

## Where in the World Have Our Dancers Been?

*(Submissions included chronologically – most recent at the top)*

### 59.1 (May 2017)

**Honor Your Partner in Germany:** Last September, I enjoyed a terrific two-week square dance tour of southern Germany with 80 other dancers. Our callers were Tony Oxendine, Jerry Story, and Tom Crisp.

What a time we had! Home base was the charming Bavarian village of Grassau. During the day, my adventures included the Munich Oktoberfest, a Mozart concert in nearby Salzburg, Austria, schnapps tasting, Oberammergau, the Berchtesgaden salt mines, and a sobering visit to Dachau, the former concentration camp. I loved shopping in Munich and the local farmers' markets. My partner, Bob, enjoyed hiking in the Alps on pleasant days.

Most evenings were spent with local Mainstream and Plus clubs. They were terrific dancers, all decked out in western attire, and loved fast dancing. Since all calling was in English, it was easy to understand. Their clubs had good names: Flying Dandelions, Zugspitz Promenaders, and Tamata Twirlers!

To learn more about this smoothly run travel experience, contact Tom and Gina Crisp at [crisptours.com](http://crisptours.com) or 800-901-8044. *Helen Jacobson (Reelers)*



**Florida Festival:** Four members of the Hunterdon Flutterwheels shared an exceptionally exuberant weekend of fun, friendship, and square dancing at the wonderful Suncoast Squares annual February "fly-in" weekend near St. Petersburg, Florida. The theme was Sashay thru the Wild Wild West, and the warm welcome from club members was a delight!

*Donna and Ralph Serio, Carol and Anthony Casale (Hunterdon Flutterwheels)*

**Tumbling Leaves Festival:** Bennington, Vermont, was not just for dancing and leaf peaking last October. We danced on Friday evening and explored on Saturday morning and afternoon. First we drove through three covered bridges close to the college where the festival was held. Next was the Bennington Battle Monument, with an elevator up to enjoy spectacular views of Vermont, Massachusetts, and New York: absolutely breathtaking! Then we saw the Old First Congregational Church and Robert Frost's tombstone, followed by a 24-mile drive to Manchester. We cannot begin to describe how beautiful the scenery was with the massive mountains and array of colors. Manchester has adorable shops and fabulous eateries. After lunch, we drove a few miles to Hildene, the Georgian Revival mansion home of Abraham Lincoln's son, Robert Todd Lincoln. Upon returning to Bennington, we toured a Victorian mansion, Park-McCullough House. Our last stop was the Bennington Museum, where we visited the Grandma Moses Gallery and her old schoolhouse. Yes, this was a lot to cover in one day, but so worth it. And yes, by 8:00 PM, we were in a square and ready to dance again to five fabulous callers!

*Matty and Bernie Sharkey (Kittatinny Rangers, Middletown Ramblers)*

### 58.3 (September 2016)

(No submissions.)

### 58.2 (May 2016)

**Dancing in Canada:** While attending a wedding, my partner and I went to a Scottish-themed square dance sponsored by the Chuckwagon 8s in Burnaby, British Columbia. (That explained why the caller was wearing a kilt, the walls were draped with tartans, and the dancers were clad in plaid.)

When one of the dancers asked me if I liked haggis, I thought he was testing my knowledge of Scottish customs. I know it's made with ground-up sheep heart, liver, and lungs, wrapped in the stomach and cooked somehow. I had also heard that it's absolutely repulsive to those who haven't grown up eating it.



At the midpoint in the dance, we all lined up for a Grand March. The procession was led by a bagpiper who “piped in” ... a haggis, carried on a platter by two men.

When the haggis was set on a table at the front of the hall, someone read (in Scottish dialect) Robert Burns’s poem Address to a Haggis. In plain English, the gist of the poem is a gushing tribute to the “great chieftain of the sausage race.” As a guest, I saw no way around at least trying the delicacy. Aside from being a little dry, it wasn’t bad at all. Coffee, tea, and assorted goodies rounded out the offerings.

