



Dudes & Dolls SQUARE DANCE CLUB

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Info at: www.DudesAndDolls.org

Second, Fourth, and Fifth Friday Dances at Cedar Valley Grange / 20526 – 52nd Ave. W / Lynnwood WA

Old (Square) Dancers never die, they just promenade away



The picture above shows the participants of the First Picnic of the Dudes & Dolls Former Dancers. It shows all the smiling faces that once were dancing in a square, as a Dude or Doll. Jeanne was punching herself on the chin for sitting next to the dog as he bit his butt, and Harold in the background, waving goodbye. He was supposed to be in the dog's place, next to his wife. Look for Gundy and Marie.

When will your Square Dancing end?

There are many changes in life that affect how long one will continue to square dance. There are those who no longer dance who were so vital to the Dudes & Dolls Square Dance Club.

At times, we miss the members that no longer dance, but do we keep in touch? Do the present dancers realize the loss they will suffer when they no longer participate in dances or activities?

When I started dancing in 1980, the square dance clubs were my social network. I couldn't wait to go to a club dance. These people became good friends, and an important part of my life.

I had been making a few calls to my "old" dancing friends, and after putting it off, I decided to invite some of them to our farm. I despise



memorials. It is more fun to socialize, and I wanted to do be amongst friends while I still am able.

I mentioned this to Jean Hughes and immediately she stepped up to the plate and offered a ride to those unable to drive to our farm for this gathering.

At a visit I made to one of these dear friends, their family was in the process of taking away the keys from the parents, denying them access to their freedom—their car.

Tears flowed and harsh words were exchanged. After the children left, we, too, shared a few tears over the incident.

Jean recruited Marie and Gundy Gunderson to provide a ride for Cal and Faye. The Meicho's joined our group and away we went to the

farm. We made it a daytime event, convenient for those that could not drive in the dark.

Remember Dottie Stevens, a former member of the Frontier Squares and the Evergreen Squares? She was there. See if you can find her in the picture.

Gundy brought his guitar and his wife, in that order. He entertained us. We enjoyed singing! We had our picture taken in the 1955 Fire Engine Red Buick.

We ate breakfast in a milk house.

The gathered may no longer be Dudes & Dolls, but these people are still special friends and hope you take the time to remember the Past.

As for the active Dudes & Dolls, we have only touched a quarter, I mean a few, of the members. There are so many more today that are enjoying the club, and each other, and the dances and the friendships.

Our hope is that someone will plan a Past Members Event and honor the people that held it together, and made the club what it is today—
A World Class Square Dance Club

After a few sing-along-songs and a couple of ditties by Gundy and his trusty guitar, former Dudes & Dolls gathered around the garden for some quality reminiscing time. The event took place at Jerry and Marilyn's Farm in Machias, WA.

Thanks to Marilyn Jones for this report.

Thanks for Remembering the Past D&D ...

Many things make up a Square Dance Club. Hands and feet allow us to dance in a square. Corners make up the squares, and where would we be without our partners? It would be a sad club that did not have feelings, and a sadder one if it had no heart.

The memories we carry around with us each day, and the good times that we relive over and over are all the result of someone doing a job to make a club a great organization to belong to.

It warms the cockles of my heart when I hear that Dudes & Dolls has not only a heart, but many hearts. Jean and Harold along with Gundy and Marie took on the task of getting together with almost two squares of dancers that could no longer attend the dances. For different reasons, mostly brought on by the March of Time, these people were not able to get to the Grange hall for the dance.

Marilyn, in her notes, asks, "When will your Last Dance take place? Will you have the memories of your Last Dance to be relived and enjoyed? Will you miss the dance hall?"

Thanks to the fearless four from Dudes & Dolls that took the time and made the effort to visit and entertain some of the pioneers. They made our club what it is today, for without them, the club would have floundered, and likely died.

Remember and respect the past. It is the story of your life.

The Last Dance ...

