

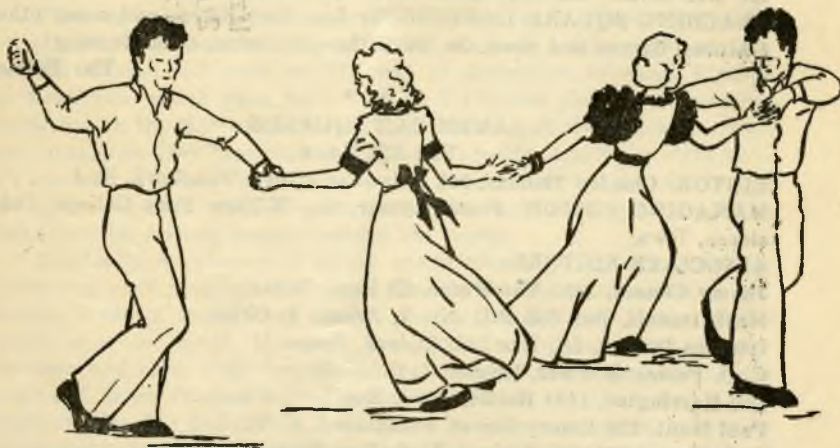
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AMERICAN SQUARES

THE MAGAZINE DEDICATED TO AMERICAN SQUARE DANCING



10 cents



March, 1948

The Magazine

How many times have you thought, "I'd like to have a square dance party, but where can I find a caller or an orchestra?" Probably many times. We hope that you have noticed our directory in the back of the magazine. Here the best callers everywhere are listed. These men can be counted on to give a good performance because they keep themselves up to date with material from AMERICAN SQUARES. So, the next time you're looking for a caller or an orchestra, contact one of those listed in the directory.

Have you checked through the Records and Books For Sale listing in the back of the magazine recently? These are kept up to date, and new additions made constantly so you can have the latest publications and recordings available.

Our Letters to the Editor column is becoming increasingly popular as a forum in which to express ideas about square dancing. If you have some point you'd like to discuss relative to square dancing, drop us a line, and we'll print it, space permitting. We are always glad to hear from square dancers everywhere.

If you have a problem about dancing that you'd like to have solved, send it in to the Round Table for discussion. The editors will answer it for you.

In the April issue, we will have an article by Paul Hunt entitled IN DEFENSE OF SINGING CALLS, the third and last lesson on TEACHING SQUARE DANCING, by Lou Harrington, and many other features, dances and news. So, until the next issue: Good dancing!

The Editors

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AMERICAN SQUARES

Vol. III No. 6

EDITOR: Charley Thomas, 121 Delaware Street, Woodbury, N. J.

MANAGING EDITOR: Frank Lyman, Jr., William Penn College, Oskaloosa, Iowa.

ASSOCIATE EDITORS:

Jimmy Clossin, 2930 Van Buren, El Paso, Texas.

Mark Dannis, Box 668 R.D. No. 7, Arkon, 3, Ohio.

Douglas Durant, Jr., Box 138, Radnor, Penna.

C. D. Foster, Box 540, Denver, 1, Colorado.

Lou Harrington, 1131 Harlem Blvd., Rockford, Illinois.

Paul Hunt, 136 Emery Street, Hempstead, N. Y.

J. C. Moore, 705 So. Oakland Blvd., Fort Worth, 3, Texas.

Ralph A. Piper, Dept. Phys. Ed., U. of Minn., Minneapolis, Minn.

Carl E. Schmitz, 1517 E. Almeria Ave., Phoenix, Arizona.

Editorial Offices, 121 Delaware Street, Woodbury, N. J.

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Send in your articles, dances, notes and comments for publication.

Television

By Charley Thomas, editor.

We get our scripts in sections, covering only the times we are to appear with Mac. There must be close-ups for dialogue and that means that the people talking must be standing close together. "When you talk to somebody, bring him in on the screen with you," says the director when Mac forgets. So after one song Uncle Jim the comic, and Mac will talk, or Jennie or I or three of us. Mac usually spiels with me just before a dance and as one of the cameras has to be taken as far away as possible and cranked up to its fullest extent for the dance, that means we have quite a little session together. (My kindest critics say I haven't gotten into the character of a hayseed yet).

