

Connie (Seiler) and Terry Schmalzried
Morganville, NJ

Current club: Rutgers Promenaders

Former clubs:

Terry – Tip and Ringers (MS, P), 2 Bee Squares (A-2)

Both – Princeton Rounds, Red Rose (Exhibition),

BACtracks (A-2), tagBACs (C-1)



How did you start square dancing?

Connie: I saw an ad in the Rutgers student newspaper in September 1981 advertising a beginner square dance – and I have been there ever since.

Terry: I wanted to learn to square dance in college, but never had my homework done on Sunday evenings when the local club met. So when in my first job after college I saw an ad for a Bell Labs club offering square dance lessons, I jumped at the opportunity.

What year did you meet? 1986 And marry? 1994

Many of our friends and guests at our wedding were square dancers, so we planned one tip and one round at our wedding reception. Dan and Kathy Koft called and cued. I think about two squares got onto the floor. Most of our relatives hadn't seen us square or round dancing before, appreciated seeing us demonstrate, and remarked that we put on a great show!

Circumstances of your meeting and dating?

Connie: Tip and Ringers (Bell Labs Square Dance Club) came to visit Rutgers. Some of their members came back since there were many fun people dancing. Terry and I went to dances together as friends for a number of years – often as part of a group. Terry seemed to be nice quiet shy guy, a bit of a geek – but also liked to do crazy fun stuff.

Terry: When I had learned most of the Mainstream calls, Craig Sherman, my square dance caller, recommended going out to dance with other clubs to practice our new skills. He suggested Rutgers Promenaders had a lot of dancers my age, many of them singles. I went, found plenty of welcoming singles to dance with, good calling, great refreshments, and had a lot of fun. Connie was in a relationship at the time, so wasn't really on my radar for dance partners for the first several years. She was perky, very pretty, always contributed something for the refreshment table, and was usually working on some needlework craft between tips. After her relationship broke up, Connie became one of the singles I asked to dance with at Rutgers. I took her to other dances in the area as well, and we traveled to conventions in neighboring states and to a couple of national square dance conventions. We became friends, then boyfriend/girlfriend for years. I finally realized one day when struggling with a closet-remodeling project in my house that I would miss Connie if she wasn't around, and that she had come over to help me on that Saturday when she could have chosen to do so many other things herself that day. I asked her best friend (also a square dancer) about Connie's taste in rings and swore her to secrecy, bought a ring, and planned to pop the question at Connie's favorite restaurant in Colonial Williamsburg on our way to the National Advanced and Challenge Square Dance Convention. The right moment didn't arrive until after dinner under a streetlight by Old Parish Church on our stroll through Colonial Williamsburg, but Connie said, "Yes!", and we married four months later.

Favorite square dance memories?

Connie: When I carried our first baby, Alex, through his first-ever tip, Alex cried through most of it as Dan Koft called to the aptly chosen "What a Beautiful Noise." Betsy Gotta singing "Alex's Restaurant" to Alex to calm him afterward in the dance hall bathroom. Of course, passing the baby during tips. Dancing on the beach after a Rutgers graduation. Leap Day dances. Dancing on stage for the Statue of Liberty Centennial celebration closing ceremony.

Terry: Going out for dinner and conversation after dances with members of our square dance clubs. Vacationing with friends to and from square dance weekends. The professional photos we had taken of us at National Square Dance Conventions in full square dance attire that Connie had sewn. Performing with Red Rose at National Square Dance Conventions.

Anything else?

Terry was impressed when visiting other clubs while traveling in Kansas, Alaska, and Colorado how the entire family was welcomed and attended dances: older adults, young adults, teens, children, and babies. Not all of them danced, but they all socialized and visited with each other. Terry brought this idea back and Rutgers Promenaders has been very supportive of families over the years. It has kept us dancing rather than taking a hiatus to rear kids, and the club has a number of children who have learned to dance with the club, including our three sons. We hope to welcome you to a dance sometime, and bring the kids!