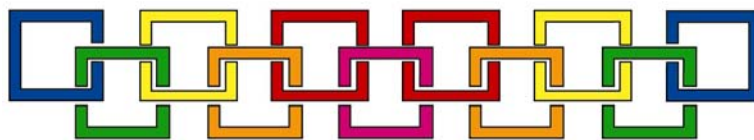


INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION



Volume 1 * Issue 7

Fall 2007

OF GAY SQUARE DANCE CLUBS® A Lesbian and Gay Organization

The 2007/08 IAGSDC® Board

Chairperson – John McKinstry
Vice-Chairperson – Keith Gehrig
Secretary – Scott Philips
Treasurer – Brian Smith
Club Liason Officer – Phil Davis

For information on the IAGSDC®, please go to the interactive web site at:

<http://www.iagsdc.org/>

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All Join Hands Foundation

This newsletter is proudly funded by All Join Hands Foundation, Inc.

For more information, call or fax All Join Hands Foundation at 602-674-3239, send email to info@alljoinhands.org, or visit the web site at <http://www.alljoinhands.org/>.

Send donations to:
All Join Hands Foundation, Ltd.
PO Box 9942
Phoenix, AZ 85068

2007 Challenge!

In Denver, we were challenged to raise \$10,000!

Patricia Anne Hatlen Trust
We will receive \$1 for each \$1 you donate
Don't wait—send your donation today!

The Jail Fundraiser

As for my arrest, a handful of people thought I was a "good sport". Even as I was

going through security at the airport people were still expressing shock that I "got out". I figure I'm on work release until the bail is matched. Send it to All Join Hands - or next time I expect a hot cell-bitch to keep me company. NOT LOIS.
Rick



Editors note: Rick's jail time raised \$520.00 for All Join Hands and has been challenged as a match. Send your donations to AJH at the above address and mark them "Rick Hawes Match"

Family

To everyone who went to the convention in Denver:

I am one of the Rocky Mountain Rainbeaus and was reading e-mails from members of our club about the convention. One of my fellow members urged me to share my experience, so here it is.

As I was reading the e-mails from everyone, I again got teary-eyed from the memories of this great convention. My daughter's high school graduation was Saturday during the convention, so I missed things like the club photo shoot, the banquet and many hours of dancing. However, I managed to still dance over 12 hours from Thursday to Sunday and had a great time during it all.

When I first talked to my mom (and my sister, who both came up for my daughter's graduation from Farmington, NM), she was

fairly clear in her tone of voice that she did NOT want to go to this convention. My mom has been square dancing for 27 years and was the inspiration for me to start dancing. However, after telling her about the callers we had (she has danced to Kris Jensen, Bill Eycler down in Albuquerque, NM - and knew of Deborah and Tim, as well as our own Bear Miller), and the good times I was having on Thursday and Friday, she agreed to come with my sister, and my partner, Kevin, to the Sunday's night dancing. We danced from 7-9 in the plus hall.

Folks - this is the first time in my mom's 75-year old life that she has encountered any significant number of GLBT folk. Our first tip had a transgendered person in the square - did my mom even flinch? No, she went up to each person in the square, took their hands and introduced herself to them. I had to fight to keep my tears from flowing. You have no idea how much her dancing with me at convention meant to me. She was clearly outside of her comfort level, but through the simple act of square dancing, she and I found common ground. I think both of us have been profoundly changed.

My sister as well, was a bit overwhelmed by it all. Her husband is a classic "conservative" listening to Rush and O'Reilly and others who continuously put gays and lesbians down. She was fairly quiet through most of the dance, sitting with Kevin, but the experience moved her as well, I think.

A big thanks to all of you who danced with myself and my mom on Sunday night!!! My mom has gone to many straight square dance conventions. Every square we danced in, she went and introduced herself to each person in the square - I sometimes introduced her to the square as "my mom" and after dancing, the guys would hug her and say "Thanks, Mom!" She showed me

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how to be a good host/dancer at a new square where I don't know everybody!!!

After the last tip of the evening, I took my mom up to Bear and introduced her to both Bear and Deborah. My mom told Bear that Dana and Lloyd say hi (her callers from Farmington) and that they really liked Bear's calling. Bear was completely gracious as was Deborah. Once again I was near tears as the two very special parts of my life were coming together for the first time in my life. This was also the first time my mom met Kevin and had spent any time with him.

I could go on about how all the people in the whitewater rafting trip were raving about the convention (especially the Fun Badge tour!!!) and how at least three people fell out of the rafts, but were rescued.....I'll save that for another time...