This group has its hospitality down pat. We received guest badges to identify us, and the rest period in the middle of the dance was a time to socialize while recharging our batteries. We were even given a door-to-door ride back to our hotel!  
*Warren Livesley (Times Squares)*

**Cacapon Weekend:** A full square of NNJSDA dancers attended the Lehigh Valley B&B square and round dance club’s annual Presidents Day weekend in February: Lise Greene and Mark Bippes, Barbara and George Kuhne, Jan and Paul Sanderson, and Donna Poyer and Mike Szekula. It was held in a cozy lodge in Cacapon Resort State Park in West Virginia. We enjoyed the energetic calling of Howard Williamson and Denny Steiner and the enthusiastic cuing of Tim Eum. The entire weekend took place in the lodge, including delicious buffet meals. The B&Bs provided after-party snacks, games, and prizes. There was no need to venture into the frigid outdoors; however, our more adventurous members (Lise, Mark, and Paul) did go out for a hike. We also enjoyed a visit from our son, daughter-in-law, and four grandchildren. This is a lovely winter weekend that we would highly recommend.  
*Barbara and George Kuhne (Y Squares)*

**Flip the Flamingo:** For the second winter in a row, we visited our friends and fellow club members, Miriam and David Gurowsky, in Florida. We enjoyed dancing and a barbecue on the beach at Fort De Soto Park in St. Petersburg during the annual Flip the Flamingo “fly-in” sponsored by Suncoast Squares.



In the photo, left to right: David, Miriam, Cathy, Don.  
*Cathy and Don Schlesinger (RocklandRockytops)*

### 58.1 (September 2015)

**Florida Escape:** We were fortunate enough to spend a few weeks in Florida last winter – escaping some of the New Jersey snow! We enjoyed playing golf, swimming, and dancing with several clubs: Heel and Toe in St. Cloud, Whirl and Twirl in Orlando, Hoedowners in Casselberry, and Temple Twirlers in Tampa. We had visited the first three clubs during the previous winter, and were pleasantly surprised at how many people remembered us and welcomed us back like old friends.

In the photo, we’re on the left along with other “first-timers” at Temple Twirlers, where we were all introduced and presented with visitor dangles.

*Pat and Tom Duemig (Circle Eights, Western Wheelers/Hix & Chix)*



**Fancy Meeting You Here:** My husband, Rick, and I were vacationing in the Berkshires this summer. On a tour of the Clark Museum in Williamstown, Massachusetts, we were reminded what a small world it is. We ran into Irene and Harold Stoller of Reelers, who were visiting with Irene’s college roommate. We enjoyed the opportunity to share square dance and vacation stories.

*Gerry Beatty Savino (Circle Eights)*

**National Convention 2015 in Springfield, Massachusetts:** Way to go, New Jersey dancers! We had the third highest representation of any state, with a sea of green flowing proudly in the Parade of States.

Some of the huge contingent of Garden State dancers is shown in the photo. Thanks to Joanne Ingis for the photo.



### 57.3 (May 2015)

**Flip the Flamingo:** Over the long holiday weekend of February 13-16, Suncoast Squares hosted the annual Flip the Flamingo Fly-In at two locations in the St. Petersburg, Florida, area. Club members David and Miriam Gurowsky, who are also members of RocklandRockytops, danced Friday and Saturday in Pinellas Park at the Bayou Club, and again on Monday in St. Pete on the beach at Fort De Soto Park. They were joined on Saturday evening and Monday afternoon by Don and Cathy Schlesinger, Rockytops members who were vacationing at the Gurowskys' timeshare in Sarasota. Two more New Jersey friends of the Gurowskys, Ralph and Donna Serio of Hunterdon Flutterwheels, also danced on Saturday evening.



A delicious buffet dinner was served on Saturday, and a sumptuous barbecue lunch on Monday afternoon. The dancing was superb, and the callers (Todd Fellego, Chris Phillips, and Michael Cox) were all first-rate.

*Cathy Schlesinger (RocklandRockytops)*

Photo: The Schlesingers and Gurowskys on the beach at Fort De Soto Park, with the Sunshine Skyway Bridge in the background

**One Month, Three Festivals:** My boyfriend and I enjoyed three dance festivals in the space of one month last fall! First, we went to Tumbling Leaves in Vermont. Tim Marriner and the other callers were wonderful, and I loved their harmony together. The music was great and very up tempo, making everyone lively and in high spirits.

This inspired us to motivate a group to go to the Harvest Moon Classic in New Jersey. Again, we enjoyed the harmonies and energy of the callers, and the dancers were delightful, as always.

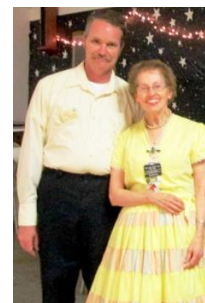
We also attended the one-day Hudson Valley Council dance, which was closer to my home in New York. In addition to not having to travel far, we appreciated that there was less expense, food and lemonade were served, there was a talented caller, and the dancing was excellent. The pleasant environment created a fun and happy mood.