After we have the gist of our conversation, (we don't memorize) and the time we are to appear, we go over them as a dry run with the director in front of us. As soon as our dancers arrive, they are the same for each show now and come after work, we walk through the dances the same way and the director figures out shots for the cameras. (When we do couple dances he often picks up the footwork.) Then the director retires behind his partition, the cameramen and coach take their places and we go into a dress rehearsal, though we are not in costume. We may interrupt this rehearsal several times to go back over dances or dialogue, but at the end of it they can tell us its running time and we may have to make adjustments. If at the end of it, the clock has not reached 5:45 we rehearse it until it does.

Then we knock off for supper. We dancers eat together and usually cut a pretty good hole in our profits. We are back at the studio at 7:30 and get dressed and made up. We may go downstairs to watch **Pleased to Meet You**, which runs from 7:30 to 7:45, over the set the station maintains on the thirteenth floor. From 7:45 to 8:00 they turn the cameras around so they face our set and we get ready. And from eight on—it's too late. After the show, I teach the dancers the dancers the dances for next week until we're all so tired that we can't learn any more. Then we're thru for a week, except drawing the checks.

Originally, we planned to do one spectacular or pretty dance and one funny one each program. Then, since we do figures to the opening and closing hoedown music, they figured that a couple dance in the middle would be a nice break. However, five dances proved too many, so now we open and close with figures, do one complete dance and one couple routine. I dance this and with the five dancers we supply, it just makes three couples. We find that it looks better to have each couple in turn do the figure in front of the camera rather than work out a routine with all of us showing at once. This is because the television screen is still so small that two dancers show better than six.

I suppose most of you won't have to dance for television, but you may still be interested in our problems and suggestions.



Records are our main one. The station turntable is exactly 78 revolutions per minute and I find that most of the phonographs we dance to are faster. At any rate all of the music seems to slow down when we play it over WPTZ. Our first square dance with Imperial records looked like a minuet. We find that the best ones are the Signature records which I condemned when I reviewed them as being so fast as to absolutely undanceable.

And then, they can't use just any record on the air. Our first catastrophe was Ford's Hungarian Varsouvienne which I had worn out with use. Fortunately Ralph Talmadge was able to get this copy in time to go on with the show. The next was the Decca recording of Herr Schmidt. We beat our brains out on that dance working out and learning combinations and new patterns only to have the brand new, as yet unused, recording condemned. Seems as how Decca records, and particularly the old cheap ones, have too much surface noise. No other recording of Herr Schmidt is made and the whole dance had to go out of the window.

Nor can we do just any dance. We did the Varsouvienne and worked out a beautiful routine both in couples and as a three-couple set. The director told us after the show was over that the dance was just too slow. The program sped along up to the dance, slowed down until the dance was over and then picked up again. So Laces and Graces was out and we are confined to polkas and schottishes until we find something else fast.

When we started off I drilled the dancers on coordination and timing. It was time wasted. The set dances so close together and the finished picture on the screen is so small that the details that typify a polished square dance set just don't show up. So long as everybody keeps moving all the time, the show's good. If they stop for an instant—pow!

And I spent lots of time figuring out routines and combinations of dances so that there would be no boring repetition to watchers. Then Bobby Thomas viewed one of the programs from the Williams' receiver. She reported:

"We kept up a conversation all the time and couldn't give all our attention to the show. The others all missed the point of **Don't You Touch Her**. I did until it was almost over and I only caught on then because I knew the dance. By that time you had gone into **Cheat or Swing**. It wouldn't have hurt at all to do that dance over again." And I could have saved Cheat or Swing for some other night. Repetition is proper.

Well, guess that's about all. See us over WPTZ on some Thursday evening.

Picture: Caller, Charley Thomas; Gents in the star, from left to right. Mac Maguire, Elmer Taylor of the Camden Y, Squeezy (back to the camera) Ralph Talmadge of the Camden Y. Girls, Jennie, Betty Cherry of the Camden Y (back to the camera) Jean Evans of the Camden Y, and behind the caller, Dorothy Burgin of the Camden Y.

On left: Mac Maguire and Charley Thomas dialoguing.

On right: From bottom to top, Charley Thomas, Betty Cherry, Dorothy Burgin and Elmer Taylor, all of the Camden Y.