Once again, words cannot express my deepest thanks and appreciation for the entire RRPM committee and club members who put the entire convention together. You are my family.....

Michael Sattler

From the Chair

It's been almost six months since we gathered to enjoy our annual Square Dance Convention. What a great time it was. My thanks to "Denver" for a wonderful event. In Denver we elected a new Club Liaison Officer. His name is Phil Davis and he hails from Chicago Ill. I know Phil will bring his own enthusiasm and energy to the board of the IAGSDC®. We bid farewell to Bob Hazen who has been the CLO for the past 4 years. He has done an amazing job and we thank him. I know that Bob will be back to serve in some other capacity...Hmmm.

Scott Philips, our IAGSDC® Secretary, was awarded the Golden Boot. He is one of the most hardworking and selfless individuals I have ever worked with and the award was well deserved.

The IAGSDC® is faced with many challenges in the coming years.. declining enrollment being the major one. It has and continues to be the issue which challenges us most. We are trying believe me. Next year is the 25th anniversary of the first convention held way back then in Seattle.



I know that the folks in Cleveland are going to do their best to celebrate the 25 years and I really hope that you all turn up in Cleveland to help us mark this milestone. I know that I am looking forward to the fun and memories immensely. See you there.

John McKinstry
IAGSDC® Chair

Musings of a Com Queen

by Lois Carmen D'Nominator

Well, after a brief hiatus from attending, I returned back to the fold, and attended this year's Convention in Denver. This, however, was something new for me, as this was the first Convention I ever attended that I was a non-dancer at. (For those of you muttering things quietly to yourself about my dancing abilities before, I say to you: Shut up!)

I had a fabulous time in Denver. I talked to people that I usually only get to yell a greeting to as we rush to yet another hall to dance to yet another fabulous caller. I sat at the Cleveland registration table (I hesitate to say that I actually helped, but I was there for color commentary). I assisted 2 contestants in the Honky Tonk Queen contest with their makeup. They didn't need much, those two boys were cute as buttons anyway. Me – I need a good shellacking just to get out there (insert your own snickering comment here). I also got to SLEEP part of the weekend, which is quite different for me at most Conventions.

I learned how good an Apple Martini can taste (they're even better when someone else is buying them, by the way). Must be all that fresh mountain air.

I bought danglers and trinkets and other foofah things.

I laughed uproariously at Rick Hawes getting locked up. Can we make this an annual event, and can it start on the first day of the Convention, and last until everyone's chosen up sides and gone home? Just a thought. Love ya, honey.

I really only have one suggestion for the Denver folks and that is – pay your oxygen bill! The big girl was gasping like Nemo out of the tank. (Make your own insulting derogatory comment here. And then keep it to yourself.)

For effect here – Scott Philips was an inspired choice for the Golden Boot Award. There, I said it. Now she can't go around telling people I've never said a nice thing about her, ever. I do have a heart – damaged as it is.

And, best of all – NO TAMI! Woohoo! She of the deadly oven mitts. (For you newbies, check with a seasoned veteran of the Conventions, and they can tell you all about how Auntie Tami and Auntie Lois have spent most of their adult lives being mean to each other. And loving it.)

Hopefully, I will get my health back on an even keel, and will be back on the dance floor once again. Stranger things have happened. I mean, I've seen people dancing C2 that I thought couldn't ever make it through a revolving door without incurring bodily harm. But look at them now!

Love y'all. Mean it.

Hope to see everyone in Cleveland.

Our New Club Liaison Officer PHIL DAVIS

I became a member of Chi-Town Squares in 1990 and attended my first convention in Miami in 1991. I've been a director for the Club a number of times and have served as President twice - last term ends this June. Have had the opportunity to twice co-chair The Great Chicago Crossfire over Labor Day weekend and was the Secretary for Tip the Cow, Inc., the organizing committee for Track 2 Chicago in 1995. I currently dance C3A and on occasion have been seen in public as one of the She-Devils.

I pay for my dancing during the day as the Communications Manager for an industrial company providing products and services to the food, beverage and water industries. Play bridge and pinochle, attend Chicago theater, try as many new restaurants as I can, and enjoy anything in a martini glass.

I am very excited to be taking over the programs that Bob (Hazen) has created. I look forward to building the momentum to advance GLBT square dancing and promote into areas where there currently is none.

Phil Davis, Club Liason Officer

Golden Boot Award 2007

The Golden Boot award is our way of recognizing special, lasting, or significant contributions to the gay & lesbian square dance community. There is no formal selection process or criteria for choosing the recipient. The Boot is passed on each year from one recipient to the next.