*Mary Ann Gazivoda (Friendly Squares)*



**Strawberry Square:** In mid-January, on a vacation in Florida, Perry Didriksen and I danced in Plant City at Strawberry Square, a hall dedicated to square dancing. It has a beautiful "floating" wood floor and is located at the edge of a mobile home community, from which a number of the dancers can walk or bike to an event. We were delighted to find that the caller for the evening was the ubiquitous Todd Fellego.

I first danced at Strawberry Square in 1991 with my then-partner, John Occhipinti. He later retired to Florida. This year, Perry and I danced with John at his club, Temple Twirlers in Tampa.



The photos show me with John (left) and Perry (right) at Strawberry Square. More than 20 years later, I am wearing the same dress!

*Joan Schierlitz (RocklandRockytops)*



## 57.2 (January 2015)

Six square dance adventurers from New Jersey promenaded down to the 40th Tennessee Square Dance Convention last August. We had met some very nice people while on a square dance cruise in February, and they invited us to visit. So Carol and Anthony Casale, Debbie and José Obarrio, Nancy Jacobs, and Mark Parent decided to check out the amazing town of Gatlinburg, Tennessee. (Photo L-R: Carol and Anthony Casale, Mark Parent, Nancy Jacobs, Debbie and José Obarrio)



The convention center, which is in the middle of town, is a great venue with easy access to all the sights and sounds. The streets were teeming with people (it was like walking in New York City) and lined with shops and restaurants for blocks on end. We had some really good meals. And then there were the beautiful mountains in the background. Of course, the dancing was great. Everyone was very friendly (aren't all square dancers?), and we had a wonderful time. There were some really creative callers doing some very unusual calls, which made it a lot of fun. I think that's part of the excitement of square dancing: You get to travel to many places, some near and some far, and meet very nice people. Up next, the Florida Winter Festival in February!  
*Carol Casale (Belles & Beaux and Hunterdon Flutterwheels)*

While attending the National Square Dance Convention in Spokane a few years ago, Vic and I had the opportunity to meet Don Casper, a cuer from Mannheim, Germany, where we had lived for three and a half years while Vic was in the Army. Having planned a visit back to Germany for some time, we resolved, basically, to build our trip around the chance to dance at Don's round dance club ... which we did!

We rented a car and toured Germany, Czech Republic, and Austria. Driving the autobahn again was an experience – good for Vic, bad for me! We revisited Berlin, where it was very moving to follow the markers showing the previous location of the Wall and reflect on so many who died trying to gain freedom. We also had three wonderful days in Prague, then went to Vienna, and finally proceeded to Bavaria, where we saw several of the castles we knew from years ago.

From researching [dosado.com](http://dosado.com) and other websites, I located a number of square and round dance clubs in the cities we were visiting. Unfortunately, we were not there when those clubs danced ... with one notable exception. We did end up in Mannheim on the Tuesday before we returned home, and danced with Don's club. At left is a picture of the happy group. We look forward to seeing Don (tall guy with glasses) and his partner, Heike Beck (lady in the blue blouse in the front row), at the National Convention this June; they come every year!



*Nancy Ammons (Bee Sharps)*

## 57.1 (September 2014)

When I lived on Ærø, a small island in Denmark, I danced with a local club. Although the caller did not speak English, he used the standard English calls, albeit with a Danish accent. The club members were fully accustomed to his pronunciation, and I usually understood him, too. However, during one tip, I heard him call: "Right and Left Thru, and Cover Your Face." I started the Right and Left Thru, and then, stumped by the next part of the call, stopped abruptly – as it happened, right in front of the caller. He stopped calling and stared as the entire square came to a halt behind me. I whispered: "Cover my face?" He enunciated a bit more clearly: "Wit' de cuppa you face." With the couple you face! Then I really did cover my face with my hands to hide the redness of embarrassment as the other dancers roared with amusement over the American who didn't understand English.

*Lise Greene (Reelers, Kittatinny Rangers)*

We followed a family tradition by taking lessons with the Middletown Ramblers in 2013. Lori's parents, aunt, and uncle were dancers, and the latter two enjoyed visiting clubs when they traveled. So last April, before completing Mainstream, we looked for dances during our southwest vacation. Lori checked links to clubs' websites, maps, event calendars, and contact information. Good starting sites were [wheresthedance.com](http://wheresthedance.com) and [dosado.com/clubsorgs/default.htm](http://dosado.com/clubsorgs/default.htm), which lists clubs in all 50 states and worldwide.

In the Las Vegas area, only one club potentially meshed with our availability on a Sunday night, when they

hold classes. Even though it happened to be Easter, the club held a lesson, and we served as angels for the first time. Score one! More good luck followed with a club in Utah having a special dance with Mike Sikorsky calling. The club is far from callers' travel circuits, so it was a treat for them to dance to a live caller. It was no surprise that both clubs were hospitable, but the fun extended beyond dancing. Dancers shared pointers on restaurants and even retirement planning.