Teaching Square Dancing

By Larrupin' Lou Harrington

LESSON TWO

If we go on to Lesson Two a second night a week or two later, we first more or less review Lesson One. In lesson two we add the **allemand left** and **grand right and left**. The **allemand** is tricky and not easily learned, though I do not tell them so. Rather I say, this requires close attention to get quickly.

Let's form sets. **Sets ready** is the call. Explain and demonstrate the **allemand left**. (Gents face your girl, giving her your left hand turn her once all the way around and return to your place, facing the center.) Do nothing else until all understand and do the action smoothly as they listen to three or four different calls for this particular action.

Now the **grand right and left**. Do this separately from the **allemand left**, and when the dancers have mastered this, then put them together, repeating until all is done smoothly. Now we have to backtrack a moment to pick up the **promenade** from the **grand right and left** movement as the partners meet across the square from the home position. As they meet the gent takes the lady's right hand in his right, as he keeps walking along without pause, he lifts his hand from directly in front of himself up to the lady's shoulder height at the same time swinging his arm out to his right, so that as he steps up to his lady she naturally comes under his right arm, with right hands still joined and his arm around her shoulder, with left hands joined in front. Do not under any circumstance lift her hand over her head. It does not look well, it is awkward and it kills the rythm. It is also unnecessary and is one of the few things that are wrong even if everyone does it.

Now with the music, repeat these movements and end up with a **balance and swing**. Now for variety start the **allemand** from a home position, **swing** then **promenade home** and **swing**. Take a new **allemand**, **grand right and left**, **meet your partner** and **promenade home**. The **promenade**, even from a standing position back home is begun in the same manner.

Now show that the **allemand** may be done from any part of the square (many will think they will have to run home to start it.) From any part of the ring call **break right** there, or **break away** all with an **allemand left**, etc.

Now we are getting along, and this review itself, is a nice little dance. Using these four fundamentals after **honors right and left**, **circle half**, the other way back and **swing**, **allemand left**, **grand right and left**, **promenade home**, **balance up and back** and **swing** again. Next time vary it by calling **grand right and left** all the way around, and **promenade right** when you get straight (home).

For further variety let's put in a call like **all up to the center** and

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The Callers Corner

By C. D. Foster, Author of Foster's Square Dance Cards.

Openings for the professional dancer, include only a limited number of opportunities, and these, mostly for highly talented and well trained artists in the concert field, or in the ballet of opera companies.

Popular dancers are employed in the choruses of musical comedies and in vaudeville or in motion pictures. Some teachers of dancing are being offered positions in public schools, private schools and in the chorus work.

On the whole, the most attractive opportunities seem to lie in the teaching of folk dancing, interpretative or social dancing in public schools and in colleges and private schools.

Old Time Square Dancing, the old fashioned waltz, two step, schottische, the varsouviana, polka, etc, is now being taught in schools, colleges, universities, Y.M.C.A.'s, 4H clubs, in fact by all sorts of dance clubs in most every city, even including small towns and suburban communities. The physical education departments of these schools and clubs, have come to realize that folk songs and folk dancing tend to broaden the understanding of such subjects as history and geography as well as give a better understanding of sociology. These dances are also valuable as a means of "breaking down" prejudices and promoting a feeling of friendliness among people.

With a comparative small amount of capital one can start his or her own school. It may be possible to obtain a paying clientele by teaching in several different towns near-by, spending a certain day of each week in each community. The dance club idea has been worked successfully and literally thousands are teaching the old fashioned get-together square dance to tens of thousands of interested "square dancers" all over the country.

The income from these private ventures, depend upon the size, wealth and interest of the community, also, to a large extent upon the competition. The publicity is another factor. Then too, the available "contacts" must be considered.

To you older ones who contemplate a venture of this kind, let me say to you that, intelligence, personality, and physical grace and poise, are more essential to a dancing teacher than youth and physical beauty. Physical endurance and patience are also important.

If you are a teacher of dancing you should take lessons periodically yourself. The reason, you can readily see. Changes are going on all the time, and it is well to see how the other fellow is doing it. One advantage in the OLD TIME FIELD, the basic principles remain the same.

Remember always that a reasonable amount of dancing is healthful, but even the ordinary dance, carried on for too long at a "stretch"

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Beginners Corner

This is one of the simpler dances recommended by Larrupin' Lou in his article, TEACHING SQUARE DANCES. Also a singing call, it has been recorded many times, and this is but one of many ways of performing the dance, perhaps the simplest way.