Last year in Anaheim, Seth Levine passed the Golden Boot award on to All Join Hands Foundation. This is only the second time since the Golden Boot was formed, that this award was presented to an organization with South Florida Mustangs being the other club-organization. We thank Seth for recognizing our efforts of creating a 501c3 organization that accepts tax deductible donations and gives 100% of the money back to our passion – square dancing.

Over the past year, we have been looking high and low through this group of people for a special person that is involved at the local, national and international level of gay and straight dancing. We feel that this person we have selected to receive the Golden Boot this year is well known to all of you.

This Person

- Is a dancer, and has been dancing 18 years.
- Has Attended 17 conventions only missing one.
- Has/is an officer and founder of a club.
- Has served as a convention co-chair.
- Has served as a co-chair for an A&C weekend.
- Has served as Vice Chair of the IAGSDC® not once but twice.
- Has served as Secretary of the IAGSDC® not once but twice
- Volunteers for organizations involved in square dancing with the straight community

It gives us great pride and pleasure to present the 2007 Golden Boot award to

MR. SCOTT PHILIPS.

It is the custom of the *outgoing* Golden Boot recipient to bestow a token of appreciation on the *new* Golden Boot Award winner. All

Join Hands has chosen to acknowledge Scott's achievements with the following:

- A 2007 Golden Boot Dangle
 - A sterling silver engraved Tiffany dog tag.
 - And
 - A crystal desk award with the following inscription:
 "All Join Hands presents Scott Philips with the 2007 Golden Boot Award; For your dedication, spirit and enthusiasm in the presentation of GLBT square dancing."
 May 26, 2007 - Yellow Rocks
- In addition, Scott's name was added to the perpetual plaque of Golden Boot recipients.

Quotes

The IAGSDC® survives with every little effort anyone makes. – Stan, Cleveland

My life has been such that opportunities to experience joy have been few and far between. For the first time in a very long time, I experienced absolute joy at being alive. Not only this, I have NEVER experienced more joy than I did at convention. Walking into a room where hundreds of people are dancing their hearts out has affected me in ways that i had never anticipated. The energy, the laughter, the comraderie... and of course, the flirting (so many men, so little time!!)

James Green, RMR

If you don't come to convention, eventually they will all forget about you – Unknown

The 25th Annual Convention

Touch a Quarter Century

The 25th Annual IAGSDC®Convention.
Friday, July 3 – 6, 2008
Cleveland, OH
<http://www.taqc.org/>



What the Future Holds

2009

DC Diamond Circulate

The 26th Annual IAGSDC®Convention.
April 2009
Washington, DC

<http://www.dcdiamondcirculate.org>

2010

The 27th Annual IAGSDC®Convention.
Friday, July 3 – 6, 2010 - Chicago

2011

Atlanta, Georgia

2012

Bids closed in Denver, bids will be presented from Phoenix/Tucson, AZ & Vancouver, Canada

Silver Squares

Gay and lesbian square dance club approaches age 25 *by Rebecca Ragain*

Dick Burdon remembers when Portland's gay square dancing club, the Rosetown Ramblers, initiated new members with rituals similar to what one might encounter during a good-natured fraternity hazing. When rookies graduated from their dance class and wanted to join the group, they might have been required to dance with a roller skate on one foot to prove their worth. Or maybe to dance with a pair of pantyhose tied around their waist so that the legs—which were weighted with a potato in each foot—dangled down toward their knees.

"Try to dance and keep that from tangling!" says Burdon, chuckling and pointing at a photograph of someone trying to do exactly that. Burdon had just come out of the closet when he joined the Rosetown Ramblers in 1983, which was the club's first year in existence. "I found a lot of support and liberation from being part of it," he recalls. Today, the 76-year-old returns that support by helping other gays and lesbians learn how to square dance. And these days, there's no hazing at graduation.

Square Dance Class: What to Expect

Starting each fall, the Rosetown Ramblers hosts two 10-week square dancing courses for beginners. (Intermediate dancers are also

welcome.) This year's classes begin Oct. 10 and take place on Wednesday evenings through April. Come to class wearing comfortable clothes, because—unlike straight square dancing—there is no formal dress code for gay and lesbian square dancing. Rick Hawes, a square dancer since 1984, quips: "We'll dance nude or as gussied up as straight folks. Or even more so, like the 6-foot-tall drag queen in roller skates." Classes are open to singles and couples. Traditional square dance terminology is maintained even in gay and lesbian clubs, so new dancers will decide whether they want to learn the "boy" or "girl" part. (It's up to you; biology is irrelevant.) After mastering one position, many gay and lesbian dancers choose to learn the other. Square dance has a language of its own. The announcer is the "caller," who explains how to do the different dance formations, or "calls," which have names like Dosado and Promenade. Of course, when it comes to physical activities, hearing something explained is not necessarily the same as understanding how to do it. That's where Burdon comes in. During class, he and other experienced square dancers, or "angels," join the beginners on the floor to help demonstrate the calls. Whenever possible, an angel will partner with a beginner so the new person can truly get the feel for the move. "They do better [dancing with an angel] than two people who don't know what they're doing dancing together," explains Burdon. If you do make a mistake, try not to worry about it. According to Scott Philips, who joined Rosetown Ramblers 19 years ago, "The more you do, the easier it gets."

