same time? Square dancers do it all the time.

Encourage questions and discussion. Sometimes you can get them asking questions. You mention that you are going square dancing tomorrow night. They say “Oh, I remember that from grade school.” You reply, “You should drop in for a little while and see how it has evolved into an interactive dance form. You can have some refreshments while you are there.” If they ask you to elaborate, you can then explain how modern square dancing works.

It’s not a class – it’s an adventure. If they come to watch and express an interest in joining, don’t talk about weeks of “lessons” or “classes.” Instead, invite them to the next open house or introductory dance and explain that, after that, there will be a series of “introductory dances” that will teach them the vocabulary that will allow them to square dance all over the world. If they say “all over the world? you can answer with “the vocabulary is universal and you can dance in Japan, Europe, and even Saudi Arabia.”

Elevator Pitch (This section is taken, with permission, from the CALLERLAB Square Dance Marketing Manual)

An elevator pitch is a brief and succinct statement that is used to spark interest in square dancing. It should be short, taking approximately 20 to 30 second to state. When someone asks you about square dancing, what do you say? Here are a couple of examples:

- “I love square dancing! I’ve met so many of my friends at square dances. It’s a lively, fun hobby. It’s easy to learn, and we dance to all kinds of music today. I love that I get to dance with so many different people, have fun, and get some great exercise while I’m doing it. You should try it.”
- “Square dancing is an art and a sport combined into one. We know all the calls, but don’t know what will be called next, so we have to pay attention. It’s fun working with the other dancers in the square to get through all the calls successfully. So, it’s good exercise both mentally and physically. Mostly though, it’s just a lot of fun. You

A rancher was persuaded to cross-breed his cattle with hyanas. It was a disaster, The offspring were the laughing stock of the community!

Two men are hiking through the woods when one of them cries out, "Snake! Run!". His companion laughs at him. "Oh, relax. It's only a baby," he says. "Don't you hear the rattle?"

should try it.”

Engage. This tactic is a one-to-one tactic that you would usually use in a conversation with someone individually. Ending the statement with “You should try it” almost always generates a response. If the response is a follow up question like “Where or when do you dance?” you can talk more about the activity. Be sure to answer their question. It could be a positive statement like “Maybe I should” giving you the opportunity to provide them with more information. It could also be an objection like “I can’t dance”, giving you the opportunity to explain more about how easy it is. Regardless of the response, you’ve now engaged the individual in a conversation about the activity and had the chance to invite them to participate.

What to say if you are interviewed for a piece in a local publication:

Most important, always be positive and upbeat. Here are a few things you should try to get included.

- Talk about the interaction of people from all walks of life. Mention that your club and surrounding clubs have had doctors, engineers, truck drivers, factory workers, teachers, students, and others working together towards a common goal; having their square succeed.
- If the reporter is interviewing multiple people, make sure they include the dancer’s occupation and the town they live in. This often makes a connection with the reader.
- Never talk about how many clubs there used to be, or how big your club used to be. Instead, say something like “We’ve been going strong for 15 years, and some clubs have been dancing for over 50 years. There have been many forms of dance come and go, like disco for instance, but square dancing has kept going.”
- If the interviewer makes a comment about it seems to be more of a senior activity, put a positive spin on that. You can say things like “That’s true, but part of the reason is that many of the current dancers have been dancing for 20 or 30 years. They say it keeps them young. Another reason is that we attract many empty nesters looking for something they can do on a regular

## **WARNING! SQUARE DANCE FEVER!**

***VERY CONTAGIOUS!***

**CAUSE:** Usually caused by exposure to Hoedown recordings.

**SYMPTOMS:** Absent minded tapping of the floor with foot. Mumbling meaningless phrases such as “Allemande left with the old left hand” and “Do-si-do with the gent you know.” Constant need for baby sitter. Dressing in weird costumes and imitation cowboy style.

***NO KNOWN CURE!***

**TREATMENT:** Medication is useless. Disease is not fatal. Play Hoedown recordings for soothing effect. Victim should go square dancing as often as possible.

*S. D. Caller, Dept. of Public Health*

**“The New Year lies before you like a spotless tract of snow. Be careful how you read on it, for every mark will show.” ....auther unknown**

**“If I din’t wake up, I’d still be sleeping.” ...Yogi Berra**