SPANISH CAVALIER

Oh, it's all join hands, and circle left around,

And you circle with your Spanish Cavaliero.

The other way back, you're on the wrong track,

And you swing, oh, you swing your hero.

All join hands and circle half way around, turn the other and circle to places and swing with your partners.

First lady to the right and circle three around,

Then you swing, oh you swing with your hero,

And you have swung, go back where you begun,

And swing with your Spanish Cavaliero.

First lady circles three with the second couple and swings that gent. She then returns home and swings her own partner. The call continues, until she has done the same with each of the other couples and then you are ready for this break:

Oh, it's allemand left, with a grand right and left,

First with your right, then your left dear,

And when you meet your partner, you promenade her home,

You promenade, oh, promenade your hero.

The dance is then repeated with each of the other ladies doing the same, after which the gents may follow in the same manner. It is a very simple dance, and a lot of fun. You'll find your groups asking you to call it after a while.

(continued from page 6)

back you go, and once again for the good of the floor, then repeat lesson two routine. Here let's step up the tempo to 120-126 metronome and change the order and the lingo of the fundamentals. When you think they are sharp, you are ready for dance number two.

DANCE NUMBER TWO

Warmerupper: Swing partners, swing corners, promenade partners.

Figure: Spanish Cavalier, music the same; Ringo Swingo, Music Turkey in the Straw, or other; First Old Buck, music the same, etc.

Break: Allemand left, grand right and left, promenade.

After the training and one dance, rest a bit. Coach the lame ducks, and check the swinging. If they learn wrong, they'll never do it right. Invite questions. After five to ten minutes recess, another dance or two as suggested above. (Editor's note: Spanish Cavalier suggested above will be found in the Beginner's Corner. Lesson Three, the concluding lesson will appear next month.)

Notes

Julia Dwyer

We are indeed sorry to report the passing of Mrs. Julia V. Dwyer, director of Philadelphia Folkways on January 25. Mrs. Dwyer, a native of Brooklyn, New York, had been teaching English and American folk dancing for several years at the Philadelphia Y.W.C.A., and was well known and loved by Philadelphians active in folk dance circles. Last summer she served as secretary and instructor in the Monadnock-Folkways Summer School which was run by Gene Gowing and Ralph Page in Peterborough, New Hampshire. The joy and pleasure that she imparted to others through the medium of folk dancing will serve as a lasting monument to her memory. Her passing will be deeply mourned by all who knew her.

NEW EDITORS

This month we add two associate editors, Jimmy Clossin, of El Paso, Texas, and Carl Schmitz of Phoenix, Arizona. These two editors, both of them veteran square dancers, can be counted on to give us excellent coverage of the Southwest.

* * *

Lou Harrington in his News which he distributes to his gang around Rockford, Illinois, tells us of a new plan instituted by the Rockford Public Library. This institution through public contributions has built up a lending library of records and albums to lend to groups who want to teach square dancing. Lou has assisted by suggesting albums to be purchased, and also by collecting donations from his various groups. Sounds like a swell idea for us to start in our own public libraries. What do you think?

* * *

The Annual Arizona Square Dance Festival and Fiddler's Jamboree was held in Phoenix, Arizona, February 6 and 7 with groups from many states participating. We hope to have a report on it for next month.

* * *

Jimmy Clossin of El Paso, Texas, writes us the following: ". . . I visited one of Carl Myles square dances held in Griffith Park, Los Angeles, California., during the first of December. Nice crowd, everyone enjoying himself, and having a bang up good time. Carl is really doing a fine job of helping to bring back this fine old social recreational activity. Any one who does not get around the country as I do cannot realize the number of schools, colleges and recreation departments in all sections of the country who are behind the movement to revive square dancing for all ages. Hats off to them all."

Herb Greggerson of El Paso, Texas, has added a 30x40 foot studio to his home and will teach square dancing there. He invites any readers traveling near or through El Paso to drop in.

LLOYD SHAW

As many of you know, Dr. Lloyd Shaw and his famous Cheyenne Mountain Dancers are making an Eastern trip this month. Although all of the arrangements are not complete at the time of printing, we have listed below the tentative itinerary. We certainly recommend that you see these charming dancers if it is possible for you to arrange it. Their demonstration of the Western Square Dance is undoubtedly the tops in the nation.