Wide World of Square Dancing

Classes are just the beginning of the fun. The Rosetown Ramblers also offer a club night on the third Wednesday of every month and a dance every first Saturday.

And then there's the traveling.

It might start with a day trip to Eugene to dance with the local club Spin Cycle Squares. Or maybe attending a full-weekend "fly-in" (a mini-convention) in Seattle or Vancouver, British Columbia, sounds intriguing. Just be prepared to return to work on Monday thoroughly exhausted. "When you're first learning, you dance till you drop," says Burdon. "You don't think you can miss a single dance." Before long, you might find yourself flying across the country to attend the annual

convention of the International Association of Gay Square Dance Clubs (IAGSDC).

Like the Rosetown Ramblers, which was a charter club of the international group, the IAGSDC is turning 25 in 2008. The association boasts 49 member clubs, plus a few associate and affiliate organizations.

Every year, approximately 1,000 dancers from these various clubs converge for a four-day convention filled with socializing, sightseeing and, of course, dancing.

For those who attend the convention every year, it's like having an extremely large family reunion, as friends and acquaintances from previous conventions catch each other up on the developments of the past year.

"That's half the fun of conventions: You've got a whole family of friends scattered around the country and Canada," says Philips, 67, who barely traveled at all before he became involved with square dancing.

Now, he's visited places he never would have gone without the pull of square dancing.

Tami Hazen, the Rosetown Ramblers' vice president, feels similarly. She and her partner, Jenni Bush, attended a convention this summer in Denver.

"It's such an awesome opportunity to go where you're going to meet people and make new friends, see a new city," she says. "I don't know that I would have seen Denver in my lifetime unless I was going there to dance."

Looking Back, Facing Forward

Only about 20 percent of convention attendees are women. That's because, historically speaking, gay square dancing was mostly an activity for men.

Rosetown Ramblers, for example, was founded by "guys who were tired of doing the bar scene," as Hawes puts it. Occasionally, women would drop in. But when they saw that there were few to no other women in the club, they wouldn't come back.

Today, the Rosetown Ramblers has a more balanced membership—approximately 40 percent women to 60 percent men—which puts the group at the forefront nationally in terms of gender equality.

Philips, for one, likes that balance: "It's a great opportunity for men and women to interact, because normally in gay organizations they don't."

Square dancing also forms a bridge between the gay and straight communities.

Philips and Hawes run Heads to the Center, an advanced club that sometimes shares venues and callers with the Rosetown Ramblers. It's not uncommon for straight square dancers to attend Heads to the Center events.

That wasn't always the case.

"When the club first started, we were certainly vilified for doing the thing other people did," recalls Burdon.

But the Rosetown Ramblers wanted to dance. So if the straight community was having a dance, sometimes the gay club would bring its own group to the event, and dance together, off in the corner.

Eventually "they got used to us," explains Philips. For instance, if a straight woman's husband got tired, she might ask one of the gay dancers to fill in for him.

"First, they realize that we're really good dancers," Philips adds. "Then they get to know us and find out we're just like them."

These days, gay and straight groups share a common problem: a decline in numbers combined with aging participants. The average gay square dancer is in his or her 50s or 60s; straight dancers are mostly in their 70s or 80s.

Philips, who is secretary of the IAGSDC, speculates that the Internet might be partially to blame for the decline in membership, because it allows people to socialize online instead of leaving the house.

Hawes, 56, sees it as more of a cycle: "Wherever they [younger people] go, to the bar or whatever, there probably will become a time when they'll get bored with it...and we'll be ready and willing to bring them in."

At age 42, Hazen is bucking the age trend—although she did have her doubts before she started taking classes two years ago: "I thought it was nerdy and not for me."

But she gave it a shot because her 36-year-old partner was having so much fun. Now Hazen can't imagine not dancing: "Gay and lesbian square dancing is a whole new world that I really enjoy."

Rebecca Ragain enjoys writing about all kinds of dance for Just Out. Contact her via www.rebeccaragain.com.

Feedback

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