

## **What is Modern Square Dancing?**

Square Dancing is a social activity where eight people form a square with 2 people on each side, then dance a series of movements as "called" by the square dance caller. It is a healthy, recreational, fun activity. It is often said that square dancing is "Friendship Set to Music". Dancing is done to modern music, 50's and 60's to 80's and 90's or later - from Pink Cadillac, Bill Bailey, When the Saints Come Marching In, Elvis Presley tunes, Oklahoma, etc.

### **· What is the difference between Old Time and Modern Square Dancing?**

In Old Time Square Dancing there is a set pattern followed for each dance. This never varies, no matter how often that dance is repeated. Usually the first couple executes a number of moves with each of the other couples in turn. Then the second, third, and fourth couples do the same moves with each of the other couples.

In Modern Square Dancing there are no set patterns for a dance. The dancers learn a number of moves which the caller then puts together to form the dance. The caller "calls" out these moves and the dancers execute the "calls". The dancers do not know which moves will be called next. Usually all dancers move together, although some calls are executed by just four people.

### **· How do Modern Square Dancers learn the movements?**

Anyone can learn to become a square dancer by joining a square dance club where the basic movements are mastered. New dancers enjoy an evening of fun while being taught the movements by the caller.

### **· What countries have square dance activities?**

Modern Square Dancing is a worldwide activity. Square dance calls are standardized and are called in English around the world. Once dancers have learned the calls, they can dance at any club or square dance event anywhere.

### **· Are there square dance competitions?**

There are no competitions, except that some teen clubs and adult clubs at special "games" may do so. Square dancing is recreational and done strictly for the fun of it. There are various programs within the square dance activity, each program encompassing an increasing number of calls. Dancers move at their own pace through the programs. They may decide to dance a certain program for an extended period of time, or they may decide to move on to the next program, learning additional calls.

### **· The formal organization of Modern Square Dancing**

The basic unit is the local club. Clubs may have anywhere from eight to eighty or more members. In Canada, clubs are usually affiliated with an Association such as the Eastern Ontario Square and Round Dance Association. Associations are part of a Federation; such as the Ontario Square and Round Dance Federation. The Federations in turn are part of the Canadian Square and Round Dance Society. These Associations, Federations, and the Society publish magazines, sponsor special dances and events, assist callers in obtaining training, and, in general, work to promote square dancing and to ensure the smooth operation of the movement. The callers also have organizations at the local, national, and international levels to ensure the standardization of calls and to help them in the planning and running of the best programs possible for the dancers.

### **· Number of clubs and dancers**

There are hundreds of clubs, 10 federations, and many associations, and dancers registered in Canada with the Canadian Square and Round Dance Society.