Thursday, March 27, Dodge City, Kansas. Sponsors, Dodge City High School.

Saturday, March 28, either St. Louis or Chicago—dates pending.

Monday, March 29, Pittsburgh, Penna. Engagement pending.

Tuesday, March 30, Camden, New Jersey. Charles Crabbe Thomas, Chairman.

Wednesday, March 31, through Saturday, April 3, New York City. (Details of the different engagements to be arranged.)

Sunday, April 4, 2:00 p. m., Brooklyn. Lost Battalion Hall, on Queen's Boulevard. Ed Durlacher, Chairman.

Monday, April 5, Swarthmore College—engagement pending.

Tuesday and Wednesday, April 6 and 7, Washington, D. C. Sponsors: Education of Washington Public Schools.

Friday, April 9, either St. Louis or Chicago (arrangements pending).

* * *

Roy E. Lane, director of the Fort Dearborn Square Dance Club in Chicago, writes us a thought which we'd like to pass on to you: "We think the world needs more than anything else is more square dancers and fewer soldiers." Don't you agree with him?

* * *

Paul Hunt writes that their New Year's Eve party was a bit cold until they got to dancing. Early in the evening the door of the oil burner blew off and hit the janitor on the head. He got mad, shut off the heat and went home. From that time on they had to furnish their own heat, but, he reported, it wasn't so bad.

<p>ROSIN THE BOW Folk Dance Magazine Extraordinary Rod LaFarge, 115 Cliff Street Haledon, N. J. 10 issues per year \$1.50</p>

<p>LEARN TO DANCE THE FOSTER WAY by C. D. Foster On cards for ease in handling Parts I and II (specify which) \$1.00</p>



Record Review

By Charley Thomas

PARAMOUNT. Albums Two and Three. The next two albums of a five-album series by Jimmy Clossin and the Blue Bonnet Playboys are now out. Without calls and on twelve-inch plastic platters, they are the answer to a square dancer caller's prayer except the price, \$5.80. How nice it is to have records that don't break. We have them and sell them, so you'll have them. **ALBUM 2 1002A Buffalo Gal.** The violin is slightly screechy but that can be corrected by a twist of the tone control knob. 126 beats per minute on the metronome.

1002B La Varsouvienne. I like this because it is faster than the usual recording, 52 bars per minute. I also like the arrangement which keeps going straight through without time out for a waltz. However, hearing the other side, one of my dancers said, "Throw it out." I obligingly tossed him the record which badly disconcerted him until he discovered it was plastic.

1003A Ragtime Annie. Whether it's known as Raggedy Ann, Ragtime Annie or Raggin' On, this is my favorite piece. As the name differs in various localities, so there are a few notes in this Texas recording that are new to me, but it's swell. Metronome 126.

1003B Tuckers Waltz. This is part $2\frac{1}{4}$ and part $3\frac{1}{4}$ time so there is obviously some special dance to it. Perhaps someone will enlighten us about what steps go with the tune so that the purchasers of the record can use it.

ALBUM 3, 1004A Arkansas Traveller. Nothing wrong with this that I can hear—in fact it has my unqualified approval. Metronome 136.

104B Texas Schottische. I have heard better orchestrated schottisches and ones where the fiddle didn't squeek so much. Metronome 150.

1005A Soldiers Joy. Another! It is the seventh by my count and I'd rank it about third in excellence. Metronome 132.

1005B Home Sweet Home. Sorry, we use the Missouri Waltz to close with. The fiddle in this seems to waver in spots besides being shrill. Metronome 40. The trick ending consists of a change to $4\frac{1}{4}$ time, Metronome 120.

These records, together with Album 1, consisting of Eighth of January, Little Brown Jug, Oxford Minuet and Girl I Left Behind Me, are available at \$5.80 per album from AMERICAN SQUARES. Just send in your order.

PARADE P1016A Mummers Reel, Hageman String Band. The over-worked Golden Slippers plus another, unidentified melody.

P1016B Blue & Broken Hearted. I did not purchase this.

LINWOOD 102A Let Me Call You Sweetheart. Quaker City String Band. Paul Hunt says that the old waltzes played in $6\frac{1}{8}$ time make good square dance tunes. By that definition, this should be good, but at 122 per minute it seems slow.

