

## California Square Dance Council, Inc.

The origins of the California Square Dance Council, Inc., date back to 1950. That year square dance leader and Square Dance magazine publisher Bob Osgood was asked by the City of Santa Monica to organize a street dance for the City's "Diamond Jubilee" celebration. Bob gathered the leaders of seven southern California dance associations to assist him in planning and presenting the dance.

When the "Diamond Jubilee" event proved successful, these leaders realized what a substantial impact they could have working together. In South Pasadena on August 25, 1950, Western Square Dance Association hosted the first meeting of the "**Council of Square Dance Associations of Southern California**". At this informal gathering, the body realized it could accomplish all manner of things which no single association could effectively accomplish by itself. The Council decided it would meet once every three months, would serve as an informal clearing house of square dance information, and would exert a united effort to preserve and promote the future of square dancing. The body decided there would be no officers and it would have no legislative authority.

In October 1952, Council appointed a permanent secretary to handle correspondence and to maintain a calendar of square dance events. The secretary was also assigned to help the hosting association's secretary take minutes of the quarterly meetings.

By May 1956, other associations had begun to spring up in northern California, and the southern associations thought their northern neighbors might wish to share in the benefits of a united Council. At the National Square Dance Convention in San Diego that June, Council invited associations from throughout the State to join. The word "Southern" was dropped from the name, and the "**Council of Square Dance Associations of California**" was born.

In 1957, the Council began to recognize and support the associations which volunteered to host annual California State Square Dance Conventions. This practice lasted for 10 years. In 1969 after a two-year lapse, the last of this type of convention was held in San Diego.

In the late '60's, Council recognized the need for a more formal organization. It established permanent meeting dates on the second Saturday of February, May, August and November. It was decided the meeting would be hosted by the affiliate members or the Council Affiliate Past Presidents' Group and that they would be rotated throughout the State. These meetings continued to cover a wide spectrum of topics, and Council continued to evolve. A massive reorganization was undertaken, The name of Council was changed to "**California Square Dance Council,**" and in 1971, Council was incorporated as a California non-profit corporation.

Council's reorganization assigned control of the body to a Board of Directors made up of affiliate representatives and the Council Affiliate Past Presidents' Group. Elected officers were established to conduct the business of Council under the direction of the Board. Council officers consisted of a President, four Area Vice Presidents (each assigned a specific region of the State, i.e., Northern, Central, South Central and Southern), a Secretary, Treasurer, Public Relations Director, Historian and Insurance Director. An elaborate committee structure was established to assist Council in carrying out its policies.

In 1972, Council began itself to host annual State Square Dance Conventions with changes from those held before. It was decided the convention would be held the third weekend in April in sites rotated throughout the four Vice Presidents' areas of the State. The convention committee structure was established including that the General Chairman and members had to be approved by the Board.

Also in 1972, Council's bid to host the 25<sup>th</sup> National Square Dance Convention in 1976 was approved. In March 1973, the American Revolution Bicentennial Commission recognized the 25<sup>th</sup> National (which coincided with the Nation's 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary) as an Official Bicentennial Celebration event, the first such event so recognized in the State. The 25<sup>th</sup> National Square Dance Convention was organized as a separate corporation, under the leadership of Ken & Audrey Parker. Who had served one term as Council President from 1972 to 1973. The June 1976 Convention broke all attendance records for a National Square Dance Convention making it the largest single square dance convention before or since.

Six National Square Dance Conventions have been held in California starting with the 1<sup>st</sup> in Riverside in 1952, and including the 5<sup>th</sup> in San Diego in 1956, the 13<sup>th</sup> in Long Beach in 1964, the 25<sup>th</sup> in Anaheim in 1976, the 37<sup>th</sup> in Anaheim in 1988, and the 50<sup>th</sup> in Anaheim in 2001. Council dancers have overwhelmingly supported each Convention.

In 1978, Council initiated discussions with the other state square dance organizations to create a national dancers' organization. Council was very instrumental in the formation of the United Square Dancers of America (USDA) with Council Past President Jim & Jan Maczko served as the first USDA President from 1981 to 1983. Council became a charter member of USDA when it was formed during the National Square Dance Convention in 1981 in Seattle, Washington. Council now maintains insurance for all its member's under the USDA umbrella.

In 1988, Council was instrumental in getting State-wide recognition of square dancing. Through the hard work and dedication of George & Ann Holser, the California legislature established square dancing as the State Folk Dance on October 1, 1988.