We received our very first dangles from one of the clubs, and learned that the USDA's Traveler Program ([usda.org/traveler.htm](http://usda.org/traveler.htm)) offers awards for visiting and dancing in a certain number of states. Given our positive travel-and-dance experience, we are eager to continue exploring square dancing in the good ol' USA and beyond. No question about it: Square dancing *is* "friendship set to music." *Lori and Eric Beck (Middletown Ramblers)*

My husband, Louis, and I attended our fifth annual IAGSDC (gay) convention this summer. We appreciate gay square dance weekends as a complement to straight events. In addition to the fun, upbeat dancing and the friendly, welcoming community, we value the *choices*: for either of us to dance the "boy" or "girl" part; to dance with a different partner each tip (or not); to dress casually (T-shirts are popular), or in traditional square dance attire, or any place in between – in other words, to do what contributes to our enjoyment the most. For one tip, I was in a square with seven men, and I was dancing the "boy" part! I totally enjoyed the challenge.

Closer to home, there are gay events in Washington (Lambda Squares: ACDC), Delaware (Independence Squares: Fly-in and Chesapeake Squares: Pass the Ocean, Hon!), Pennsylvania (Lambda Squares: Harvest Festival Hoedown), and New Jersey (Times Squares: Peel the Pumpkin). For an invigorating dance experience, try an LGBT square dance event. We'll see you there! *Jan Thompson (Motiv8ors)*

### **56.3 (May 2014)**

Many years ago, Jim and I were attending a summer square dance in Rapid City, South Dakota. We were in a long, low building with about a dozen squares when a bat flew through one of the open doors into the hall. The sound system must have interfered with his sonar, because he was flying around near the ceiling, bumping into the rafters and bouncing up and down. All the dancers kept right on dancing – no one missed a step. When the tip ended, the bat finally managed to fly out one of the doors. No one acted like anything strange had happened.

*Su White (Rutgers Promenaders)*



Who says square dancing is just for landlubbers? There's square dancing aboard cruise ships, too! Indeed, it gives a whole new meaning to "Load the Boat." Several NNJSDA dancing friends recently went on a western Caribbean cruise aboard the Norwegian Dawn.

There were more than 100 square dancers, including NNJSDA's Carol and Anthony Casale, Barbara and Norman Kanter, Debbie and Jose Obarrio, and Iris and Harvey Schachter. [The Casales and Obarrios are pictured above in Roatan.] It was a lovely reprieve from the New Jersey snowstorms, with great food (and lots of it), interesting ports of call (Roatan, Belize, Costa Maya, and Cozumel), and, of course, daily square dancing with some wonderful people. We danced only a few hours a day, but it was really nice meeting fellow square dancers from around the country. The coordinator did a great job, as did the callers: Tony Oxendine, Jack Pladdys, and John Saunders. We enjoyed dinner together as a group in the dining room every evening, and I had great fun playing trivia. (I even won a pen and T-shirt when I was on "Team Norman.") We also got some information on Tennessee's upcoming 40th convention in Gatlinburg this summer (July 31 through August 2). It's expected to be one of their best conventions ever and sounds like a lot of fun, so we are planning to go.

*Carol Casale (Belles & Beaux, Hunterdon Flutterwheels)*

### **56.2 (January 2014)**

We attended our first "Summer Magic" weekend festival last August in Ontario, Canada, and had a wonderful time. We met three other couples from NNJSDA clubs; it was nice to see some familiar faces. It was our first time dancing out of the country, so that was a new experience for us. There was a great crowd of dancers

with four fantastic and entertaining callers: Don Moger, Tony Oxendine, Mike Seastrom, and Jerry Story. Many folks there commented about how much energy there was in the Plus room – Don Moger had us all laughing hysterically on the floor. The organizers of the weekend thought of everything. The accommodations were great, especially since you never had to leave the premises. All of the dancing was “in house.” All meals were included and the restaurant prepared delicious food. We certainly recommend this weekend to anyone looking to try somewhere new.