Letters To The Editor

Dear Editor,

In reference to Larrupin' Lou Harrington's letter in the November issue, I'd like to add my two bit's worth.

I've been calling square dances for 23 years, and don't know all there is to know about it, but would like to express my opinions. My experience has been gained from calling in the mid west, west and southeast sections of the U. S.

All through the war I taught and called square dances for service men from all parts of the U. S. We have "played" six U.S.O.'s a week lots of times, and now play an average of 22 square dances a month, mostly at officer's and enlisted men's clubs of the armed forces. Lots of these dances involves teaching the crowd to dance and having a dance all in the same evening.

And they are square dances.

I have booked dances (before I learned better) in the past on a half and half basis with an orchestra. We were "on" with square dances for a half hour and the orchestra was "on" for a half hour. They were the least enjoyed and most unsuccessful dances I have ever seen. Just as bad as a half and half dance where both the squares and swing dances are played by the same band. The half and half dance is a disappointment to both groups of dancers.

When we are booked for a dance they know they are going to get the real McCoy in square dancing, calling, and music. We "throw in" just enough folk dances and old time waltzes to make the dance interesting and not so tiresome. I refuse to call a square dance figure at a swing dance except as an exhibition with authentic square dance music and experienced square dancers, and then only one or two figures unless the crowd demands more.

One of the worst things for square dancers and square dance beginners is something like this: Some character (group) decide to have a "Barn Dance". They invite their crowd and some of the invited are square dancers, others are people wanting to learn, others don't know what it's about but come anyway because it seems like it will be something different. They all come dressed for the occasion (overalls, red handkerchief, print dresses, or old clothes if it's a hard times dance) and what do they find at the dance hall? The promoters have scattered some hay around the place, put a few bales around the place for people to sit on, also have added a shock or two of corn fodder and hung up some kerosene lanterns. Well and good so far, but for music they have the same old swing or jazz band that they have always had. Maybe they have picked up a would-be fiddler to sit in for the two or three attempts that they will try to run a square dance. Also somebody said he was a caller. He has learned a lot of square dance phrases and terminology

from a book or from a record and don't know what they mean or how to demonstrate or explain them, and if he did know what they mean or how to demonstrate or explain them, and if he did know them he would have two strikes against him from the music department. The whole doesn't make sense to the beginner and is disgusting to the folks that know what a square dance should be like. The beginner will decide that he doesn't want to learn to square dance after all, especially if they are like this.

Musicians and caller have to work together for some time before they are perfect. Although approved by some I have found some pieces very unsatisfactory to call and square dance to. Musicians must see and learn to "play" the crowd. When playing at a new spot, I have been asked to play a swing tune, and although our band can play nearly anything, we will pack up and go home before we will change a square dance to a swing dance.

I recall an Army Officers Club where we were booked for a square dance, the manager of the club had changed and the bus broke down that had ten couples of guest instructors aboard and there we were, nearly no one there was familiar with square dancing. By using simple figures and demonstrating we had twenty sets square dancing before the evening was half over and it was pronounced the best party that they ever had at the club. Had we turned that dance into a swing dance as they wanted us to everybody would have been dissatisfied. Can't you just imagine a hill-billy string band led by an ole time fiddler, backed up by a guitar, mandolin, and bass fiddle playing swing tunes for hours and the crowd liking it? Square dancing and swing (jazz, jitterbug, etc.) just don't mix successfully.

Let's keep them apart and save two good dances for separate crowds rather than try to mix them and spoil both dances.

On rare occasions in small towns when there is only one dance per week I have seen a mixed dance go over fair because there was nothing else in the way of dances for people to go to.

—Rawhide Cooper
Kaneohe Bay,
Oahu, T. H.

Dear Editor,

After all my comments, although the new printing of "American Squares" is super, I rather miss the "hominess" of the mimeographed paper, while I struggled to read it!

What moves me to take my pen in hand is the letter from Jack Hoheisal which you printed in the January issue. I am both a square and folk dancer, enjoying both equally well, for different reasons, and I must protest Jack's sentiments.