The couple hobbled through their front door, and struggled down the few stairs to their car, parked in the driveway. He instinctively opened the door for his wife of many, many years, and she carefully and gingerly eased herself into the passenger's seat. She raised her arm with some pain to get a hold of the seat belt, pull it around, and buckle it up, finally hearing the decisive "click". She then rubbed the pain out of her hands.

He limped slightly as he walked around to the driver's side, opened the door, straightened out the pillow that he kept on his seat, and prepared himself for a nighttime drive to the square dance hall.

They had done this many times over the years, and each time lately, it was becoming more and more of a chore. Some nights it was just not worth the effort, and they ended up back in the house, without going to the dance hall. A few members of their Square Dance Club missed them, but as the frequency of their attendance waned, fewer and fewer wondered how life was going for them.

But, tonight, they would show up at this Last Dance, and maybe even dance a dance, or two.

The drive was difficult, as the lights on the cars and trucks seemed much brighter than the years before, and when a newer car, with the airplane-style landing lights approached, he was blinded, and almost drove off the road.

But soon their destination, the old and familiar Cedar Valley Grange Hall, came into view.

Again, getting out of the car took extra effort, but they were determined to be at this Last Dance, to see old friends, say a good bye; a final farewell.

The steps up to the hall were another challenge to overcome, and with a pull on the handrail with each step, they managed to get to the

top, and into the dance hall where the dancers were already whirling and twirling.

It was a familiar and enjoyable sight. The sounds of the dancers, and the voice of a skilled caller filled the hall.

They edged past the dancers, sat on a chair, caught their breath, looked at each other, and relaxed, finally.

It had been their most difficult and most trying trip.

"Ahh, but listen to the music. Listen to the caller. Let's just sit on the side and watch. I don't think we will be dancing tonight," she says; and he agrees.

The dancers appear more active now, than when they used to dance every dance.

All club members come by, say their hellos, and have a bit of a conversation. No one comes up and asks them to dance, and they are destined to not wind up in a square.

"This is our Last Dance," he says to her. "We won't be coming to another one. It is just too much effort." At announcement time, he gets up from his seat, and walks across the floor. There are tears in his eyes as he walks toward the stage, takes the microphone in his hand, and speaks his precious pre-thought-out words from his heart. He tells of the good times they had as a couple in the Dudes & Dolls Square Dance Club. He informs the dancers that they had been members since 1988, and the good times, when they could dance every dance, and clamber up and down these now damned stairs. He told of their appreciation for the club, and the wonderful members that were as close as family.

"But this is our Last Dance," he states, with his eyes full of tears. It hurt deep in his heart to say, "We won't be renewing our Dudes & Dolls membership this year." This was, indeed, their Last Dance.

He handed the microphone back to the caller, and walked back to where his partner was sitting, on the way dropping a few tears as they rolled off his cheeks, onto the precious hardwood floor of the Grange Hall, mixing with those that have been shed before, and will be mixed with more yet to come. He gave her a hug. She looked up at him, welcoming the hug, and she, too, cried a tear. It was as though they were being torn asunder ... from their family and friends. They make their way to those damned stairs, and go down for a cup of coffee, decaf, and a delicious piece of pie.

They speak with some club members, and soon the Last Break Time is another memory in their lifetime memory bank. Then, later in the evening, they were gone. They had not said a round of goodbyes, they just quietly left the hall, practically unnoticed, for the last time.

Their names will not be in the Dudes & Dolls Directory next year. And it made me think of which D&D Directory will be printed without my name. When will my tears mix on the hardwood floor with those already there?

And which directory will be without your name in it?

Enjoy your dance time, as I know you do; because you never know when the Great Caller in the sky has the Last Call for you.

So the ex-Dude and his Doll return home, safely, both breathing a big sigh: hers for being home; and his for not being in a car accident. On the desk, in a stack of mail, is their Second Notice dues renewal for the upcoming year. It is destined to wind up in the recycle bin.

-Warren B Funnell