*Kathy Randall and Tony Milito (Rutgers Promenaders)*

Barbara and I enjoyed the National Convention in Oklahoma City, seeing friends from other states whom we met at past conventions. We use the convention as a starting point for experiencing our beautiful country, having now visited the 48 contiguous states and taken a cruise to Alaska. Last year, we concentrated on the Louisiana Bayou and southeastern Texas. One drawback at the last few conventions was the seeming absence of many national callers from the halls. In contrast, at the Tumbling Leaves festival in Vermont, it was a pleasure dancing to six top callers for the entire weekend: Red Bates, Bill Harrison, Tim Marriner, John Marshall, Don Moger, and Ken Ritucci. One of the two cuers was Steve Bradt. Although this festival is on a much smaller scale, it was far superior to the National Convention in actual dancing. It offers Mainstream through Challenge and has two round dance teaches at a lower level. If you cannot get to the National Convention and are looking for a new dance experience, we recommend trying weekends offering your preferred dance programs. Others we enjoy are WASCA, Harvest Moon, and Lehigh Valley B&Bs.

*George Kuhne (Y Squares)*

WASCA is a terrific long weekend of square and round dancing held outside of Washington, DC, every March. We have been attending this event for many years, and look forward to it all winter. It feels like the kickoff to the spring and summer dance season. The callers and cuers are top-notch, the dancers are friendly and fun to be with, and the hotel facilities are excellent. What more can you want for a great weekend of dancing and socializing? We have made friends there over the years and look forward to catching up with them each year (sometimes in the bar after dancing). The schedule includes a full-time DBD Plus hall (Carl's favorite) – and you can't miss Tommy Miller calling DBD Plus! Also, for the round dancers, there is a full-time round dance hall (actually more than one), teaches in the morning and afternoon, and 2x2 in the Plus hall. We even tried our feet at an introductory clogging session, and that was a giggle or two. We fill our days with square dancing, round dancing, a little shopping at the vendors, and chatting with friends – all in all, a great weekend. Consider adding this event to your square dance calendar – you won't be disappointed!

### **56.1 (September 2013)**

In October, I am bringing a group of home-schooled teens to Puerto Rico on a short-term mission trip. My son, Stephen, and I went there for a weekend in June for a site survey. I used Google to find San Juan Squares, and they invited us to call a father/son dance. This club dances to recordings and rarely sees a flesh and blood caller. We were careful to stick to the Mainstream list and not use many filler words because of the language barrier. After we returned home, the organizer sent a nice email: “I keep receiving feedback from the dancers on how much they enjoyed this activity. Rhythms were varied and fun. We all especially liked the Mickey Mouse Club song! Thanks again to Paul and Stephen for offering to visit and call for us. It was certainly a special experience not to be forgotten. You are always welcome!” Here's a link to photos and videos: [youtube.com/watch?v=qnT4ZbHjw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qnT4ZbHjw) 8.

*Paul Ingis (Belles & Beaux)*

We were on vacation in Hawaii with other square dancers from New Jersey. At a dance, while introducing ourselves to the others in our square, one of the couples announced that they wintered in Hawaii and summered in Alaska. Who could beat that for a lifestyle?

*Georgi Flandera (Western Wheelers/Hix & Chix)*

We remember hearing about the National Convention and thinking it sounded neat. A Belles & Beaux member said: “It doesn't matter which one you go to; you just have to go!” Another year slipped by, more members from our club were attending the convention, and we felt we were missing out on a great time. Ed wanted to attend the convention in the state of Washington, because it's so beautiful. I wanted to first learn Plus so that we could dance as much as possible. Reelers, here we come! Well, after Plus lessons followed by workshops and four years of Mainstream/Plus dancing, we did attend the National Convention in Washington and it was just wonderful! Now we tell people: “It doesn't matter which one you go to; you just have to experience the energy. It's a lot of fun!”

*Vicky and Ed Proskey (Belles & Beaux, Reelers)*

One of our favorite memories is traveling to a Summer Magic weekend festival in Ontario, Canada, with the Elk Mountaineers from Pennsylvania. Lucille Ims, our wonderful caller, rented a bus. We had lots of fun dancing to great callers such as Don Moger, Steve Kopman, Lee Kopman, and Johnny Preston. Our cuers were Jerry and Bonnie Callen. On the way home, we stopped at the St. Lawrence River and took a cruise, admiring the beautiful homes on the islands. The Mountaineers made sure that the bus trip was interesting; Ed Ims played his guitar while we sang, and the dancers took turns telling jokes. This made the trip seem a lot shorter. We have stayed in touch with some of our new friends from Canada.

*Dianne and Don Madden (Y Squares)*

After dancing for just a few years, I drove with my daughter to her college in Michigan, bringing along the National Square Dance Directory and an outfit. I called a couple in the area, who picked me up and took me to a dance. The greeters at the door gave everyone a hug, and I was treated as a special out-of-state visitor. I had a grand time and was driven back to the college after the dance. It was such a nice introduction to dancing with new people I didn't know, but who made me feel welcome as a member of the square dance family.

*Linda Millian (Belles & Beaux)*