Being acquainted with Lloyd Shaw, Ray Shaw, Carl Myles, Ralph Maxhiemer, Al Bade, J. King Ross, to name some of the well-known callers in this area, I well know their feelings about mixing the square

and folk dances. However, the folk dancers have a different approach to this problem. They are out for enjoyment, just as the square dancers, but they open their minds to other types of dancing and culture. On the whole the folk dancers are not good square dancers, possibly because the square dance callers are not interested in folk dancing, whereas the folk dancers are always willing (perhaps not so able) to help anyone who wishes to learn folk dancing.

J. King Ross is widely known in the San Fernando valley as a good square dance caller and one of his groups, composed of horsemen, is terrific when it comes to square dancing—doing nothing else for three hours! However, through Mr. Ross calling at a Folk Dance Festival, and his group traveling with him, they came into contact with folk dancing and have started to do some of them. They haven't lost their square dance flavor, and are one of the most friendly of the square dance groups.

"Many old dances were modified to meet democratic conditions of America. The sound of stomping leather, the whoop of the cowboy, the colorful shouts of the callers, all reveal the history of the Western dance. The New England Quadrille, Kentucky Running Set, Hoedown, the Squares, the Lines, the Rounds, the Docey-does, all make a composite picture of the March of Freedom."—Lloyd Shaw.

Folk dancing is a basic heritage of ancient origin and universal in appeal. With hardly an exception, the life and spirit of national groups find expression in music and dancing. Originally, certain dances were performed exclusively by tribes or villages, bound by ties of race, religion, or language, whereas, in America, folk dances representing all periods and nationalities are performed—including the popular American square dance, which in itself is descended from the French quadrille.

I do realize how hard it is to have both types of dancing, so different in character in one evening, but would plead with all to keep an open mind and heart. In this chaotic time, more and more people are yearning to participate in some activity where they are part of a unit, working and playing together. Folk dancing of all types provides this outlet.

—Virginia C. Anderson
Hollywood, California

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may prove harmful.

The principle reward in dancing—joy in the grace and beauty of the art—the satisfaction of pleasing yourself and others—can be gained by dancing as a hobby, as a pastime and as a relaxation from the daily grind of business or household duties. Preciseness and exactness can turn dancing into vexation, rather than a relaxation.

A teacher who has the patience, the business ability and social contacts, may build for himself a profitable and enjoyable business, either as a part time or full time proposition, and he will be aiding Americans to know and enjoy the square and folk dances we love.

Texas Square Dance Association

By "Cal" Moore

History: Square dancing in Texas is as old as the state. Some form of this type of dancing has been perpetually maintained in local areas and communities. In connection with the festivities at the Governor's Inaugural Ball in 1947, square dancers were invited to attend. The representation was so great that it became necessary to find larger quarters for this event at the last minute. As a result, one of the largest halls in the city (which had been reserved for one of the regular social dances) was turned over to the square dancers. News reports the following day indicated that the "square dance crowd" had "stolen the show."

During the day, representatives from most of the larger cities in the state held a meeting, at which time a temporary organization was formed for the purpose of having a state-wide event each year. At a later date, this organization was made into a permanent organization. The state was divided into approximately fifteen districts with a local chairman in charge. Each of these districts holds an area festival during the year, and a portion of the net proceeds is sent to the state organization to assist in the overhead expenses. All festivals are **PARTICIPATION** events and definitely **NOT CONTESTS**. All persons who attend one of the district events are entitled to participate in the state event.

The state meet is to be rotated among the larger cities each year in order to afford an opportunity for those who are unable to make long trips to get in on one occasionally. The state meet will be held in Austin, Texas, this year on April 15, 16 and 17. Apparently the district festival set-up has been very successful during the year, and it appears that there will be a large turnout at the state event. The state organization has the normal run of officers, boards, steering committees, etc. At the present time, the Association is still in its infancy and the overall success remains to be seen.

* * *

Charley Thomas has written a new book entitled *Twelve Homemade Square Dances* which will be off the press soon. It contains a dozen new and original square dances, all of which have been tried out many times, and have found wide acclaim. Possibly you may be dancing some of them now and not know it. If you are not doing the *Old Mill Wheel* at the present time, you'll want to learn it, because it is one of Charley's most famous creations. The price of the book, 50c, is worth spending for this dance alone, for the fun you'll get out of dancing and calling it.

