

"Learn Basic Square Dancing in One Weekend"



The "Learn Basic Square Dancing in One Weekend," sponsored by Square and Twirl, gave a shot of adrenaline to those who are optimistic about the future of square dancing!

Over fifty current students and new dancers came together in Maplewood to enjoy and "soak up" the fifty "basic" calls. Excitement, energy, smiles, anticipation, endurance, great food, exhilaration, good times, full house, fulfillment--all just a beginning list of words that describe the weekend! Beyond that, where else can you get a delicious "taco dinner" for a mere \$5 or buy square dance clothing for bargain-basement prices?

Where did these dancers come from? All over the state: Bemidji, Stillwater, Mankato, Watertown, Lakeville, and all over the metro area! The ages ranged from 11 to 84! Up to ten squares were dancing at times! Even a couple that is nearly blind danced until ten on Saturday evening.

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Angels, too, came from everywhere (and they truly are “angels” to come and spend hours greeting and helping beginning dancers)! How important are the angels? A couple of dancers from ABC dances (who had no idea we'd be there) and a few returnees rushed to us with the greeting: "It's so good to see a familiar face! We walked in, scanned the faces, and hoped we'd see someone we recognize!"

More angels would have added to the comfort level in every square. Dan's job was made considerably more difficult when there was only one angel in a square. One of the rewards for angels comes in follow-up notes such as the following one: “Many thanks to you two for being there for us this weekend. What a fabulous time we had! We’re more confident now in the calls we had learned prior to this weekend and look forward to the new ones yet to be learned.” The note ended with “It’s hip to be square” dancers!

A huge thanks to the "behind-the-scenes" workers who set up the hall, made the food, and solved the problems. Pulling off such a smooth weekend was a Herculean task! A special thanks to Janet Beberness who handled the logistics like a pro--all the while on crutches!

The key to this successful weekend was the man on the microphone, and Dan Sahlstrom was a maestro! His patience, his repetition, his clear and precise instruction, his singing calls, his humor--all blended together they made the weekend extremely productive and enjoyable for everyone!

Minnesota is very lucky to have a caller and a club who will put together a weekend like this that benefits the WHOLE square dance community, not just one club. Square dancing as a WHOLE is gaining lots of wonderful dancers who, once they finish the mainstream calls, will be out looking for a good time.