In 1990, Council created its Friendship Program to encourage visitations to affiliates' festivals throughout the State. To be eligible for a Friendship Program award, a dancer must attend nine affiliate festivals and one State Convention. The dancer is awarded a certificate of completion and a Friendship Program dangle. Similar Friendship Programs have been established for youth and Handicapable dancers as well. Since the program's inception, 310 Friendship awards have been presented.

In 1991, Council approved creation of a Handicapable standing committee. The committee, patterned after the USDA Handicapable Committee, was assigned the responsibility of reporting on the activities of all Handicapable clubs in the State. The committee's work was so successful that it ultimately resulted in the formation of the Handicapable Square Dancers of California Association in 1995.

In 1995, Council initiated California Progressive Square Dance Day, a day on which affiliates arrange dances in a variety of public areas such as shopping centers, malls, parks and fairgrounds to showcase the square dance activity. Some affiliates have received Progressive Square Dance Day proclamations from city officials. Progressive Square Dance Day takes place in August each year.

Council has long supported innovative marketing programs to promote square

dancing and, in 1998, contributed \$5,000 to The CALLERLAB Foundation for this effort. Council also supports the Alliance of Rounds, Traditional & Square Dance (ARTS) as an Associate Member. Council Past President Jim Maczko was selected to serve as the ARTS' inaugural Chairman of the Governing Board.

In 2000, Council started its Golden Dancer Certificate program. The program was established to honor the devotion and perseverance of its older dancers. A Golden Dancer Certificate is given to any active square dancer 80 years old or older. The program is Council's way of thanking its older dancers for keeping square dancing a vibrant and active form of dancing.

At Council's 2002 State Convention, the California Youth Square Dance Competition was begun as part of a long-term project to encourage youth to become square dancers and keep them interested once they have completed classes. The initial program was developed in the "style" of the popular Pacific Northwest Teen Competition where youth dancers participated in a timed event, with the square achieving the longest total dance time without breaking down being declared the winner. This "open" division pairs youth dancers from throughout the State who may or may not have met before the day of competition. Practice sessions are held the day of competition to give the dancers the opportunity to get to know each other.

The importance of youth to our activity was recognized when, in 2003, Council awarded its first Youth Scholarship Award. The first \$250 Award went to Jessica Horton. To be eligible for this Award, a youth must be a current active member of a dance club belonging to the California Square Dance Council, Inc. through one of its member affiliates. The youth must have been a club member for a minimum of one year prior to application. The scholarship is awarded on merit to a youth dancer who has a record of volunteer service in the square dance movement, and outstanding leadership potential and communication skills.

Over the years there have been many square dancers, callers, cuers, instructors, teachers and other who have been instrumental in establishing and leading the California Square Dance Council, and in carrying out its business. Because of their achievements and their contribution to Council, the following people have been awarded Council Honorary Member status: Bob & Becky Osgood, Bill & Bobbie Myrick, George & Ann Holser and Mac & Mary McClure.

As of 2004, 20 affiliates with 287 clubs and 9,596 dancers make up the membership of the California Square Dance Council, Inc. Current affiliates are:

Associated Square Dancers of Superior California, 26 Clubs  
Bachelors 'N' Bachelorettes International, 16 Clubs  
Back Country Square Dance Association, 4 Clubs  
Central California Square Dance Association, 18 clubs  
Central Coast Square Dance Association, 5 Clubs  
Coastal Basin Square Dance Association, 4 Clubs  
Council Affiliates Past Presidents' Group, 71 Members  
Cow Counties Hoedown Association, 32 Clubs  
Handicapable Square Dancers of California, 11 Clubs  
Northern California Square Dancers Association, 37 Clubs  
North State Dancers Association, 9 Clubs

Palomar Square Dance Association Inc., 7 Clubs  
Peninsula Square Dance Federation, 10 Clubs  
San Joaquin Valley Square Dance Association, 16 Clubs  
Santa Clara Valley Square Dancers Association, 16 Clubs  
Southern California Clogging Association, 16 Clubs  
Square Dance Association of San Diego County, Inc., 17 Clubs  
United Square Dance Association, 10 Clubs  
Valley Associated Square Dancers Inc., 11 Clubs  
Western Square Dance Association, 22 Clubs

January 11, 2005  
Donna E. Hawkins  
Public Relations Director  
California Square Dance Council, Inc,