Dances Contributed

Try this to Polly Wolly Doodle:

First couple lead to the right,
And circle four with a right hand star.
Those two ladies chain across,
And gents go 'round where your partners are.

Same as a regular ladies chain except the gents circle halfway around counter clockwise and turn their partners who chain back again while the gents continue on around to their places to swing their partners.

Turn 'em round, send 'em back,
While the gents go 'round on the same old track,
Those two couples swing their own,
And lead right on to the next.

—Paul Hunt

* * *

Do you want to spread square dancing? Give a subscription of AMERICAN SQUARES to your library, your high school or your college. To help in this, we'll send Foster's Learn to Dance and Call Square Dances plus one year's subscription to the library, school or college of your choice for \$1.60. And we'll send them a card announcing your gift.

* * *

Bob Sumrall writes us that he is working on a new and more complete edition of this popular book, Do-Si-Do, which should be off the press in about a month. It will be available through AMERICAN SQUARES.

* * *

The First Annual Texas Square Dance Festival will be held April 15—17 in the Gregory Gymnasium, Austin, Texas. Anyone interested in participating should write the chairman, Lillie Lee Baker, 111 East Fifth Street, Austin, Texas.

* * *

The Minnesota Folk Dance Federation monthly Festivals have been a huge success. The January festival was sponsored by the International Institute Folk Dance Group at the Municipal Auditorium, with over 500 costumed dancers attending.

* * *

A lot of you are interested in the purchase of the Ford records and books for which you subscribed. We have received a letter that the matter is in the hands of the attorneys for the estate and we shall be advised when the proper time comes. Folkraft Records are also interested in the purchase of the Ford concern, so we may not get it after all.

The Round Table

In the February issue, Coreb Echols of Chicago asked for some mixers. We have two or three favorites in Rockford. The first one is my own mixture. Music—any lively two step, though we usually half chant it to the tune of Little Brown Jug.

Wink Your Eyes and Cross Your T's.

The call is

1. Couples separate if you please,
2. Wink your eye and cross your T's;
3. Swing with the lady on your right,
4. And promenade for half the night.

The action is

Have all couples promenading around in a large circle with a comfortable distance of four or five feet between couples, gentlemen on the inside of course. At the call (1) the gent takes four **short** steps backward into the center and the lady four **short** steps backward as she faces toward the gent. (2) With a wink and a nod (smile if you have to), partners join right hands as they step forward, immediately **passing each other, and "cross"** to the opposite position. The gent now faces toward his lady who is standing with her back to the center. (3) The gent now leads to the lady on his right (as he faces in), swings her and (4) they promenade for 16 counts—one full strain of the tune when the call is repeated ad lib. Nice for getting acquainted.

We also use Shoo Fly

Shoo Fly

Big ring all facing in, hands joined. Often the whole group joins in the the song until they are out of breath. The swing and passing the lady to the left is a bit tricky and they need some coaching at first for smooth action.

The call

1. Shoo Fly, don't bother me,
2. Shoo Fly, don't bother me,
3. Shoo Fly, don't bother me,
4. For I belong to somebody,
4. I feel, I feel, I feel like a morning star,
6. I feel, I feel, I feel like a morning star.

The action

(1) All take four steps to center. (2) Four steps back. (3 & 4) repeat action. Simply different words. (5 & 6) A continuous swing, usually four instead of the regular two, until the final phrase—I feel like a morning star. The gentleman stops the swing with his lady standing with her back to the center of the ring. Then still holding her right hand in his left hand (and this presupposes the standard waltz hand grip), the gent lifts his left arm up and the lady walks under to

his left side making a half turn clockwise as she passes under. Then still holding the same hands, the gents reaches out with his right to his right hand lady and the lady reaches out with her left hand and the ring is made complete again and in the meantime the call has begun again. Not much chance to get acquainted or visit, but a good mixer for those who like a good husky swing with a new girl each time. Repeat about a half a dozen times. All promenade, form sets and square dance. After one square dance, all promenade, all form ring and Shoo Fly again for about six changes; then one more square dance. Promenade in one big ring again around the hall. Ladies stand still—gents keep on, pick up own partner and

Promenade all- -

You know where and I don't care.

Lou Harrington

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(Continued from back cover)

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- Folk Dancing In High School And College**, Grace I. Fox. 17 foreign dances and 7 squares, with music. \$2.50
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(Continued on page 18)